Research Data Management Policy

Plymouth University regards research data as a valuable asset. The management of research data is an integral part of good research practice that allows reliable verification of results, protects the intellectual and financial investment made in its creation, enables it to be shared and prompts new and innovative research.

Research data is defined as any material created or collected necessary to generate, support and validate original research results, observations, findings or outputs, irrespective of the format or the media in which they may exist.

Scope

The policy applies to all research conducted at the University, regardless of funding source. It does not imply additional compliance where good practice and relevant research funders' requirements are already being followed.

Principles

1. Plymouth University seeks to promote the highest standards in the management of research data and records, throughout its lifecycle, as fundamental to both research excellence and academic integrity.

2. The University recognises that accurate and retrievable research data are an essential component of any research project and necessary to verify and defend, when required, the process and outcomes of research. Research data are valuable to researchers for the duration of their research, and may well have long-term value for research, teaching and for wider exploitation for the public good, by individuals, government, business and other organisations, as a project develops and after research results have been published.

3. The University acknowledges its obligations under research funders’ data-related policy statements and codes of practice to ensure that sound systems are in place to promote best practice, including through clear policy, guidance, supervision, training and support.

4. Researchers, departments/faculties, central directorates and service providers and, where appropriate, research sponsors and external collaborators, need to work in

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1 Research is defined as per the Frascati manual, i.e. creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of man, culture and society, and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise new applications.

2 An overview of the major research funders’ data policies is available at [www.dcc.ac.uk/resources/policy-and-legal/overview-funders-data-policies](http://www.dcc.ac.uk/resources/policy-and-legal/overview-funders-data-policies). See also the RCUK Common Principles on Data Policy (2011) at [www.rcuk.ac.uk/research/Pages/DataPolicy.aspx](http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/research/Pages/DataPolicy.aspx)
partnership to implement good practice and meet relevant legislative, research funder and regulatory requirements.

5. Research data should be:
   i. Accurate, complete, authentic and reliable;
   ii. Identifiable, retrievable, and available when needed;
   iii. Secure and safe;
   iv. Kept in a manner that is compliant with legal obligations and, where applicable, the requirements of funding bodies and project-specific protocols approved under the Plymouth University Research Ethics Policy.

6. Able to be made available to others in line with appropriate ethical, data sharing and open access principles.

7. Research data should be retained for as long as they are of continuing value to the researcher and the wider research community, and as long as specified by research funder, patent law, legislative and other regulatory requirements. The minimum retention period for research data is three (3) years after publication or public release of the work of the research. In many instances, researchers will resolve to retain research data for a longer period than the minimum requirement.

8. Where research is supported by a contract with or a grant to the University that includes specific provisions regarding ownership, retention of and access to data, the provisions of that agreement will take precedence.

9. If research data are to be deleted or destroyed, either because the agreed period of retention has expired or for legal or ethical reasons, this should be done so in accordance with all legal, ethical, research funder and collaborator requirements and with particular concern for confidentiality and security.

10. Research data of future historical interest, and all research data that represent records of the University, including data that substantiate research findings, will be offered and assessed for deposit and retention in an appropriate national or international data service or domain repository, or a University repository.

11. Exclusive rights to reuse or publish research data should not be handed over to commercial publishers or agents without retaining the rights to make the data openly available for re-use, unless this is a condition of funding.

Responsibilities

12. Researchers are responsible for:
   i. Managing research data in accordance with the principles and requirements in 5-11 above. Sound research data management plan during any research project or programme lies primarily with Principal Investigators (PIs);
   ii. Developing and documenting clear procedures for the collection, storage, use, re-use, access and retention or destruction of the research data associated with their research, under appropriate safeguards. This shall include, where appropriate, defining protocols and responsibilities in a joint or multi-institution collaborative

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3 Researchers are defined as members of the University including staff and research students, and those who are not members of the University but who are conducting research on University premises or using University facilities.

4 Plymouth University Research Ethics [www.plymouth.ac.uk/research/ethics](http://www.plymouth.ac.uk/research/ethics)
research project. This information should be incorporated, where appropriate, in a research data management plan;

iii. The inclusion of research data management plans or protocols that explicitly address data capture, management, integrity, confidentiality, retention, sharing and publication for all new research proposals;

iv. Planning for the ongoing custodianship (at the University or using third-party services) of their data after the completion of the research or, in the event of their departure or retirement from the University, reaching agreement with the head of department/faculty (or his/her nominee) as to where such data will be located and how this will be stored;

v. Ensuring that any requirements in relation to research data management placed on their research by funding bodies or regulatory agencies or under the terms of a research contract with the University are also met.

vi. Protecting the legitimate interests of the subjects of research data

13. The University is responsible for:

i. Providing access to mechanisms and services for the storage, backup, registration, deposit and retention of research data assets that allow researchers to meet their requirements under this policy and those of the funders of their research. This support includes both current and future access, during and after completion of research projects;

ii. Providing researchers with access to training, support and advice in research data management;

iii. Providing the necessary resources to those operational units charged with the provision of these services, facilities and training.

14. The University’s Research Information Management Systems (RIMS) Committee, which reports to the Plymouth University Research and Innovation Committee, is responsible for guiding the development and updating of this policy.

Relationship with existing policies

15. This policy will operate in conjunction with other University policies such as:

- Data Quality Policy
- Freedom of Information
- Information Security Policy
- Integrity Assurance Statement
- Intellectual Property Policy
- Research Ethics Policy

(Refer to http://www1.plymouth.ac.uk/research/ourresearch/Pages/Strategy-and-policy.aspx)