

Manchester Metropolitan University Research Data Management Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Manchester Metropolitan University firmly believes that good research data management is the foundation of good research, since it allows for the verification of findings and supports digital preservation.
- 1.2 Publicly funded research data are a public good, produced in the public interest, which should be made openly available with as few restrictions as possible in a timely and responsible manner.¹
- 1.3 The benefits of opening up research data for scrutiny and reuse are potentially very significant; including economic growth, increased resource efficiency, securing public support for research funding and increasing public trust in research. However, openness requires more
- 1.4 than disclosure of data. All those engaged with research have a responsibility to ensure that the data they gather and generate is properly managed, accessible, intelligible, and usable by others unless there are legitimate reasons to the contrary².
- 1.5 The University supports FAIR Principles for data sharing making data findable, accessible, interoperable, and reusable. <https://www.go-fair.org/fair-principles/>

2. Purpose

- 2.1 Manchester Metropolitan University has a clear strategy to develop the research environment and ensure research excellence. This policy demonstrates the University's commitment to adhering to and promoting research data management best practice throughout the research lifecycle and is in accordance with the Concordat on Open Research Data and its principles. This policy outlines the responsibilities of both the University and its researchers in relation to research data management and sets out the support and guidance that is available.

3. Scope

- 3.1 This policy applies to any individual engaging in research as part of their employment or studies at the University, involving in the creation, collection, generation, processing or destruction of research data, regardless of whether or not the research is funded.

¹ UKRI, Guidance on best practice in the management of research data (July 2015; rev. July 2018): <https://www.ukri.org/publications/guidance-on-best-practice-in-the-management-of-research-data/>

² UKRI, Concordat on Open Research Data (July 2016): <https://www.ukri.org/what-we-do/good-research-resource-hub/open-research/>

- 3.2** Researcher leaders, supervisors and mentors should ensure that their collaborators, colleagues and students are aware of the relevant research data management requirements and have a clear understanding of appropriate practice.

4. Definitions

4.1 Researcher

A Researcher references any individual engaging in research as part of their employment or studies at the University.

4.2 Research Data

UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) defines research data as 'the evidence that underpins the answer to the research question, and can be used to validate findings regardless of its form (e.g. print, digital or physical).

These might be quantitative information or qualitative statements collected by researchers in the course of their work by experimentation, observation, modelling, interview or other methods, or information derived from existing evidence. Data may be raw or primary (e.g. direct from measurement or collection) or derived from primary data for subsequent analysis or interpretation (e.g. cleaned up or as an extract from a larger data set), or derived from existing sources where the rights may be held by others.

Data may be defined as 'relational' or 'functional' components of research, thus signalling that their identification lies in whether and how researchers use them as evidence for claims.

They may include, for example, statistics, collections of digital images, sound recordings, transcripts of interviews, survey data and fieldwork observations with appropriate annotations, an interpretation, an artwork, archives, found objects, published texts or a manuscript.³

Manchester Metropolitan University recognises three main states for research data:

- **Active** research data (e.g. live digital project data in the research data storage platform)
- **Archived** research data (e.g. 'finished' / 'end of project' data prepared for long-term preservation. This may contain sensitive personal information. This is archived for legal, regulatory or contractual purposes and is not publicly accessible)
- **Reusable** research data (e.g. a dataset that has been made findable, sharable and available for reuse through the most appropriate repository / data archive. This is subject to ethical, legal

³ UKRI, Concordat on Open Research Data (July 2016): <https://www.ukri.org/about-us/policies-standards-and-data/good-research-resource-hub/open-research/>

and contractual requirements)

For the purposes of this policy 'research data' refers to active, archived or reusable data, that is created, collected, generated, processed or destroyed by any researcher at the University.

4.3 Data Management Plans (DMPs)

A Data Management Plan (DMP) is a formal statement describing how data will be managed and documented throughout a research project. A DMP should address the capture, handling, integrity, confidentiality, preservation, sharing, publication and destruction of the research data. DMPs are living documents and therefore should be periodically reviewed and updated to ensure their effectiveness. Manchester Metropolitan University expects all research data to have an associated and proportionate DMP.

