**Management of Research Data and Records Policy (MPF1242) – Major Amendment**

**Consultation Draft March 2021**

1. **Objectives**
   1. The objectives of this policy are to:
2. Preserve the value of [research data](#Definitions) and [records](#Definitions) for [researchers](#Definitions), research participants, the University and wider community by defining expected standards for their management; and
3. Facilitate effective research practices.
4. **Scope**
   1. This policy applies to:
      1. Research data and records generated during research undertaken by University of Melbourne researchers.
      2. Research data and records in any form, including digital formats, paper formats and other physical materials.
   2. This policy does not apply to:
      1. Research where responsibility for data has been allocated to a third party through a written agreement.
5. **Authority**
   1. This policy is made under the [*University of Melbourne Act 2009* (Vic)](http://www.unimelb.edu.au/governance/regulatory-framework#legislation) and the Vice-Chancellor Regulation and supports compliance with:
      1. Legislation
         1. [Copyright Act 1968 (Cth)](https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2019C00042)
         2. [Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)](https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2020C00237)
         3. [Electronic Transactions Act 1999 (Cth)](http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/C2011C00445)
         4. [Defence Trade Controls Act 2012 (Cth)](https://www.legislation.gov.au/Series/C2012A00153)
         5. [National Health Security Act 2007 (Cth)](https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2016C00847)
         6. [Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)](http://www8.austlii.edu.au/cgi-bin/viewdb/au/legis/vic/consol_act/padpa2014271/)
         7. [Health Records Act 2001 (Vic)](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_act/hra2001144/)
         8. [Public Records Act 1973 (Vic)](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_act/pra1973153/)
      2. Research codes of practice
         1. [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2018](https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/australian-code-responsible-conduct-research-2018)
         2. [National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2007 – Updated 2018](https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/national-statement-ethical-conduct-human-research-2007-updated-2018)
         3. [Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research 2020](https://aiatsis.gov.au/research/ethical-research/code-ethics)
   2. Failure to comply with this policy may:
      1. Lead to researchers or the University being held legally responsible for breaches of legislation.
      2. Be considered a breach under the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research* and be investigated in line with the *Guide to Managing and Investigating Potential Breaches of the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research.*
      3. Be considered inappropriate behaviour in line with the *Appropriate Workplace Behaviour Policy (MPF1328).*
6. **Policy**
   1. Researchers and the University are responsible for ensuring that research data and records are:
      1. Accurate, complete and authentic
      2. Understandable, retrievable and [accessible](#Definitions), for as long as is required
      3. Safe and secure
      4. Compliant with ethical and legal obligations
7. **Procedural principles**

**Ownership, responsibility and control**

* 1. Researchers must ensure that ownership of and responsibility for research data and records is identified and documented at the start of a research project and reviewed and updated as appropriate, with consideration given to:
     1. Authority to decide on storage, [retention](#Definitions), disposal, publication or licensing of research data or records;
     2. Research data ownership as outlined by the [*Intellectual Property Policy (MPF1320)*](https://policy.unimelb.edu.au/MPF1320);
     3. Agreements with funders, data providers, research partners and collaborators;
     4. Arrangements for researchers changing institutions or withdrawing from collaborative projects; and
     5. Any Indigenous intellectual and cultural property rights, for research involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (in line with the *Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies [AIATSIS] Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research*).
  2. Researchers must ensure that the University has a record of ownership and responsibility for any research data and records they have transferred into the University’s control (e.g., for storage on University [facilities](#Definitions)).
     1. Where no ownership or responsibility has been recorded, or the recorded responsible party is no longer a University of Melbourne researcher, the relevant Dean or delegate will hold authority to decide on storage, retention, disposal, publication or licensing arrangements in compliance with legal and regulatory obligations
  3. Researchers leaving the University should deposit a copy of their research data and records into University facilities to support research integrity and retention obligations, as consistent with ethical, contractual or legislative requirements

