

Post-award data management guide

Introduction

This is a short guide to help PIs and project teams address a project's data management requirements in the post-award stage, when a project is being set up.

Detailed guidance on all aspects of data management can be found on the University's [research data management website](#).

If you have questions or require assistance, contact the Research Data Service at researchdata@reading.ac.uk / 0118 378 6161.

Create a data management plan

If you wrote a data management plan (DMP) as part of your funding application, this can provide a basis on which to create a practical instrument for the project. If a DMP was not required at application, now is the time to create one.

Use a template or checklist to structure your DMP. See our [guidance on writing a DMP](#).

The DMP should have a named owner, e.g. the PI or the project data manager. Ensure everyone in the project team with data management responsibilities is identified and has the opportunity to provide input into the DMP.

The DMP should be a living document, which is kept under review and updated as you progress through the project. You can make the DMP a standing item in project meetings, and schedule an update as part of your project's annual progress review.

Data management planning must take account of your funder's requirements, specifically those relating to the preservation and sharing of data in support of research findings (see [below](#)).

Funder-specific DMP requirements

NERC-funded PIs are required to contact the NERC data centre nominated on their Outline Data Management Plan within three to six months of the start date of the grant, in order to [develop a full DMP for the project](#).

Horizon Europe-funded projects (including ERC grants and Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowships) are required to submit a DMP deliverable within the first six months. For information, download our [Horizon Europe Open Science and Research Data Management Guidance](#).

Research contracts

If your research project will be carried out under a collaboration agreement or other research contract, check this contract for data-related provisions. Most contracts follow a standard model and will contain IP and Publication clauses.

It is usual for ownership of arising IP (including datasets created during the project) to be vested in the originating party or parties (datasets may be jointly created), but for all parties to enjoy access to and use of any data created by the project for the duration of the project.

Sharing of data in support of project findings may be subject to agreement by other parties in a collaboration. Check Publication clauses for requirements and factor these into planning for data sharing at the end of the project (see [below](#)).

Storage and computing resources

Set up your primary project storage, which should be in University-managed network or cloud infrastructure. We provide [information about storage options](#).

Ensure your storage solution enables efficient access and file sharing with members of the project team. Network fileshares can be accessed only by University account-holders. OneDrive and Teams can be used to share files securely with external project team members.

If your budget includes costs for high-volume data storage in the Research Data Storage Service or the use of the Research Cloud high-performance computing platform, visit the [Academic and Research Computing team website](#) for information and to request services.

Plan ahead for data preservation and sharing

The preservation and sharing of primary research data in support of research findings is required by [University policy](#), the policies of many [public and charitable funders](#) (including the Research Councils, the EC, the Royal Society and the Wellcome Trust), and is increasingly expected by the publishers of research.

Digital data that support research findings should be deposited in a suitable data repository on completion of the research, and no later than publication of the findings.

Your DMP should identify the repository or repositories in which relevant data will be deposited for long-term preservation and sharing at the end of the project, and you should include in your work plan time towards the end of the project to prepare data for archiving.

There are various subject and data type-specific repositories (including those required or recommended by funders, such as NERC data centres and the ESRC-funded UK Data Service), as well as the University's own [Research Data Archive](#) and general-purpose data sharing services. We provide guidance on [choosing a suitable data repository](#).

Exemptions from the data sharing requirement may apply where there are valid legal, ethical and commercial reasons.

In most cases data collected from research participants can be shared, providing an ethical basis for doing so has been established (see [below](#)).

Personally identifying and confidential information can be removed to anonymise or de-identify data and so make them safe for sharing. See our [guidance on anonymisation](#) (bottom of page).

Anonymised data collected from participants that may be at higher risk of re-identification and data containing personal or confidential information may be shared on a restricted basis using some repository services, including the UK Data Service ReShare repository and the University's Research Data Archive. See University guidance on [archiving restricted data](#).

It is acceptable to restrict access to data if they are commercially confidential or there is a commercial pathway for the research. If IP protection is sought, it should be possible to release data once protection has been confirmed.

Research ethics and data protection

Sharing of data collected from research participants can only take place if a valid ethical basis is established. This usually happens when ethical approval to conduct the research is sought and during participant recruitment.

If you will be collecting data from research participants, consult University guidance on [Data Protection and Research](#) and review the **Data Protection Checklist for Researchers**. Ensure you seek [ethical approval](#) in good time.

In order to comply with the University's and any other policies on data sharing, ensure that your consent procedures do not preclude public sharing of anonymised participant data, or sharing of higher-risk anonymised/de-identified or identifiable data under appropriate safeguards. Do not set a time limit on the retention of the research data collected from participants, or state that all data will be destroyed at the end of the project, or that data will not be shared outside of the project. Such undertakings are not required, and they will prevent you from making your research data accessible to others, even if they have been anonymised.

We provide [guidance on research ethics and data protection](#).

Book a consultation with the Research Data Service

If you need guidance on how best to undertake data management for your project, you can book a consultation with the University's Research Data Service. Contact researchdata@reading.ac.uk / 0118 378 6161.