



UCL Research Information and IT Services Group (RIISG)

UCL Research Data Policy

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1. Policy Background

Researchers and students at UCL create data as part of the research workflow. These data represent the evidence that underpins academic endeavours and, in conjunction with publications, form an important aspect of the scholarly record.

Data are facts, observations or experiences on which an argument or theory is constructed or tested. Data may be numerical, descriptive, aural or visual. Data may be raw, abstracted or analysed, experimental or observational. Data include but are not limited to: laboratory notebooks; field notebooks; questionnaires; texts; audio files; video files; models; photographs; test responses.

Advances in technology have enabled the exponential growth in the creation of data, which in turn has led to both novel methods for conducting research (data-driven science) and a new, significant data management burden.

UCL recognises that appropriate management of research data leads to an enhanced research practice respecting specialist knowledge, supporting synthesis of new knowledge and facilitating collective and collaborative working practices in order to gain wisdom¹. UCL considers the research data generated by its members as a valuable research output, an asset to the institution and a critical contribution to the knowledge economy².

The purpose of this Policy is to provide a framework to define the responsibilities of all UCL members and to guide researchers and students in how to manage their data, enabling research data to be maintained and preserved as a first class research object in its own right and made available to the widest possible audience for the highest possible impact.

This policy is intended to ensure that research data created as part of the research process are compliant with the FAIR principles³. Data should be:

- Accurate, complete, authentic and reliable;
- Attributable and citable;
- Identifiable, retrievable and available with minimal barriers;
- Secure from loss and degradation;
- Retained for a minimum of ten years after publication or public release;
- Compliant with legal obligations, ethical responsibilities and the rules of funding bodies.

2. Policy Statements

1. It is the policy of UCL that its members can fulfil the requirements of good research practice by enabling them to manage research data in a manner that maximises data impact and acknowledges the value of data as a primary research outputs. This should be done by respecting the principle that data should be “as open as possible, as closed as necessary”⁴.
2. It is the policy of UCL that responsibility for managing and preserving research data is shared between all members of the College.

¹ <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/research/vision-strategy> (UCL Research Strategy 2011)

² [BIS performance Indicators \(2013\)](#)

³ According to these principles, research data should be Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable. See www.force11.org/group/fairgroup/fairprinciple.

⁴ Guidelines on FAIR Data Management in Horizon 2020: http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/grants_manual/hi/oa_pilot/h2020-hi-oa-data-mgt_en.pdf. A description of the FAIR principles is also available at <https://www.force11.org/fairprinciples>.

3. It is the policy of UCL that following primary use (e.g. publication) or when research data is archived for long term preservation, these data will be made available in the most open manner appropriate.

Unless covered by third party contractual agreements, legislative obligations⁵ or provisions regarding ownership, it is advised that UCL research data be provided using a [Creative Commons CCO waiver](#)⁶; supported by data citation guidelines similar to existing publishing conventions. This will ensure that re-used data are unambiguously identifiable and that appropriate credit and attribution is made.

4. It is the policy of UCL that clear lines of responsibility are established so that research data generated at UCL will always have an owner, responsible for preserving research data.
5. It is the policy of UCL that all research datasets, wherever deposited and whether open or closed, should be recorded in UCL Research Publications Services⁷.

In conforming to this policy, UCL researchers will comply with all national and many international policies and requirements from funders of academic research⁸.

3. Responsibilities

3.1. Lines of Responsibility

- Research students and Supervisors
- Researchers
- Heads of Departments or Research units
- UCL Research Data Services
- UCL Research Governance Group
- Vice Provost (Research)
- Provost

3.2. Research students and Supervisors

Embedding Research Data Management practice in early career research is critical to establishing an effective data management ethos. Good research practice requires students and their supervisor to plan the collection, storage, security and use of research data, in accordance with conventions in their fields of study and obligations from their institutions.

It is the responsibility of students and their supervisors that good practice in data management is planned and documented as part of their research process. The plan and execution should form a critical part of the research process.

Research students and supervisors should:

- Establish collection and storage procedures for their research data.
- Ensure that their plans and activities are documented in accordance with their obligations as defined by relevant funding bodies and UCL policies.
- Supervisors should encourage their research students to fill out a Data Management Plan⁹.

⁵ UK Data Protection Act (1998): www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/29/contents

⁶ <http://creativecommons.org/> (2018)

⁷ Guidance is available at <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/library/open-access/guides> and <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/isd/services/research-it/help/faqs/rps-fags>.

⁸ Examples of funder policies are available at www.ucl.ac.uk/research-data-management (2018).

⁹ The UCL template for PGR Data Management Plans can be downloaded at www.ucl.ac.uk/library/research-support/research-data/policies/writing_DMPlan.

3.3. Researchers

It is good research practice, and frequently a requirement for grant applications, to plan data management before commencing any research activity. Often this is in the form of a Data Management Plan.

Researchers must comply with research funders' expectations to submit a Data Management Plan as part of grant applications. When such a Plan is not required, it is recommended that Principal Investigators nevertheless generate, execute and update one. Templates, guidance and examples to create such Plans are available on the UCL Research Data Management website¹⁰.

Researchers should:

- Develop and record appropriate procedures and processes for the collection, storage, use, re-use, access, and retention of the research data associated with their research program;
- Establish and document agreements for Research Data Management when involved in a joint research project, collaborative research, or research undertaken in accordance with a contractual agreement;
- Include within research grant proposals appropriate consideration of the cost and time implications of data storage and management;
- Ensure that the integrity and security of their data is maintained;
- Be aware of their obligations and potential liability when handling data protected by the UK Data Protection Act (1998) and European General Data Protection Regulation (2018);
- Plan for the on-going custodial responsibilities for the research data at the conclusion of the research project or on departure from the University;
- Include recommendations for the destruction of research data (if required) to the designated departmental data steward, or, where no such role exists, the Head of Department or Research unit;
- Create a record of their research datasets in UCL Research Publications Services¹¹.

