QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST

Research Data Management Policy
February 2015

1.   Introduction

As a broadly-based, research-driven university, a key strategic priority for Queen's University Belfast (the University) is to achieve nationally and internationally recognised research excellence in all of its disciplines. Underpinning this priority, the University recognises that accurate and retrievable research data[1], are an essential component of any research project and that good practice in research data management is central to research excellence.

Research data is a valuable asset and good data management practice can deliver benefits to researchers, the University and the wider community, including individuals, government, business and other organisations. These benefits include, *inter alia*, ensuring that research data is stored safely thus avoiding data loss, enabling the validation of research findings, and facilitating the ability to reuse and share data sets. Indeed, notwithstanding circumstances when access must be restricted, the University recognises that facilitating open access to research data can provide value added benefits such as raising the research profile of individuals and the University as a whole, promoting open inquiry and academic integrity, and enabling innovative re-use of data to enhance research outcomes. Consequently, the University has an overall commitment to:

> Adopt the highest standards in research data management throughout each stage of the data lifecycle, and to make publicly funded research accessible and freely available while, at the same time, ensuring that the release of any data does not compromise the research process.

Taking this commitment forward, this Research Data Management Policy identifies key principles of research data management practice and outlines expectations on the University and individual researchers. As such, the policy provides an institutional framework for the effective collection, quality, storage, security, maintenance and dissemination of data. Overall, the purpose of this policy is to:

- create a model of research data management practice and embed good research practice and procedures.
- safeguard intellectual property rights (IPR).
- ensure a commitment to research quality and integrity throughout the research process.
- foster responsibility for research data management.
- ensure that research data which is significant (as determined by the researcher with guidance, as relevant, from the research project group and Director of Research) is stored, retained, accessible and disposed of securely in accordance with all legal, statutory, ethical, contractual and funding requirements.

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[1] Research data are defined as the recorded information (regardless of the form or the media in which they may exist) necessary to support or validate a research project's observations, findings or outputs.

2.   Implementation

Notwithstanding funder requirements, from 1st May 2015, all researchers[2] at the University are required to comply with this Policy and ensure the proper collection, recording, maintenance, storage and security of research data.

Under this policy, all researchers must comply with funder requirements in relation to the dissemination and open accessibility of research data. In cases where funder requirements are not specified, the University, as part of its commitment towards open access, encourages all researchers to make their publicly funded research accessible and freely available, where legally, commercially and ethically appropriate.

The policy's primary application is to current or future research undertaken from the 1st May 2015.

3.   Key principles and expectations

- The University operates in an increasingly complex, data-orientated environment which requires the effective collection, management, analysis and dissemination of data. The data generated and held by the University are key assets that must be managed correctly to underpin University strategic development, essential functions and academic integrity.

- All data created or owned by researchers at the University are the property of the University and are regarded as corporate assets.

- As part of a commitment to research excellence, the University seeks to promote the highest standards in the management of research data and records, throughout the research data lifecycle. As such, this Research Data Management policy should also be read in conjunction with policies and practice on research governance, including:

  - The Concordat to Support Research Integrity[3]
  - The Code of Conduct and Integrity in Research[4]

- The University considers the value of data to be diminished through misuse, misinterpretation or unnecessary access restrictions and that any misappropriation of data could lead to misconduct in research.
- The University supports the principle of open access to research data, where legally, commercially and ethically appropriate. Where research is supported by a contract or a grant to the University that includes specific provisions regarding ownership and the retention of and access to data, the provisions of that agreement will take precedence.

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[2] Researcher refers to any person undertaking research or involved in collecting, generating or creating research data for, or on behalf of, the University (regardless of whether or not the research is externally funded). This includes, but is not limited to, employees, workers, visiting researchers and postgraduate research students. This policy, however, does not apply to taught postgraduate or undergraduate research or to research such as surveys used to improve service provision, conducted by the Student's Union or Professional Services.
[3]
http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/highereducation/Documents/2012/TheConcordatToSupportResearchIntegrity.pdf
[4] https://www.qub.ac.uk/home/media/Media,599772,en.pdf

Indeed, where multiple policies apply to a particular research project, legislative requirements supersede all other policies.

- The University supports researchers to have privileged access to the data they have collected during the course of their research before it is made openly accessible. Subject to legal, ethical and commercial considerations, researchers' rights to the exclusive use of research data will be protected up until the point of publication.

- Exclusive rights to reuse or publish research data should not be handed over to commercial publishers or agents without retaining the rights to make the data openly available for re-use, unless this is a condition of funding or legal requirement. Where research involves the use of data owned by a third party, researchers must abide by licences or terms of use governing the data.

- Where required by the funder, research data that has been selected for retention must be offered for deposit and preservation in an appropriate national or international data service or domain repository, or a repository of the University, and be made openly available with as few restrictions as possible, unless this would breach legislative, regulatory, contractual, ethical or other obligations.

