EPSRC (& RCUK) Policy on Research Data Management

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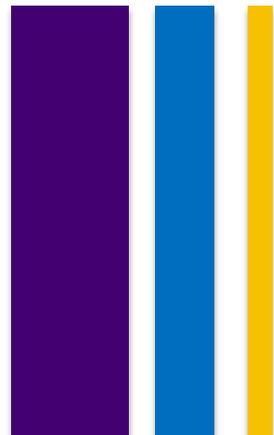
▌▌ Nature **530**, 27–29 (04 February 2016)
     (doi:10.1038/530027a)

"No standard mechanism exists to request raw data.

When we were able to access data online, we could quickly confirm suspected errors.

In at least two cases, we requested data from the authors but received summaries of calculations instead.

Sometimes we received no data at all, at which point it was not clear whether journal staff should step in.

One journal did retract a paper when its authors refused to show their data or explain discrepancies that we had identified and alerted the journal to in a letter."

Underpinning Philosophy

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- **Data is a critical output of the research process which should be shared:**

  - ❖ to reinforce the integrity, transparency and robustness of the research record

  - ❖ to increase its potential value through aggregation

  - ❖ to enable new research questions to be addressed

- **From a funder's perspective:**

  - ➢ **looking after and sharing research data is part of the research process AND a legitimate use of research budgets**

  - ➢ **Data underpinning published research findings should be made available by default**

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▌▌ Research Data…

- o is a *Public Good* – to be made available responsibly

- o has *long-term value* – the need for preservation

- o should be *Discoverable* and *Citeable*

- o is subject to *legitimate constraints* – it cannot all be shared equally

▌▌ Researchers should have a period of *privileged access* to 'their' data

▌▌ *Data users should cite their sources* – and abide by terms of access!

EPSRC Policy expression
- the '9 Expectations'

▌▌ Each focuses on the *Institutional* **responsibility**
(– but of course Researchers are responsible too!)

▌▌ **NOT required to keep all and every bit of data**

▌▌ **Researchers have flexibility to decide what (and what not) to keep**
- subject to the default on data underpinning published research
= avoid saying 'just take my word for it'

▌▌ **BUT… …what is kept should be kept properly**

▌▌ quality storage and curation
▌▌ well documented – 'metadata'
▌▌ 10 yr term – 'since last use'
▌▌ access/downloads logged (helps assess value to others)
▌▌ managed access controls - if necessary.

▌▌ Everything in the **context** of existing legislation – FOI, DPA, EIR…

How EPSRC Policy affects…
Research Organisations

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▎▎Research Organisations have **primary responsibility** for *ensuring that researchers manage their data effectively*.

▎▎They need establish infrastructure and processes to ensure that:

- ✓ *retained* EPSRC-funded research data is preserved for a minimum of 10-years

- ✓ effective data curation is provided throughout the full data lifecycle,

- ✓ they know what publicly-funded research data they hold, make it discoverable, and record 3rd party requests to access such data;

- ✓ they notify and justify access restrictions, e.g. 'commercially confidential'

- ✓ their researchers appreciate/make use of relevant law e.g. FOI

- ✓ their researchers understand the requirement to comply with research data policies

- ✓ that adequate resources (e.g. from QR/Research Grants) are allocated to research data management

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▌▌ **They have a responsibility** to understand - and adhere to - our principles and expectations for research data management.

▌▌ **They need to:**

- ✓ make their EPSRC-funded research data freely and openly available with as few restrictions as possible

- ✓ comply with the data management policies of their Research Organisation

- ✓ have project specific data management plans in place

- ✓ where relevant, have appropriate agreements in place with non-academic collaborators,

- ✓ ensure their published research describes how to access the supporting data (also a requirement of the RCUK Policy on Open Access)

- ✓ be aware of the relevant legislation and the available exemptions which may be used, should the need arise, to justify the withholding of research data

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▌▌ Non-Academic Partners in research collaborations need to be aware of:

- ✓ the general principle that publicly-funded research data will be expected to be made freely and openly available with as few restrictions as possible

- ✓ the relevant legal requirements such as the Freedom of Information Acts

- ✓ the need to ensure that issues of commercial confidentiality and data ownership are adequately addressed in the data management plans and collaboration agreements - *before* the start of a collaborative research project.

▌▌ **Data sharing agreements *are likely to be* appropriate**

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Produced some bizzare comments…

- "The nature of my work is such that it generates no data that doesn't end up in my papers, so I'm unlikely to know about these policies."

- "This is irrelevant to me. I deal with no sensitive data."

- "As I do not work with empirical data I am not affected by RDM."

- "I am on the point of retiring so taking less interest in these things"

- "RDM sounds like a gigantic waste of time and I intend to spend as little time on it as possible"

All costs associated with research data management are eligible expenditure of research grant funds, but…

- *no expenditure can be 'double funded'* (a institutional service that is centrally supported by the indirect costs paid on all research grants cannot then also be included as a direct cost on a grant)

- *all* directly incurred expenditure of a grant *must* be incurred before the end date of the grant.

Thank You

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