
ULSTER UNIVERSITY

Research and Impact

Research Data Management Policy

(currently undergoing equality screen)

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Research Data Management Policy

Ulster University recognises that research data created, collected, generated or otherwise produced during the research process are a key asset that will continue to have value for the creator, institution, and research community as a whole. As an institution, Ulster University supports the principle of open access to publicly funded research outputs. Research data generated at the University is recognised as an institutional asset that when shared openly not only increases the visibility of Ulster University's research but also facilitates public engagement and creates new opportunities for knowledge exchange and collaboration.

1. Preamble

1.1 The University operates in an increasingly complex, data-oriented, environment which requires effective collection and management of, and open access to, research data:

- to comply with the requirements of funding bodies
- to underpin research excellence and academic integrity
- to increase impact
- to validate research results
- to enable re-use in the interests of follow-up studies and the creation of new knowledge.

1.2 To this end, the University has developed a Research Data Management (RDM) Policy which aims to:

- ensure that those involved in the research process are aware of their data-related responsibilities
- ensure that the University meets its obligations with regard to research data management as defined by research funders
- promote open access to research data produced at Ulster University in order to facilitate data discovery, citation, sharing and collaboration.

1.3 A robust RDM Policy will demonstrate and ensure:

- good research practice and procedures
- protection of intellectual property rights (IPR)
- appropriate recording, storage, security and maintenance of access to research data
- compliance with relevant legislation and regulations.

1.4 This policy:

- adheres to the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) Common Principles on Data Policy as well as to the specific requirements of the EPSRC Policy Framework on Research Data
- provides a corporate framework with defined roles and responsibilities for the collection, quality, storage, security, maintenance and dissemination of research data
- should be read in conjunction with all related policies, regulations and guidance documents (see Annex 1)

2 Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all members of the University conducting research or involved in the creation, collection or generation of research data. This shall include, but not be limited to, employed staff, research students, honorary staff, and visiting academics. This group will be collectively referred to as 'Researchers'.
- 2.2 The University's data management policy applies to research data in all its forms irrespective of whether or not the research is funded. This may include raw data captured from instruments, derived data, documents, spreadsheets & databases, lab notebooks, visualisations, models, software, images, measurements and numbers.
- 2.3 This policy applies to all approved research projects conducted at the University by Researchers regardless of whether they are externally funded or not.
- 2.4 This policy will be augmented in due course with detailed procedures and guidelines for staff in relation to the management of their research data.

3 Policy Requirements

- 3.1 Research data must be created, maintained and shared in accordance with contractual, legislative, regulatory, ethical and other relevant requirements at the local, national and international level. Externally-funded researchers must ensure compliance with their funder's policy on research data management and data publication. In cases where researchers may be affected by a number of policies, funder policy should take precedence.
- 3.2 All new research proposals [from date of adoption] must include research data management plans or protocols that explicitly address data capture, management, integrity, confidentiality, retention, sharing and publication.
- 3.3 The storage, management and sharing of research data carries a cost, particularly if there is a need for long-term curation and dissemination, requiring the provision of staff and system resources. Costs for data management and sharing activities should be written into research grant applications, unless explicitly forbidden by the funder.

- 3.4 Responsibility for research data management through a robust research data management plan during any research project or programme lies primarily with Principal Investigators (PIs) although all researchers have a personal responsibility to manage effectively the data they create.
- 3.5 Where a project involves external collaborators, the lead organisation is responsible for putting appropriate formal agreements in place covering the contributions and rights of the various organisations and individuals involved. All such agreements should be reviewed and approved by the University before the project begins. In cases where the project is led by an external partner there is still a requirement for data generated or shared by Ulster University to be managed by a named individual with the University, usually the Lead Researcher at Ulster.
- 3.6 Research Data must be held in a managed storage environment throughout the period of retention. Data must be retained in an appropriate format and storage facility, normally for a period of at least 10 years from the date of any publication which it is based upon. Where specific regulations with regard to data retention apply, eg: from funders, these regulations should prevail, particularly where the required retention period is longer than the University requires.
- 3.7 The University will provide an infrastructure and support service for the storage, backup, registration, deposit and retention of research data in support of current and future access and, where appropriate, guidelines and templates for the research data management process and plans. Appropriate safeguards will be put in place to ensure the legitimate interests of subjects of research data are protected.
- 3.8 Any research data which is retained or hosted outside the University (eg: in an external repository which is subject/journal or publisher specific) must be registered with the University.
- 3.9 Research data selected for archiving must be made openly available, where appropriate, with as few restrictions as possible. Data sharing represents a key component of good research practice that contributes to the University's strategic objective of increasing the visibility of Ulster's research. The University encourages researchers that have created or captured data to make it available for access and use in a timely manner, in conditions where it is feasible under contractual, legislative, regulatory, ethical or other obligations. Where necessary, appropriate safeguards should be put in place to protect participants and ensure that access conditions are met (e.g. Anonymisation, access passwords, inclusion of rights statement) in compliance with Ulster University's guidance on good research practice.
- 3.10 Research data produced and/or used during research must be cited in research outputs. Good research practice is built upon the recognition of all source material that contributes to the performance of research activities. Researchers must ensure that research data used during the research process is cited in conference papers, journal articles and other research outputs. Journal publications that report on publically funded research should include an access statement that indicates how research data may be accessed and any associated conditions.

A persistent identifier, such as a Digital Object Identifier (DOI) should be included when one is available

3.11 Research data deemed to be of future historical interest, including data that substantiate research findings, will be offered and assessed for deposit and retention in an appropriate external data service or a University repository.

3.12 Exclusive rights to host, 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.

4 Responsibilities

4.1 The **Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research & Impact)** is responsible for overseeing and ensuring the implementation of this policy.

4.2 The **University** is responsible, through the Department for Research & Impact, for providing an appropriate infrastructure for the long-term storage of data including, training, guidance and support for those responsible for the creation of research data.

4.3 **Associate Deans (Research & Impact)/Research Directors** are responsible for ensuring that researchers in their areas are aware of this policy.

4.4 The practical and operational responsibility for research data throughout the lifecycle of the project is the responsibility of the **Principal Investigators**. Their key responsibility is to ensure the Data Management Plan adheres to the research funders' obligations and compliance with this policy.

4.5 All **Researchers** must adhere to their obligations under this Policy either as Principal Investigator or by proactively supporting the Principal Investigator.

5. Contacts

Questions related to the Research Data Management Policy should be directed to pure-support@ulster.ac.uk.

Go to the Research Data Management website for more information and resources including support materials and training on using PURE for Research Data Management:

<https://www.ulster.ac.uk/internal/research/rdm/>

Related Policies/Procedures:

- Code of Practice for Professional Integrity in the Conduct of Research (*updated June 2013*)
- Procedures for the Investigation of Research Misconduct
- Intellectual Property Policy
- Policy for the governance of research involving human participants
- Policy on research using human tissue
- Data Protection Policy
- Data Handling Procedures/Guidance
- Archiving Procedure for Research Data

Useful Links:

- UK Research and Innovation Common Principles on Data Policy. Available at:
<https://www.ukri.org/funding/information-for-award-holders/data-policy/common-principles-on-data-policy/>
- EPSRC (2011) Policy Framework on Research Data. Available at:
<http://www.epsrc.ac.uk/about/standards/researchdata/Pages/policyframework.aspx>
- A summary of funder data management/sharing requirements can be found here:
<http://www.dcc.ac.uk/resources/data-management-plans/funders-requirements>.