4.4 Metadata

Metadata are defined as information about data. In the context of research data management this concerns any descriptive or contextual information related to research data that contributes towards its discoverability, long-term preservation, and reuse. Metadata can range from simple explanatory text documents to extensive structured metadata schemas.

Roles and Responsibilities

4.5 Researcher's Responsibilities

- 4.5.1** The Principal Investigator (PI) is responsible for ensuring ethical approval is obtained for all research projects before any data collection takes place.
- 4.5.2** The PI has overall responsibility for research data management before, during and after any project or programme. Research data management duties may be shared or delegated but should be clearly outlined in a DMP.
- 4.5.3** All researchers are responsible for familiarising themselves with the research project DMP and complying with all legal⁴, contractual, ethical or regulatory requirements that are associated with the data in their research project.
- 4.5.4** All researchers are responsible for ensuring their project data are processed, transferred and stored in a secure manner that preserves its integrity. Active data must be securely stored on the University's research data storage platform, or an appropriate alternative, in accordance with the specified contractual requirements.

⁴ Including the UK General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018.

- 4.5.5** Where data ownership may be ambiguous (e.g. in collaborative projects with external organisations), the PI will be responsible for clarifying responsibilities.
- 4.5.6** The PI is responsible for appraising and preparing active data for archiving and reuse. Data that is shared should align with FAIR principles, use a suitable format to allow verification of published research findings, and be of long-term academic value.
- 4.5.7** The PI is responsible for ensuring the research data are suitably archived and shared in the University's research repository (or appropriate alternative), subject to specific legal, contractual, ethical or regulatory requirements.
- 4.5.8** The PI is responsible for destroying data that cannot be retained due to legal requirements or that is not of long-term value as specified in the DMP.

4.6 The University's Responsibilities

- 4.6.1** The University is responsible for providing appropriate infrastructure for secure data storage through a centralised storage solution in order to ensure the safety, integrity and accessibility of live research data.
- 4.6.2** The University provides an archive and research repository for the archiving, sharing, and long-term preservation of research data.
- 4.6.3** The University is responsible for the provision of training, support and advice on research data management.

5. Sharing and Discoverability

- 5.1** Data sharing should be considered at the beginning of the project and provision outlined in the DMP.
- 5.2** Appropriate mechanisms must be in place before sharing sensitive and confidential research data. This includes, but is not limited to, anonymising and pseudonymising data, obtaining correct permissions, and carefully controlling access to data. These issues should be explicitly addressed in a DMP.
- 5.3** Research data and associated metadata which substantiate published research findings should be made openly available, where possible, no later than the date of first online publication or the end of the research project, whichever is sooner.
- 5.4** Research data deposited in the University's research repository will be securely archived in line with requirements specified in the University's Retention and Disposal schedule⁵, unless specific legal, contractual, ethical or regulatory requirements apply.

⁵ <https://www.mmu.ac.uk/records-management/>

- 5.5** If the data are stored elsewhere, such as in a national or discipline-specific repository, a metadata record must be created in the University's research repository to facilitate discovery and reuse.
- 5.6** Research data should be assigned an appropriate copyright licence that encourages the sharing and reuse of the accessible dataset.
- 5.7** A Data Access Statement or Data Availability Statement (DAS) should accompany publications outlining the availability of the data.

6. Rights and Restrictions

- 6.1** It is not always possible or appropriate to make research data open, but any restrictions to access must be justified. Such as where the costs of preserving or supplying the data are disproportionate.
- 6.2** Access to research data via the University's research repository can be restricted where necessary to comply with contractual, ethical, legislative or regulatory requirements.
- 6.3** The legitimate interests of research subjects must be protected. When gaining informed consent, researchers should include provision for data sharing and be fully transparent in how the data are to be used. Any personal data must be anonymised prior to publication and access to sensitive or confidential information must be carefully controlled.
- 6.4** All research data at the University are subject to the University's Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Policy.
- 6.5** Researchers involved in the creation of original research data retain the right to exclusive first use for an appropriate and well-defined period. Any period of exclusive use should be set out in the DMP and should be balanced against the public interest in release.

7. Associated Relevant Documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with the University's other policies and guidelines⁶

8. Version Number and Approval Dates

Version	2.0
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⁶ <https://www.mmu.ac.uk/policy/>