# Research Data Management - Procedures

## 1. Purpose of procedures

1.1 This document outlines the roles and responsibilities for the storage and management of research data and materials in compliance with the Code, the Responsible Research Conduct – Governing Policy, and other relevant legislation.

## 2. Scope and application

2.1 These procedures apply to all staff, students, research trainees, adjunct and conjoint appointments, visiting academics, and research fellows who engage in research activity under the auspices of the University.

2.2 The University acknowledges that it may not always be possible to retain all primary materials; however, durable records derived from them (such as assays, test results, transcripts, and laboratory and field notes) must be retained and accessible.

2.3 Please refer to the 'Management of research data and primary materials' section of the Responsible Research Conduct – Governing Policy when consulting these procedures.

## 3. Definitions

Please refer to the University's Glossary of terms for policies and procedures. Terms and definitions identified below are specific to this policy and are critical to its effectiveness.

The Code: the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*.

Higher Degree by Research (HDR) students: students enrolled in a research master's or doctoral degree.

Primary materials: physical or virtual objects acquired or derived through a process of scholarly investigation from which research data may be derived. It includes but is not limited to: ore; biological materials; questionnaires or recordings.

Research: as defined in the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*.

Research data: any data collected during research that could be used to validate the research findings and/or facilitate the reproduction of the research. This includes data in all forms (e.g. electronic, lab notes, surveys, field notes, datasets, audio recordings, test results).

Researcher: all staff, students, research trainees, adjunct and conjoint appointments, visiting academics, and research fellows who engage in research activity under the auspices of the University.

## 4. Initiation and storage

4.1 All research data and related materials must be stored in facilities and environments endorsed by the University. Information about endorsed storage facilities is provided on the staff intranet and student portal. Physical storage options are to be provided by schools, research centres, institutes, and/or departments.

4.2 In cases where access to an endorsed facility is not available, for example, when in a remote location, researchers must transfer research data to an endorsed facility as soon as access is restored.

4.3 Researchers are required to complete a research data management plan (RDMP) at the commencement of each research project. HDR students should complete the RDMP in conjunction with their supervisor. RDMPs must be reviewed and updated throughout the lifecycle of the project to reflect changes to research data storage and management.

APPROVAL AUTHORITY

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation)

RESPONSIBLE EXECUTIVE MEMBER

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation)

DESIGNATED OFFICER

Director, Office of Research

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4.4 If the storage location of research data and materials and related records is changed during the research project, the RDMP must be updated to reflect the new location.

4.5 Completion of the RDMP facilitates access to endorsed storage facilities. In cases where research data cannot be stored in an endorsed facility, the RDMP must be completed and approved prior to the start of the research project.

4.6 RDMPs may be required for externally funded research projects; therefore, in addition to University requirements, researchers will need to consult the specific grant conditions to ensure they comply with research data storage requirements.

4.7 Researchers must familiarise themselves with any legislative and regulatory requirements, including, but not limited to, meeting requirements related to privacy, health data, vulnerable persons, export controls, and foreign interference.

## 5. Retention and disposal

5.1 The minimum retention period for research data and primary materials will be set according to the Queensland State Archives*University Sector Retention and Disposal Schedule*. Some research data may be permanently retained, for example, where the project is of high public interest or significance to the discipline.

5.2 Disposal of research data and materials, including orphaned data, must be managed in accordance with relevant legislative requirements and the minimum retention period set by Queensland State Archives in the *University Sector Retention and Disposal Schedule*.

5.3 As outlined in the Information and Records Management – Procedures, researchers must not dispose of research data and materials without prior approval from Information Management Services.

## 6. Access and reuse

6.1 Research data and materials giving rise to research outputs must be available for discussion with other researchers, subject to any confidentiality, contractual, privacy or patent protection requirements.

6.2 During the research activity, requests by other researchers to access research data and materials should be directed to the lead researcher who may refer the request to the relevant Head of School or Research Institute or Centre Director. Transition management plans for provision of research data to other researchers should be considered.

6.3 On completion or abandonment of any research project, all access requests shall be directed to the relevant Head of School or Research Institute or Centre Director who will:

(a) consult with the researcher and their supervisor;

(b) consider the ethical, privacy, contractual, confidentiality and patent protection issues;

(c) consider the potential value of the research data and materials and related records;

(d) for further research, particularly where the research would be difficult or impossible to repeat;

(e) ensure the independence of the research project; and

(f) optimise areas of synergy with other University research projects or research collaborators.

6.4 Access authorisations may be reviewed by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) on the request of any researcher.

6.5 Researchers given access to confidential research data and materials must maintain that confidentiality.

6.6 Where a request for research data access is refused, the reasons for not sharing should be transparent and justifiable.

6.7 Researchers are encouraged to share and reuse research data where possible subject to any confidentiality, contractual, privacy or patent protection requirements. Sharing and reuse must be in accordance with the Intellectual Property – Governing Policy and Copyright – Governing Policy.

## 7. Ownership and transfer

7.1 In cases where research is conducted using research data or materials that are owned by another party, neither the institution nor the researcher can assert ownership. In such cases, the source of the data or materials and the access arrangements should be documented by the researcher ensuring the data can be accessed to enable justification and verification of the research outcomes.

