



Aston Research Data Management Policy

May 2020

This document sets out the policy for research data
management for Aston University staff & students

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Reference Number	Version Letter	Executive Sponsor	Officer Responsible for Policy/ Procedures	Consultation Process	Date of Approval and Committee and/or Executive Officer	Effective Date
Version 1.4		Paul Maropoulos	Heather Whitehouse	Research Data Management Steering Group (sub group of Research Committee)	Research Committee	December 2016
				Research Committee		
1.5		Simon Green	James Wolffsohn	Library Services Research Integrity Office Graduate Management School	Research Committee (tbc)	

Aston University Research Data Management Policy

1. INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE OF THE POLICY

The maintenance of accurate and retrievable data arising from research projects is an essential component of good practice in the conduct of research and a key component of research integrity. While computers and memory sticks can be secured with encryption, regular backup and access to the latest version cannot be ensured. When data was recorded and altered needs to be transparent along with the ability to retrieve any data mistakenly deleted.

Opening up research data for scrutiny, to validate and replicate research or for re-use in further, possibly unrelated, research is a key component of Open Research.

The principles of Open Research Data are set out in the [Concordat on Open Research Data](#) of which UKRI (HEFCE and RCUK at the time), UUK and Wellcome Trust are all signatories. The principle that research data, arising from publicly funded research should be treated as a public good, is reflected in the policies and conditions of major public research funders.

Open Research Data can only be delivered when the planning and management of research data takes account of that eventual outcome in earlier stages of the research lifecycle.

1.1. Purpose of the Policy

This policy covers Aston's approach to Research Data management (including Open Data), as a critical output of the research process.

1.2. What is covered by the Policy

This policy covers the processes, arrangements and limitations for storing research data and (where appropriate) for making research data open either for re-use or in support of research publications to enable the validation of that research.

For the purposes of this policy, Research Data are defined as factual records, which may take the form of numbers, symbols, text, images or sounds, used as primary sources for research, and that are commonly accepted in the research community as necessary to analyse and validate research findings. Data may comprise primary raw data or secondary analysed data.

Making data open is essential where there is a funder requirement for Open Research Data and its application may be extended to research data from non-funded research where there are no legal, commercial sensitivity or ethical barriers.

1.3. Who is Covered by the Policy

This policy applies to all researchers and research students at Aston University with regards to the management of data arising from their research, and to the roles of the various individuals or services that will support the management of research data during its lifecycle.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

2.1. General data management

2.1.1. The principal investigator / supervisor should set up a folder on Box for each project where all data is to be stored ideally in real time. This cloud storage can allow access to data lost in the past 30 days. Secondary back-ups can be made on other devices. There is space on Box for all research data including images/videos

2.1.2. Consent forms should be scanned, stored in a separately pass-worded area of Box and the originals destroyed.

- 2.1.3. Data storage should follow the duration approved as part of the ethics and governance review.
- 2.1.4. Each PhD meeting record should include a commitment as to these regulations being followed.

2.2. What Research Data should or should not be made Open

- 2.2.1. Research data arising from research where the funder has a requirement for Open Research Data should be made Open in line with that funder's requirements and with this policy.
- 2.2.2. Where research data underpins a research publication, then sufficient data to enable validation or replication of that research should be made Open subject to legal, commercial sensitivity and ethical constraints.
- 2.2.3. Research datasets with the potential for reuse in future research should be made Open subject to any legal, commercial sensitivity or ethical constraints.
- 2.2.4. Research data should NOT be made Open if:
 - i. it relates to research which is likely to be commercialised (i.e. a patent),
 - ii. it contains confidential or personal data,
 - iii. doing so would be an infringement of a legal agreement (e.g. with a funder or collaborator),
 - iv. or where there is a need to manage a security risk.

