Research Data Management:

A guide for academics seeking funding from Research Councils UK
Background

To reflect its commitment to transparency and coherency across the research base, Research Councils UK has produced a set of common principles on data policy to provide an overarching framework for individual Research Councils.

This being the case, when applying for funding from any of the Research Councils, issues related to the storage and accessibility of the research data you will produce must be fully considered. This is particularly important when applying to the EPSRC which has introduced a set of clear expectations to be fulfilled by researchers and their institutions.

For researchers applying to EPSRC, this means that any project producing research outputs after 1\textsuperscript{st} May 2015 will be required to comply with the expectations set and to explain how they considered issues related to data production, storage, preservation and accessibility.

Link to...

RCUK Common Principles on Data Policy

EPSRC expectations

Why it is good practice to share research data

In the case of Research Council funded projects, it is a condition of the funding that you will make your data available for sharing, however, it is generally good practice for all your research projects to store your data in a format and location which will enable this.

Research data generated may be of value beyond the reasons for which they were originally produced. This is particularly true if data is made open to sharing beyond the original research team. Making your data available so that others can use and cite it will help extend the usefulness of your research, allowing it to be tested, replicated and validated and maybe resulting in the generation of new research in areas not included in the original project design.

When it is not appropriate to share research data

There may be instances when it would not be appropriate to share research data and these need to be considered when developing a research funding application. If the sharing of data is likely to breach a contract with a partner organisation, it should be avoided.

Every effort should be taken to ensure data concerning human participants in a research project is held securely and that the sharing of data will not compromise the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants. Such issues should be considered at the project design stage and Cardiff Met
researchers should always conform to the policies and procedures laid down by the University Ethics Committee. Ethics approval must be obtained before any research projects involving human participants can go ahead.

Even when conducting a research project which is funded by an organisation which requires the open sharing of data, researchers are permitted to restrict access to data where this is not in the best interests of the partners or participants. If you think your project may fall into one of these categories, seek advice from Research & Enterprise Services.

In instances where access to data will be restricted, the institution has a responsibility to give the reasons why the data is not openly available and to summarise the conditions which must be satisfied in order for access to be granted. This will normally be dealt with as part of the Data Management Plan which you will complete alongside your application to the research council.

Link to...
Cardiff Met Ethics Procedures

Compiling a Data Management Plan (DMP)

When you complete a funding application to a Research Council, you will also complete a Data Management Plan (DMP) which will set out how you will collect and store your data and make it available for sharing. Research & Enterprise Services will discuss this with you as a part of the application process. Cardiff Met uses the templates provided in the online tool produced by the Digital Curation Centre (DCC) for this purpose. By using the DCC facility, your DMP will be tailored to the requirements of the particular Research Council you are applying to but will contain the common elements that researchers are typically expected to cover. These are:

- Administrative Data
  Information which will help identify and contextualise your plan
- Data Collection
  Information about what data you will collect and how you will collect it
- Documentation and Metadata
  Information required to enable your data to be read and interpreted in the future
- Ethics and Legal Compliance
  Consideration of any ethical or legal issues which may place restrictions on data sharing
- Storage and Backup
  Information on where the date will be stored and implications in terms of backup, access and security

Link to...
Digital Curation Centre
DMP Online
What you should do when you publish

It is vitally important that you ensure that any publication you produce is deposited in the Institutional Repository, DSpace. The Cardiff Met Policy on Open Access publishing of research “requires its researchers to endeavour to make the research outputs they produce freely available whilst fully complying with the publishing requirements of their research funders.” In order to comply with this policy, upon acceptance of a journal article or conference proceeding, you must deposit bibliographic information in DSpace and provide a copy of the final peer reviewed version of the output to the library. Whilst this might sound onerous, you will only need to input minimal data into DSpace, library staff will then take over and deal with issues relating to matters such as copyright and embargo periods. For more information on using DSpace, contact the Library at dspace@cardiffmet.ac.uk.

For outputs published as a result of Research Council funding, you should include on the output a short statement describing how any supporting research data may be accessed. Currently, requests to view data will be received via Research & Enterprise Services and the statement should therefore read as follows,

“The data accompanying this research can be obtained on request by contacting researchadmin@cardiffmet.ac.uk. Please note, access to data which cannot be shared due to legal or ethical reasons, or which is subject to an embargo period, will be restricted. Requesters will be made fully aware of any such restrictions upon receipt of the request.”

This statement will also be added to the DSpace record by the Library but it is important to ensure that it appears on the actual article for instances where the article is not accessed via DSpace.

The Library will also add a copy of your completed Data Management Plan to the output record in DSpace as this will include information regarding the data that has been produced.

Link to...

Policy on Open Access publishing of research

DSpace

Library pages for researchers

Data retention periods

Research Councils UK require that data produced as a result of projects funded by them is securely preserved for a minimum of 10 years from the date that the researcher’s privileged access period expires or from the last date on which access to the data was requested by a third party, whichever occurs later. In simple terms, this means that data should be preserved for at least ten
years after it is created. In cases where the data has been accessed by an external party since its creation, it should be preserved for at least ten years after the last request of this kind was received.

When undertaking an RCUK funded project, you should consider what type of data will be produced and the most effective ways of storing your data in order to ensure its integrity and its accessibility. You should discuss these matters with your Associate Dean for Research and ensure that data is not retained solely by yourself.

Cardiff Met has invested heavily in SharePoint, this is the preferred system for storing data and should be your first choice when considering how you will store your data. There are also a number of external data storage options which can be used. These are often subject specific and have been developed to provide the subject community with a public repository for the storage of pertinent data. You should consider such options when formulating your DMP and ensure that full details of where the data will be stored are included.

Link to...
Cardiff Met Policy on the Storage of Research Data

What you should do if you receive a request to view your data

Every effort has been made to direct external requests to view research data towards Research & Enterprise Services in the first instance. As previously mentioned, all outputs produced as a result of RCUK funding will include a statement giving contact details for RES and this statement will also be included on the DSpace record of the output. In addition, a webpage is being developed which gives details of the RCUK funded projects which the university is engaged with and the types of data which will be generated by them. This page also gives RES contact details.

There may however be instances when a request for data is made direct to you as the project contact. If you should receive such a request, you should inform RES as soon as you can because, as far as practically possible, the institution is obliged to log such requests.

Requests to view data may also be linked to the Freedom of Information Act and it would therefore be beneficial to familiarise yourself with the requirement associated with requests of this kind. Cardiff Met’s website includes extensive information on this and the University’s Freedom of Information Officer is also available to answer any specific queries.

Link to...
Freedom of Information web resource
How to comply with requirements when your data is not in a digital format

Research data of any kind generated by an RCUK funded project is subject to the requirements laid down in the Common Principles on Data Policy. This includes data which is not generated in a digital format and is therefore unlikely to be stored digitally.

Whilst this is the case, researchers and institutions are not obliged to digitise this type of data in order to comply. Instead, it is required that such data is stored in a manner which facilitates being shared in the event of a request for access to the data being received.

You should therefore consider where and how this type of data will be stored and discuss options with your Associate Dean for Research and Research & Enterprise Services when developing your DMP. Most importantly, the data must be accessible and information on how the data can be accessed widely available.

Where to learn more

MANTRA - a free, online non–assessed course developed by the University of Edinburgh with guidelines to help you understand and reflect on how to manage the digital data you collect as part of your research.

DCC – The Digital Curation Centre’s website is a great source of information