**Storage, retention and disposal**

* 1. Researchers must store accurate, complete and authentic research data and records in formats that are understandable, retrievable and accessible to appropriate parties.
     1. [Metadata](#Definitions) should be stored with research data and records to support interpretation, authenticity and reproducibility.
     2. Where it is not practical to store physical research data and records, durable records documenting or derived from them should be stored in digital formats.
  2. The University must provide facilities, advisory services and resources for the safe and secure storage and management of research data and records, to support researchers in complying with their ethical and legal obligations.
  3. When not utilising University-provided facilities, researchers must ensure that processes and facilities used for the storage and management of research data and records comply with ethical and legal obligations. Where researchers are unsure of their ethical and legal obligations, they should consult with research data advisory services at the University.
  4. Researchers must ensure that research data and records are retained and disposed ofin line with the *Records Management Policy (MPF1106)*, with minimum retention periods specified in the [*University Records Retention and Disposal Authority*](https://records.unimelb.edu.au/services/disposal_advice/rda)*.*
  5. Researchers are encouraged to deposit research data and records into University facilities at the conclusion of a research activity/project to support meeting of retention obligations. Where research data and records are already stored on University facilities, researchers must ensure that the research activity’s completion is recorded in University registers/research management systems to allow for appropriate retention and disposal.

**Safety and security**

* 1. Researchers must ensure the safe and secure management of research data and records to comply with ethical and legal obligations over the life of the research data and records, with consideration given to research data and records with particular sensitivities, including:
     1. [Personal information](#Definitions) subject to privacy legislation, including information that may be considered personal information when linked with other information;
     2. Sensitive cultural information, e.g., on sacred cultural practices;
     3. Sensitive ecological information, e.g., the location of vulnerable species;
     4. Information subject to export controls, as regulated by the *Defence Trade Control Act*;
     5. Information on security sensitive biological agents (SSBAs), as regulated by the *National Health Security Act*;and
     6. Commercial-in-confidence information.
  2. Researchers must ensure that research data and records are transferred and stored with electronic or physical security controls to restrict access to authorised individuals. Controls must be appropriate to the level of sensitivity as defined by the *University Research Data Classification Framework.*
  3. Researchers shoulddocument plans for the safe and secure management of research data and records, and ensure all authorised individuals with access follow documented plans.
  4. Researchers must manage personal information in line with the *Privacy Policy (MPF1104)* and ethics processes outlined by the *Research Ethics and Biorisk Management Policy (MPF1341).*
  5. The University must ensure that facilities provided for the storage and management of research data and records meet legal and technical requirements in line with *University Research Data Classification Framework* and the *Information Security Policy (MPF1270).*

**Access by interested parties**

* 1. When making research data or records available to interested parties,consideration should be given to:
     1. Data ownership;
     2. Agreements with funders, research partners, data providers or publishers;
     3. Meeting ethical and legal obligations, e.g., preserving privacy, intended use and consent for use of data at the time of collection; and
     4. Ensuring safety and security, e.g., through agreements with interested parties that define required controls;
  2. Researchers must make available any research data and records substantiating research findings to enable academic discussion or evaluation of research outputs, unless prevented by ethical or legal obligations. Where research data or records have been requested and access refused, the reasons must be transparent and justifiable.
  3. For research involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, researchers must provide access to Indigenous data owners to uphold Indigenous intellectual and cultural property rights, in line with the *AIATSIS Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research*
  4. Researchers are encouraged to publish research data and records to disciplinary or institutional repositories to allow reuse by other researchers and maximise the value of research, unless prevented by ethical or legal obligations
     1. Where ethical or legal limitations apply, researchers should consider if [mediated access](#Definitions) or sharing of a limited subset is possible
     2. Researchers should publish research data in formats that meet disciplinary standards, as well as being [findable](#Definitions), [accessible](#Definitions), [interoperable](#Definitions) and [reusable](#Definitions)
     3. Researchers should consider applying the least restrictive licensing option that is appropriate for governing the future use of their published research data

