Model Language for Research Data Management Policies
ASERL / SURA Research Data Coordinating Committee

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Abstract

This proposal was drafted by a Working Group of the ASERL/SURA Research Data Coordinating Committee. The purpose of this document is to provide model language for universities to consider when drafting policy to support data management practices and infrastructure at their institutions.

ASERL/SURA member institutions may not need all of the sections in this document. Each institution should include the sections that are relevant for their situation, and modify content as necessary.

Much of this document was adopted from Research Data Management Policy, University of Edinburgh, available at (http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/information-services/about/policies-and-regulations/research-data-policy).

Introduction

Research data are valuable resources, regardless of discipline or format. Advances in computing have brought about new possibilities and expectations for research data, particularly in digital form.

Research data reside in a variety of computer systems and require institutional policies to protect, preserve, and ensure future access to the data. Funders, administrators, and other stakeholders increasingly believe that research data should be actively managed, in order to both protect the financial investment in research, and improve the transparency and reusability of scientific findings. The ability to re-use research data is rapidly becoming a best practice within research institutions.

Several funding agencies and foundations have indicated that researchers must develop coherent plans to preserve data and to enable data sharing where appropriate. The National Science Foundation has required data management plans in all research proposals since January 2011. The National Endowment for the Humanities' Office of Digital Humanities has required data management plans since January 2012. The National Institutes of Health, the National Aeronautics and Space

Administration, the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration, and the Institute for Museum and Library Services all encourage data sharing resulting from agency funding. As a result, the amount of money tied to data management and sharing initiatives is significant and growing.

It is in the best interests of each University to protect its ability to pursue research funding. Therefore the University should adopt a policy to support and advance preservation of research data when it does not conflict with Federal or State privacy laws, funder requirements, and University policy.

Different disciplines generate and analyze different kinds of data. Just as each discipline has its own research methodologies, each discipline also has its own practices for capturing and describing data. Different kinds of data have different requirements for ethical and practical management. Research data policy must respect these differences and be broad enough to serve all disciplines.

MODEL POLICY COMPONENTS for CONSIDERATION

Aims and Objectives
The aims of this proposed policy are to:
- Support the University's mission
- Support research excellence
- Protect the legitimate interests of the University
- Protect the legitimate interests of research data subjects and of other parties
- Protect the legitimate interests of researchers
- Acknowledge differing practices in different disciplines
- Support appropriate openness and transparency, and ensure accountability for the use of public funds.
- Support compliance with Federal and State laws, and University statutes and regulations.

Suggested Policy
1. Research data will be managed to the highest standards throughout the research data lifecycle as part of the University's commitment to research excellence.
2. Responsibility for research data management through a sound research data management plan lies primarily with Principal Investigators (PIs) of any research project or program.
3. All new research proposals [from date of adoption] must include research data management plans or protocols where appropriate that explicitly address data capture, management, integrity, confidentiality, retention, sharing, access and publication.
4. The University will provide training, support, advice and (where appropriate) guidelines and templates for the research data management and research data management plans.
5. The University will provide mechanisms and services for storage, backup, registration, deposit, description, access and retention of research data assets in support of current and future access requirements, during and after completion of research projects.
6. The University will always consider researcher requests to maintain access to a set of data if they are no longer part of the original collaborative team, or have left the employ of the University. The University may negotiate a transfer agreement with the researcher to ensure access to the data by all parties, depending on the circumstances of separation from the University.

7. The University will develop appropriate guidelines for placing research data outside the University. Any data which are placed elsewhere by the University -- for example in an international data service or domain repository – should be registered with the University. The University will support placing research data in multiple locations both within and outside of the institution.
8. Research data management plans must ensure that research data are available for access and re-use where appropriate and under appropriate safeguards.
9. The legal interests of the subjects of research data must be protected and considered in any transfer of data within or outside the University.
10. Researchers should consider placing research data of future historical interest, and data that substantiate research findings in an appropriate University, disciplinary or governmental repository.
11. University data management plans should be shared, as appropriate, to enhance community understanding of good data management practices. Non-University research collaborators should be consulted where appropriate.
12. Access to scientific data for later re-use is a primary goal of this policy. Exclusive rights to reuse or publish research data will not be assigned to commercial publishers or other agents, unless this is a condition of funding or a result of University policy or licensing choices.

Data Ownership

In order to protect research data, the University retains rights, title and interest in all research data and intellectual property created or developed in facilities operated or controlled by the University, supported by funds administered by the University, and performed in the course of regular duties by all members of the University workforce. The University will always consider scientific data sharing in the best interest of scientific knowledge advancement.

