

# Guidelines for the Management of Research Data and Primary Materials

## 1. The Importance of Research data and Primary Materials

1.1 Research data and primary materials are valuable products of research activity and are important in justifying research outcomes, providing transparency, stimulating open enquiry, supporting research outputs and potentially serving as important material for further research activity.

1.2 Subject to agreements entered into by the University with third parties, including funding bodies and other institutions, primary materials (materials) and research data (data) created or collected by the researchers undertaking the research are considered as Intellectual Property, and ownership is governed by the current University of Canberra Intellectual Property Policy.

## 2. Storage

2.1. The University is responsible for the provision of appropriate infrastructure for the storage of data and materials. A variety of options are available and requests for storage can be made through the application process detailed on the eResearch [webpage](#).

2.2 Researchers must determine appropriate storage of data and materials upon consideration of the following factors: location, amount of data captured, access requirements, security, confidentiality of substance, cultural requirements. In all instances, conditions of contractual obligations, funding bodies, legislative requirements and ethics approval must also be taken into account.

2.3 Researchers must ensure storage arrangements of data and materials protect against loss, theft, damage or misuse.

2.4 Researchers must ensure security is commensurate to the confidentiality and sensitivity of the material and data. In addition, security and confidentiality must be assured in a way that copes with multiple researchers and the departure of individuals.

2.5 Special care must be given to the storage of data and materials in the context of ethical, environmentally sensitive, privacy, confidentiality, national security and cultural requirements to ensure the protection of sensitive and personal information. This includes, in particular, data and materials associated with projects that are governed by human research ethics and defence trade control protocols.

2.6 Data must be easily identifiable and accessible.

### 3. Retention

3.1 Researchers must decide which data and materials should be retained, adhering to cases where such determinations are made by law, funding bodies, publishers, or by the conventions of particular disciplines.

3.2 Researchers must determine retention periods for data and materials, ensuring they conform to any conditions specified in contractual agreements, funding body guidelines, ethics approvals and legislative requirements. In addition, they will ensure adherence with conventions of disciplines as appropriate.

At a minimum, researchers must conform to the following periods:

- short term projects that are for assessment purposes only, such as projects completed by students: minimum of 12 months from the completion of the project;
- published research not involving clinical interventions: five years;
- data and material from clinical trials: minimum of 15 years;
- data and material relating to gene therapy: permanently;
- data that has significant community or heritage value: permanently.

3.3 While it may not be practical to keep all material, researchers will ensure durable records from them are retained and accessible.

3.4 In the event that results from research are challenged, researchers must retain all relevant data and materials until the matter is resolved. Research records that may be relevant to allegations of breaches of the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research* must not be destroyed.

### 4. Data Sharing and Collaborative Arrangements

4.1 Unless it is prevented by ethical, privacy, or confidentiality matters, consideration must be given to the availability of data for use by other researchers for further research as well as availability via open access or mediated access.

4.2 In instances of collaborative projects that span multiple institutions and are covered by funding agreements, Research Services will, as needed, prepare an agreement that details ownership of data and materials and outlines responsibilities with regard to storage, retention and disposal of data and materials.

4.3 The agreement will take into account any relevant conditions specified in applicable funding body requirements or legislative requirements, including those pertaining to copyright, licensing and confidentiality

4.4 All researchers given access to data or materials must comply with stipulated requirements in the agreement

### 5. Third Party Arrangements

5.1 Where data has been obtained from limited access databases or owned by a third party it may not be possible to store the data at a location at the University. In such instances, researchers will, within their relevant

faculties/institutes, record a description of the location of the data or information regarding the database from which it was extracted.

5.2 Where researchers use third-party data that is in the public domain they must ensure they seek agreements to reproduce any databases that are protected by copyright.

## **6. Disposal**

6.1 The University will provide appropriate facilities for the disposal of data. This includes confidential bins for secure disposal of paper-based records and safety bins for the disposal of hazardous materials including chemical, biological and radioactive materials.

6.2 When the specified period of retention has ended, researchers must review the data and materials that are scheduled to be destroyed, ensuring they are not required to be permanently retained, no longer required for ongoing research projects, and not subject to any challenges to research results or allegations of research misconduct.

6.3 Disposal of data and materials must be agreed to by all parties that are subject to any collaborative agreement.

6.4 Following the above, researchers must arrange for the safe and secure disposal of the data and materials.

6.5 Confidential data must be destroyed by secure means to protect individuals' privacy rights. For secure disposal of paper-based records, documents must be placed in the University's confidential bins to ensure shredding/disintegration. For secure disposal of electronic records, documents must be overwritten before they are deleted.

6.6 Hazardous materials including chemical, biological and radioactive materials must be disposed of in strict compliance with legislative regulations and University health and safety requirements.

## **7. Researcher Exit**

6.1 When a researcher transfers to another institution, agreement on the terms of the transfer of the research project as well as ownership, transfer, access to and management of associated data and materials must be negotiated between the University, new institution and any other applicable parties.