ANDS Guide

Institutional policies and procedures

Level: Awareness

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Web link: www.ands.org.au/working-with-data/data-management/data-management-policy

This Guide is intended for those developing or updating policies and procedures relating to the management of research data as an institutional asset.

Why have a research data management policy or policies?

Institutional policies and procedures, which might include guidelines, protocols and standards, are fundamental to good research data management. These should:

- Address current data-related issues, such as the rapidly evolving Publisher and Funder data policies which involve data sharing and reuse by other parties
- Ensure that all other related policies and procedures are consistent with, supportive of, and supported by, the institution's overall research data management policy
- Support and include compliance measures such as the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#)

To be effective, these policies, procedures and guidelines should be widely publicised to all those who have a role in ensuring that research data is managed as an institutional asset, i.e. researchers, research project teams, data managers, Librarian.

Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research

All Australian universities have signed up to the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (The Code). Section 2 of The Code states that:

"Policies are required that address the ownership of research materials and data, their storage, their retention beyond the end of the project, and appropriate access to them by the research community"

Examples of data management policies

A comprehensive list of Australian University Policies and Procedures relating to data management can be found on the ANDS Project Registry.

The Research Data Management Policy from the University of Edinburgh is a current international example.

Inclusions for data policies

Data management policies should address the following activities which are involved when handling data:

- Data ownership
- Data documentation and compilation
- Data quality, standardization, harmonization and audit
- Data life-cycle control
- Data custodianship
- Data security and access constraints
- Data access, data sharing and dissemination/licensing arrangements
- Data publishing

Data Policy checklist

Outline of a Research Data Management Policy for Australian Universities/Institutions

This practical and comprehensive checklist is intended as a basic starting point for institutions that are intending to write, or update, their research data management policy. It is intended to be informative, not prescriptive. It is understood that each institution will have its own method/template for writing policies. Many of the things outlined here may not be included in the formal policy but may be addressed with accompanying procedures or guidelines.

It contains support information for each heading and covers:

- Name of Policy
- Policy Purpose, Key Principles or Objectives
- Definitions
- Exceptions
- Application & Responsibilities
- Period of Retention of Research Data and Records
- Storage of Research Data and Records
- Security and Protection
- Access to Research Data and Records

- Removal or Movement of Data and Records
- Destruction of Records
- Data Ownership
- Collaborative Research Projects
- Special Requirements
- Where to Get Advice
- Register of Research Data & Records Stored in Department
- Related Policies, Related Documents / Schedules, Related Legislation
- Commencement Date, Review date
- Policy manager, Policy contact, Approval Authority

Approaches to Data Management Policies

Each institution will determine how best to construct the framework of policies, procedures and guidelines needed to support effect data management.

1. A single 'Research Data Management Policy' that encompasses all data management issues See examples in ANDS Project Registry
2. Separate policies address different parts of research data management e.g. data ownership policy and/or data storage policy.
3. Data Management Policy can be:
a. incorporated into the institutional policy on the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research
b. strengthened by cross references in related policies. See below
4. Both Policy and Procedure exist e.g.:
   - University of Newcastle. Research Data and Materials Management Policy
   - University of Newcastle. Research Data and Materials Management Procedure

Related policies and procedures

Storage of research data

The Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research requires that sufficient data be retained to justify the outcomes of research and to defend such outcomes should they be challenged. For this reason, the storage of research data may not be the subject of institutional policies, but may well require procedures.
- University of Newcastle. Research Data Storage Facility Procedure

Records management

Research data created by Australian universities and other publicly-funded research institutions are subject to the Australian Freedom of Information Act, or to relevant State legislation in the same way as data created by government departments.
- Australian Information Commissioner website
- Murdoch University - Managing Research Materials and Data: Recordkeeping Guidelines [PDF 218KB]

Access to data, databases & archives

Issues related to access to data and archives may not require a specific policy as they may be dealt with in a more general research data management policy. The procedures around access, however, may be complex and require stated procedures.

Retention of materials & research data following a research project

The Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research sets out retention periods for research data, research records and primary materials. In addition, there is need to consider specific provisions set out in Commonwealth and State legislation concerning archives and record keeping, especially those materials of heritage value, and disciplinary requirements.

- Griffith University. Schedule of Retention Periods for Research Data and Primary Materials
- University of South Australia. Ownership and Retention of Research Data
- ANDS Discussion Paper - Selection and Appraisal [PDF 203KB]
- DCC guide - How to Appraise and Select Research Data for Curation

Collaborative research projects
The creation of data will be an output of most collaborative research projects. Policy issues relating to data outputs may be handled within separate policies or within institutional policies relating to:

- responsibility for disposal, retention, storage and access in both the short and long term
- intellectual property, copyright and patents

Ethics and privacy
Issues of data management and reuse need be addressed in relation to ethics and privacy. These in turn relate to disposal, retention, storage and access, all of which may be dealt with in separate policies and procedures, or within the Data Management Policy.

- ANDS Guide - Data Sharing considerations for Human Research Ethics Committees

Secure & safe disposal of research data
The following examples show different ways of addressing the issue of record disposal, for both digital and non-digital data.

- Charles Darwin University - Research Data Management Guidelines [PDF 61.7KB]
- Monash University - Secure Destruction

Intellectual property, copyright, patents & licensing
Institutional policies need not distinguish between data and other forms of intellectual property to be effective. See for example:

- Queensland University of Technology. Intellectual Property Policy

A number of ANDS Guides provide information on this topic.

- Copyright Data and Licensing
- ANDS webpage - Licensing and copyright for data reuse

Use of third party data
There can be implications for managing third party data (i.e. data brought in from other data suppliers).

- Monash University guidelines on Using Third Party Content.

Feedback?

We welcome your feedback on this guide. Please email contact@ands.org.au with any comments or questions.

About ANDS

The Australian National Data Service (ANDS) makes Australia's research data assets more valuable for researchers, research institutions and the nation.

ANDS is a partnership led by Monash University in collaboration with the Australian National University (ANU) and the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO). It is funded by the Australian Government through the National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy (NCRIS).