1. **Roles and Responsibilities**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ***Role/Decision/Action*** | ***Responsibility*** |
| Ensure research data and records are accurate, complete and authentic  Ensure research data and records are understandable, retrievable and accessible to appropriate parties  Store research data and records safely and securely  Comply with ethical and legal obligations when managing research data and records | Researchers |
| Approve the actioning of storage, retention, disposal, publication or licensing arrangements for research data and records without a recorded and current responsible UoM researcher | Dean or delegate |
| Provide facilities, advisory services and resources to support researchers in meeting their responsibilities outlined by this policy  Ensure that facilities provided for the storage and management of research data are compliant with legal and regulatory requirements | Institution |
| Approve and implement processes and training that support this policy | Director, Office of Research Integrity and Ethics |
| Monitor compliance with this policy and supporting processes | Director, Office of Research Integrity and Ethics |
| Approve minor amendments to this policy | Director, Office of Research Integrity and Ethics |
| Approve this policy and any major amendments on behalf of the University | Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) |

1. **Definitions**

**Accessible** means that access to research data and records by interested parties is enabled through defined processes. These processes may include authentication and authorisation steps to restrict or mediate access to appropriate parties.

**Authentic** means that research data and records are a true and accurate product or reflection of research processes with no attempts to falsify, mislead or obfuscate

**Facilities** means physical or virtual locations intended for a defined purpose. For the storage and management of research data and records, this may consist of a combination of physical space, equipment, hardware, software and the resources required to support these.

**Findable** means the research data or records are discoverable to interested and authorised parties for reuse. Characteristics of findable research data or records include assigning metadata that describes the content of the research data or records, attaching a persistent identifier such as a Digital Object Identifier (DOI) and indexing/making the data searchable through disciplinary portals.

**Interested parties** means any parties who are seeking access to research data this may be for the purposes of academic review, ethical or compliance review, or data reuse for further research.

**Interoperable** means that the research data or records can be effectively integrated with other data or be utilised by different applications or workflows (such as for analysis, storage or processing). To achieve this, community-agreed, published standards are used within and to describe the research data and records.

**Mediated access** means access that is determined on a case-by-case basis by an individual responsible for the data, who is able to assess the value and risk associated with data sharing.

**Metadata** means information that provides contextual details or defining characteristics about data. Meaningful metadata is dependent on the type of research data it is describing, allowing data to be interpreted accurately and appropriately. Metadata may describe, for example, where the data originated, how the data was generated and processed, when the data was collected and by whom.

**Ownership** means the legal or moral rights that gives individuals, groups or organisations the authority to determine storage, retention, disposal, publication or licensing arrangements.

**Personal information** means any information regarding an individual whose identity can be ascertained from that information.

**Research data** means any information, facts or observations that have been collected or recorded during the research process for the purpose of substantiating research findings. Research data may exist in digital, analogue or combined forms and such data may be numerical, descriptive or visual, raw or processed, analysed or unanalysed, experimental, observational or machine generated. Examples of research data include: documents, spreadsheets, audio and video recordings, transcripts, databases, images, field notebooks, diaries, process journals, artworks, compositions, laboratory notebooks, algorithms, scripts, survey responses and questionnaires.

**Research record** means documents containing data or information of any kind and in any form created or received by an organisation or person for use in the course of their research. Records often validate the provenance, authenticity and ethical collection of research data. Records associated with the research process include correspondence, grant applications, ethics applications, authorship agreements, technical reports, research reports, laboratory notebooks or research journals, master lists, signed consent forms, and information sheets for research participants.

**Researcher** means any individual involved in conducting research under the auspices of the University of Melbourne. This includes staff, visiting researchers, graduate researchers and coursework students.

**Retention** means the long-term storage of research data and records after the completion of a research activity/project, for the purposes of meeting legal obligations or other purposes.

**Reusable** means being able to be utilised by others for replication of research findings or additional research applications, such as linkage with other data. This can be achieved by having standard data usage licences, provenance information and the use of domain-relevant community standards used throughout the research data and records.

POLICY APPROVER

Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research)

POLICY STEWARD

Director, Office of Research Ethics and Integrity

REVIEW

This policy is due to be reviewed by 2024.

VERSION HISTORY

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Version** | **Approved By** | **Approval Date** | **Effective Date** | **Sections Modified** |
| 1 | [Position title of policy approver] |  |  | N/A |