Researchers are also encouraged to get an ORCID or any equivalent unique identifier¹². Such identifier helps them record and report their work; it can be used in publications, grant applications, and in UCL's [Research Publications Service \(RPS\)](#).

3.4. Heads of Department or Research units

Heads of Departments or Research units should promote good practice in all aspects of research including Research Data Management. They should ensure that staff and students are aware of their responsibilities and obligations in effective management of research data and identify or promote training where gaps in these skills are identified.

Heads of Departments assume stewardship of data once the researchers involved in compiling that data leave UCL. This role may be delegated to a dedicated data steward.

It is the responsibility of Heads of Departments or Research units to ensure good practice and legal obligations relating to the management of research data within their department or unit are fully supported. They should identify and implement any training or skills development required in executing their responsibility.

¹⁰ www.ucl.ac.uk/research-data-management

¹¹ Guidance is available at <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/library/open-access/guides> and <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/isd/services/research-it/help/faqs/rps-faqs>.

¹² See www.ucl.ac.uk/library/open-access/ORCID for information and help to get an identifier.

Heads of Department should:

- Authorise procedures adopted by researchers and student researchers (following consultation with their supervisor) for the collection, storage, use and, if required destruction, of their research data;
- Establish and implement departmental procedures for the storage and retention of research data in line with University policy or legislative obligation;
- Ensure staff conducting human research, and students under their supervision, are aware of and appropriately trained in all of their responsibilities and obligations relating to research data collected in the course of their research;
- Ensure questions relating to data compiled by members of their department can be appropriately addressed, particularly questions relating to appropriate retention periods, access permissions, and any restrictions that should be applied to re-use.

Heads of Department or Research units may:

- Appoint a member of the university to act as a data steward for the research data compiled by their department or a subset of their department.

3.5. UCL Research Data Services and UCL Library Services

UCL has recognised the strategic importance of service provision in the management and preservation of research data and is committed to supporting a permanent team within the centralised ISD organisation that will create and support institutional services for all UCL researchers.

It is the responsibility of UCL Research Data Services to provide large scale, high performance networked storage for research projects and long term storage facilities for the preservation and dissemination of UCL research data.

[UCL Research Data Services](#)¹³ provide flexible, resilient, responsive, and cost effective data management facilities and support, in particular:

- A Research Data Storage Service providing research projects with terabyte-scale shared storage¹⁴;
- An Institutional Research Data Repository for data that needs to be preserved or made available beyond the lifespan of a research project. The Repository is scheduled to go live in 2018.

It is the responsibility of UCL Research Data Services and UCL Library Services to provide guidance and guidelines relating to good Research Data Management practice. The Research Data Management team supports UCL researchers in executing their responsibilities under this policy and will coordinate a UCL-wide Research Data network¹⁵.

UCL Research IT Services and [UCL Library Services](#)¹⁶ jointly provide support for researchers, in particular:

- Support to plan for data management and to write Data Management Plans;
- Support to identify and understand research funders' requirements;
- Support to deposit, share and cite research datasets in external and local repositories.

¹³ www.ucl.ac.uk/isd/services/research-it

¹⁴ www.ucl.ac.uk/isd/services/research-it/research-data/storage

¹⁵ See www.ucl.ac.uk/research-data-management.

¹⁶ www.ucl.ac.uk/library

3.6. UCL Research Information and IT Services Group (RIISG)

UCL Research Information and IT Services Group is accountable for maintaining and updating the Research Data Policy, and for ensuring that new developments and best practice at a national and international level are reflected in the policy.

3.7. Vice Provost (Research)

UCL's Vice-Provost (Research) is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the UCL Research Data Policy and ensuring that UCL complies with funder requirements and academic needs for Research Data Management.

3.8. Provost

The Provost, as senior Executive Officer in UCL, in conjunction with the Vice-Provost (Research) and UCL's Senior Management Team, is accountable for ensuring that UCL's policy for, and practice of, Research Data Management is fit for purpose.

4. Policy Implementation and Review Procedures

This policy will not supersede any other UCL policy. If it directly conflicts with research funders' policies, the latter will take precedence.

The Vice-Provost (Research) chairs RIISG *ex officio* and is responsible for ensuring that both divisional and central resources are sufficient for compliance with this policy.

The Director of Library Services and the UCL Records Manager are together responsible for co-ordinating the implementation of the policy. This policy will be implemented by applying archival and records management principles with relevant technical solutions.

This policy will be reviewed at least every 3 years by the UCL Research Governance Group.

The UCL Research Data Services Team will provide advice on technical solutions for Research Data Management and policy direction. UCL Library Services provide guidance and advocacy for Research Data Management, data deposition and related metadata description¹⁷.

Related UCL policies

- UCL Data Protection policy¹⁸
- UCL Information Security policy¹⁹
- UCL Statement on Research Integrity²⁰
- UCL Records Management policy²¹

¹⁷ See support available at www.ucl.ac.uk/research-data-management.

¹⁸ Available at www.ucl.ac.uk/informationsecurity/policy/public-policy/DataProtectionPolicy1016.pdf.

¹⁹ Available at www.ucl.ac.uk/informationsecurity/policy/public-policy/InformationSecurityPolicy0916.pdf.

²⁰ Available at www.ucl.ac.uk/research/integrity/pdfs/UCL-Statement-On-Research-Integrity.pdf.

²¹ Available at www.ucl.ac.uk/library/about/records-office/policy.