2.3. Where and how should Research Data be made Open

- 2.3.1. Data in datasets should be fully anonymised before being made Open. Note that fully anonymised data must no longer have any means of linking it back to the individual and is no longer classified as personal data;
- 2.3.2. Datasets should be identifiable (ie the sets, not any personal data), retrievable, and available when needed;
- 2.3.3. Datasets should be assigned a persistent DOI which has been generated for that dataset;
- 2.3.4. Publications for which there is an underpinning dataset should have a Data Access Statement added prior to article submission. This should include the persistent Digital Object Identifier (DOI) generated for the relevant dataset. Note that this is an essential requirement of some funders;
- 2.3.5. Data should be stored in a secure data repository suited to the data concerned; [Aston Data Explorer](#) is open to all datasets;
- 2.3.6. Any data which is retained outside Aston, for example in an international data service or domain repository, should be registered with the University by including the associated metadata and a link in Aston Data Explorer;
- 2.3.7. Sufficient metadata to describe the data and facilitate discovery should be provided in Aston Data Explorer (based on E-prints <http://researchdata.aston.ac.uk/>);
- 2.3.8. Links between publications records and related datasets records should be established.

2.4. Making Research Data Open with restrictions or an embargo

Where the type of data makes it necessary to limit or control access to a dataset a repository (such as Aston Data Explorer) should be selected which offers one of two options:

- Embargoed, for when research data can be Open after an initial embargo period has expired.
- Restricted, for data types which have ethical, commercial, copyright or IP issues where a decision has been made that the metadata for the dataset can be made public but

access to the dataset only provided to users who make a request on the repository and provide sufficient justification.

2.5. Retention of Open Research Data

Datasets that have been made Open should be retained for a period which follows best practice in the discipline or in line with funder requirements. If none exists, data will be retained by default for a period of 10 years after which a review will take place to determine whether the data should be retained for a further period.

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1. The University is responsible for:

- 3.1.1. Providing access to services and facilities for the storage, backup, deposit and retention of research data and records that allow researchers to meet their requirements under this policy and those of the funders;
- 3.1.2. Facilitating access to training, support and advice on research data;
- 3.1.3. Providing the necessary resources to those central services responsible for the provision of these services, facilities and training.

3.2. Research Group Heads or Associate Deans for Research are responsible for:

- 3.2.1. Ensuring that researchers in their area are aware of this policy and their responsibilities in relation to it;
- 3.2.2. Defining protocols or producing guidelines to assist researchers in their area to meet the requirements of this policy.

3.3. Principal Investigators are responsible for:

- 3.3.1. Ensuring, at the outset of a research project, a Data Management Plan is created which documents clear procedures for the collection, storage, use, re-use, access and retention or destruction of the research data;
- 3.3.2. Ensuring that throughout the project, storing, sharing and manipulation of data is in accordance with legal and ethical requirements and recommended practices to ensure data is kept secure, backed-up and organised effectively;
- 3.3.3. Ensuring that accurate and up to date data of all projects are stored in line with university's policies so it is accessible after the completion of the research or in the event of their departure or retirement from the University;
- 3.3.4. Ensuring that any requirements in relation to research data and records management placed on their research by funding bodies or regulatory agencies or under the terms of a research contract with the University are also met;

4. SOURCES OF GUIDANCE

Advice on how to implement the requirements set out in this policy are available in the [Research Data Management Libguide](#) or by emailing researchdata@aston.ac.uk

5. DEFINITIONS

Research Data: are defined as factual records, which may take the form of numbers, symbols, text, images or sounds, used as primary sources for research, and that are commonly accepted in the research community as necessary to validate research findings. Data may comprise primary raw data or secondary analysed data.

Open Research: Open Research is the practice of researching in such a way that others can collaborate and contribute throughout the research process. Open Research is not limited to STEM subjects; it encompasses all fields and stages of research with the goal of making the results Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable (FAIR).

Open Research Data: Making your research data freely available to anyone, anywhere in the world and downloadable.

Metadata: Information held as a description of stored data.

DOI: Digital Object Identifier, a persistent identifier used to identify objects uniquely and standardised by the International Standards Organisation

6. RELATED REGULATIONS, STATUTES AND POLICIES

[Concordat on Open Research Data](#)

[Intellectual Property \(IP\)](#)

[Research Integrity](#)

[Ethics](#)

[Research Integrity Assurance Procedures](#)

[Open Access Policy and Code of practice](#)

[Data Protection Policies and Procedures](#)

[Records Management Policies and Procedures](#)

[Aston Data Explorer Governance Policy](#)