7.2 Before transferring any research data or materials to or from the University (either domestic or international), a material transfer agreement (MTA) or a collaboration agreement defining the rights and obligations of both parties in respect of the research data or materials must be developed.

7.3 Prior to importing or exporting any material, researchers must familiarise themselves and ensure compliance with all customs, export trade controls, Australian Quarantine Inspection Service (AQIS) rules, regulations or laws.

7.4 If a researcher transfers from the University to another institution, or from another institution to the University, a written agreement must be developed between both institutions and the researcher in respect of ownership, custodianship, transfer of responsibilities and any desirable ongoing access to the research data and materials by the University.

## 8. Breaches of responsible data management

8.1 Breaches of responsible data management include, but are not limited, to:

(a) falsification or fabrication of research data or primary materials;

(b) failure to report, in a timely manner, a data breach or inappropriate access to or use of data;

(c) failure to retain clear, accurate, secure and complete records of all research including research data and primary materials;

(d) failure to comply with approvals that relate to the retention, sharing or disposal for research data or primary materials; and

(e) selective retention of data so as to hinder the verifiability of a research output or access request.

## 9. Roles and responsibilities

9.1 Researchers are required to:

9.1.1 Create and maintain full and accurate records of the research methods and data sources, such as notes, diary entries, questionnaires, laboratory books, etc., and ensure the research data are stored securely and appropriately in accordance with section 4 of these procedures.

9.1.2 Manage research data and materials and related records according to protocols approved by the human research or animal ethics committees, if applicable, and in accordance with relevant laboratory and legislative requirements.

9.1.3 Ensure that adequate backup, archival and monitoring strategies are in place to prevent the loss of research data and materials, and to minimise delays in the completion of the research.

9.1.4 Report any inappropriate use of, access to, or loss of research data in accordance with the Information Management Framework - Governing Policy and the Data Breach Response Plan (link to MyUniSC staff intranet).

9.1.5 Manage research data and primary materials in accordance with these procedures and any other relevant legislation and University policy (e.g., the Code, the Responsible Research Conduct – Governing Policy, the Information and Records Management – Procedures) and document accordingly in an RDMP.

9.1.6 Ensure a written agreement is developed prior to the beginning of the project covering ownership of research data and materials for projects operating across institutions.

9.1.7 Store electronic research data with appropriate metadata describing how, when and where it was generated, state instrument settings and software used.

9.1.8 Where there is ambiguity around the storage of research data, researchers should consult the USC Library to determine the appropriate storage location.

9.1.9 In addition to an RDMP, large data sets should have risk assessments and transition or disengagement plans, with the latter necessary where the research data are created from data owned by a third party. Large data sets may need risk assessments to include risks associated with long term storage.

9.1.10 Ensure physical research data and primary materials are stored securely at the University. The location must be documented in accordance with section 4 of these procedures.

9.2 HDR supervisors are required to:

9.2.1 In consultation with the student, prepare an RDMP before the research commences and update throughout the lifecycle of the project, as per section 4 of these procedures.

9.2.2 Share responsibility for the storage and management of research data and materials for the student's research project.

9.2.3 Familiarise themselves with the legislative and regulatory requirements and funding body or collaboration conditions relating to the research project.

9.3 In addition to these roles and responsibilities, the University has adopted the following data roles for research data governance.

| ROLE | RESPONSIBILITIES | APPOINTED BY |
|---|---|---|
| Research Data Steward | Responsible for the management, authority, and accountability for research data. This role is usually the Chief Investigator or Principal Investigator for the research project. Responsibilities include ensuring:<br>• Research data value is fully realised.<br>• Research data are shared to the maximum extent possible given security requirements, compliance obligations, patent applications, contractual requirements.<br>• Research data and metadata quality is in line with research needs.<br>• Clear processes for the handling of the research data are established. | Head of School |
| Research Data Creator | This role is usually the researchers who primarily handle the research data as part of a research project. Responsibilities include ensuring research data are collected and managed in accordance with these procedures. | Research Data Steward |
| Research Data User | Users of research data, whether owned by the University or a third party, must ensure research data are appropriately managed in accordance with these procedures. | |
| Research Data Custodian (Head of School) | This role provides visible support and enables adherence to these procedures including:<br>• Ensuring researchers are aware of, and are supported to follow, research data management practices.<br>• Ensuring all research data within their School are stored in a University endorsed storage facility.<br>• Ensuring all research data within their School are retained and disposed in accordance with these procedures.<br>• Supporting the development of best practices for the handling of research data. | |

END

## RELATED DOCUMENTS

• Authorship and Dissemination of Research Findings - Procedures

• Disposal of Digitised Records - Procedures
• Information and Records Management - Procedures
• Information Management - Governing Policy
• Managing and Investigating Breaches of Responsible Research Conduct - Procedures
• Responsible Research Conduct - Governing Policy

## LINKED DOCUMENTS

• Responsible Research Conduct - Governing Policy

## SUPERSEDED DOCUMENTS

• Research Data and Materials - Procedures

## RELATED LEGISLATION / STANDARDS

• Right to Information Act 2009 (Qld)
• Public Records Act 2002 (Qld)
• Queensland Information Standards
• Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)
• Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2018)
• Information Privacy Act 2009 (Qld)