Stakeholders

1. Principal Investigators and researchers are key stakeholders in the development of university data management initiatives. It is imperative that policies support rather than inhibit their ability to apply for and execute sponsored research.
2. Offices such as the Vice-President for Research, the Office of Sponsored Research, and the University Provost support grantsmanship at research universities. The Institutional Review Board ensures the rights, welfare and protection of all subjects involved wholly or partially in human subject research. Since data management practices are often tied to mandates from funding agencies, it is in the interest of these stakeholders to participate in data management policy to ensure the continued competitive advantage of the University in sponsored research.
3. Libraries are dedicated to access and preservation of information in all forms. Academic libraries are positioned through current services to provide access, resource description, metadata services, and instructional support for data management.
4. The IT Division supports the University through managing a secure information environment. Management of research data at the University will require secure information architecture at a reasonable cost.
5. The Compliance Office supports the University through managing and monitoring the compliance programs of the institution.

Roles and Responsibilities

Responsibility for implementing this policy falls primarily upon the Provost, the Dean of University Libraries, and the CRO/Vice President for Research, the CIO/Vice President of Information Technology, and the Compliance Officer. This policy will be reviewed every 2-3 years [or alternative review period] and changes will be made when necessary.

Related Policies *(fill-in URLs or other identifiers for these policies at your University)*

- University's Intellectual Property Policy:
- University's IT Security Policy:
- University's Records Management / Retention and Disposal of University Records Policy:
- University's Ethical Research Policy:
- University's Data Classification Policy:
- University's Data Stewardship Policy:
- University Governance Policy or Data/Information Governance Policy

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Appendix

Possible Roles and Responsibilities

Many institutions use different terms and definitions to identify the various roles and responsibilities pertinent to this type of policy. Some examples of possible roles and responsibilities are shown here, but this is not an exclusive listing.

- The Chief Information Officer/Vice President for Information Technology is responsible for overseeing the management of the University Information Technology systems. In consultation with the President, the Senior Vice President and Provost, and the Data Steward/Dean of University Libraries, the CIO mediates conflicts and discrepancies between the interest of the Data Trustees, the University Vice Presidents and the needs and interests of the University. The IT division shall be responsible for providing the infrastructure that stores the research data and for protecting the security and integrity of the data.
- As Data Steward, the Dean of University Libraries will oversee the capture, description, maintenance and dissemination of research data, as well as the data management activities outlined in this policy. The University Libraries shall be responsible for ensuring accessibility of research data through curation, metadata, repositories, and other finding aids. The University Libraries shall be responsible for training and supporting researchers in the creation and implementation of data management plans.
- As Data Trustees, the Senior Vice President, Provost, Chief Research Officer/Vice President for Research, and the Office of Sponsored Research are responsible for ensuring the competitiveness of the University in funding for sponsored research. The Data Trustees ensure that data management practices do not conflict with other University policies or interests, such as the protection of research subjects, national security interests, intellectual property, or technology transfer.

- Principal Investigators are responsible for complying with funder guidelines and University policies.

Resources
Definitions

Data Curation: http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/dataman/glossary.html#digitalcuration

Data Repository: http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/dataman/glossary.html#repository

Research Data: http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/dataman/glossary.html#D

Research Data Lifecycle: http://www.data-archive.ac.uk/create-manage/life-cycle

Intellectual Property: http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/dataman/glossary.html#I

Other Suggested Sources

University of Cambridge's Data Management Glossary
http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/dataman/glossary.html

Digital Curation Centre, Glossary
http://www.dcc.ac.uk/digital-curation/glossary/

SURA/ASERL "Step-By-Step Guide to Data Management"
http://www.lib.ua.edu/wiki/sura/index.php/%27%27A_Step-By-Step_Guide_to_Data_Management%27%27

DMPTool, Guidance and Resources for your Data Management Plan
https://dmp.cdlib.org/

Monash University Research Data Management Policy
http://www.policy.monash.edu/policy-bank/academic/research/research-data-management-policy.html

Virginia Commonwealth University's Technology Services, Security Standard for Electronic Academic Research Data and Intellectual Property
http://ts.vcu.edu/askit/mc-docs/VCUSecurityStandardforResearchData.pdf

Association of Research Libraries (ARL) / National Science Foundation (NSF) Workshop on New Collaborative Relationships for Long-Term Stewardship of Digital Data Collections
http://www.arl.org/pp/access/nsfworkshop.shtml

ARL's E-Science Overview
http://www.arl.org/rtl/eresearch/escien/index~print.shtml

Interagency Working Group on Digital Data: "Harnessing the Power of Digital Data for Science and Society: Report of the Interagency Working Group on Digital Data to the Committee on Science of the National Science and Technology Council." http://www.nitrd.gov/about/Harnessing_Power_Web.pdf

National Science Board and National Science Foundation: "Long-Lived Digital Data Collections."
http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2005/nsb0540/start.jsp

Council on Government Relations: "Access to and Retention of Research Data: Rights and Responsibilities" www.cogr.edu/viewDoc.cfm?DocID=151536