- In cases where research data and records are to be deleted or destroyed (for example, due to legal or ethical reasons, expiration of the set period of retention or agreement that the data is no longer considered of practical use), this should be done so in accordance with all legal, ethical, research funder and collaborator requirements and with particular concern for confidentiality and security.

- As per funder requirements, published papers reporting publicly funded research should include a short statement describing how and on what terms any supporting research data may be accessed. In cases where funder requirements are not specified but the research data has been made openly accessible, it is recommended that relevant statements are included in the publications which report this research.

- Research data and records should be retained for as long as they are of continuing value to the researcher and the wider research community, and as long as specified by research funder, patent law, legislative and other regulatory requirements. In the absence of any specific legal or funder requirements, the minimum retention period for research data and records in the University is five years after publication or public release of the work of the research. In many instances, researchers will resolve to retain research data and records for a longer period than the minimum requirement.

- The University's Research Systems Group[5] is responsible for guiding the development and updating of this policy. This Group will review the Policy in May 2016 and every two-three years thereafter.

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[5] This Group includes, among others, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Postgraduates, the Director and Assistant Director of Information Services, and the Director for Research and Enterprise.

4. <u>University responsibilities</u>

- The University acknowledges its obligations under research funders' data-related policy statements[6] and codes of practice to ensure that sound systems are in place to promote best practice in research data management, including developing clear guidance, supervision, training and support. Details on support and guidance on research data management is outlined in documentation (as presented in a series of FAQs) accompanying this policy, available at: https://www.qub.ac.uk/Research/Support-for-researchers/Outputs-and-outcomes/Research-data-management/ The University is responsible for:

  - Providing researchers with access to training, support and advice in research data and records management;

  - Providing access to services and facilities, during and after completion of research projects, for the storage, backup, deposit, cataloguing, retention and discovery of research data and records that allow researchers to meet their requirements under this policy and those of the funders of their research;

  - Providing the necessary support to those Directorates charged with the provision of these services, facilities and training.

5. <u>Researcher responsibilities</u>

- While the Principal Investigator (PI) of a research project (or where the PI is not defined, the most senior researcher associated with the research project) is ultimately responsible for research data management related to that project, all researchers are responsible for:

- Making themselves familiar with and adhering to legislation, contractual obligations, ethical considerations and funder policies governing their research data and records management.

- Managing research data and records to ensure they are:

  - Accurate, complete, authentic and reliable.
  - Identifiable, retrievable, and available when needed.
  - Secure and safe. Principal Investigators (PIs) should ensure that access to the research data is not limited to a single person.
  - Backed-up regularly in accordance with best practice in the relevant field of research.
  - Kept in a manner that is compliant with legal, commercial and ethical obligations and, where applicable, the requirements of funding bodies and project-specific protocols approved under University policy.

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[6] An overview of the major UK funders' data policies, for example, is available at http://www.dcc.ac.uk/resources/policy-and-legal/overview-funders-data-policies For Horizon 2020 see the following requirements http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/grants_manual/hi/oa_pilot/h2020-hi-oa-data-mgt_en.pdf

- o Able to be made available to others in line with appropriate ethical, data sharing and open access principles.

- Developing and implementing research data management plans for all new research projects, as per funder requirements. By documenting clear procedures, processes and responsibilities, these plans shall address, *inter alia*, the capture, management, integrity, confidentiality, security, selection, storage, preservation and disposal, commercialisation, costs, sharing and publication of research data, including the production of descriptive metadata to aid discovery and re-use, when relevant. Research data management plans should also, where appropriate, define protocols and responsibilities in a joint or multi-institutional collaborative research project. While responsibility for research data management during any research project lies primarily with Principal Investigators (PIs), the PI can delegate roles and responsibilities and outline these in the plan.

- Seeking, where possible, to recover the direct costs of managing research data from the research funder.

- Providing and publishing sufficient metadata (descriptive information) and explanatory documentation about their retained research data which they have selected to be made openly accessible. This will ensure that the data is discoverable, understandable and re-useable. Where access to the retained data is restricted, the published metadata should also give the reason and summarise the conditions which must be satisfied for access to be granted.

- Registering any University data that has been selected for retention for open access display, whether the data is hosted by the University or maintained elsewhere. This involves cataloguing the data (via completion of a short metadata page) within the University's research information management system, known as Pure, for display on the Research Portal. As part of this process, researchers are also required to link the dataset to the relevant publication(s) and project(s). Any University data which is retained elsewhere for open access display, for example in an international data services or subject domain repositories, must also be catalogued within the Pure system for display on the Research Portal.

- Recording requests from persons seeking access to research data that has been selected for retention and made openly accessible.

- Planning for the ongoing custodianship (at the University or using third-party services) of their data after the completion of the research or, in the event of their departure or retirement from the University, reaching agreement with the Head of School / Institute or Dean of the Faculty (or his/her nominee) as to where such data will be located and how this will be stored.