PL_AC_018 Research Data Management Policy

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<th>Policy Category</th>
<th>Academic</th>
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<td>Document Owner</td>
<td>Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research</td>
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<td>Responsible Officer</td>
<td>Pro Vice Chancellor, Research</td>
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<td>Review Date</td>
<td>May 2023</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Related Documents</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Copyright Compliance and Intellectual Property Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsible Research Conduct Policy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<tr>
<th>Version</th>
<th>Endorsed by</th>
<th>Authorised by</th>
<th>Approved</th>
<th>Effective Date</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>3.0</td>
<td>Academic Policy and Appeals Committee Executive Group</td>
<td>Academic Board</td>
<td>03 June 2020</td>
<td>09 June 2020</td>
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1. Context
Torrens University Australia (the University) is committed to the highest standards of ethical and responsible research and complies with the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#) (the Code). Compliance with the Code is a requirement of the Australian Research Council (ARC) and National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) funding. This policy addresses the ownership of research materials and data, their storage, their retention beyond the end of the project, and appropriate access to them by the research community.

This policy sets out the requirements for the University and University researchers to ensure that all research data are managed according to the legal, statutory, ethical and funding bodies’ requirements (in accordance with Responsibilities of Institutions: R8 (Provide access to facilities for the safe and secure storage and management of research data, records and primary materials and, where possible and appropriate, allow access and reference). The University recognises that good management of research data and primary materials can increase the efficiency and maintain the integrity of research results.

2. Definitions

**Collaborator:** any person other than a researcher who acquires, or has access to, primary materials or creates research data, while taking part in any research project or scholarly activity in conjunction with a University staff member or student.

**Institutional resources:** resources of the University which include premises, facilities, funds, services, equipment, paid leave, staff time and support staff.

**Principal Investigator:** the researcher with overall responsibility for the management of the research project.

**Primary materials:** objects, physical and/or virtual, acquired through a process of research from which research data may be derived, examples include biological material, survey questionnaires, recordings and images.

**Research data:** the data, records, files or other evidence, irrespective of their content or form, that comprise research observations, findings or outcomes, including primary materials and analysed data. Research data referred to in this policy relates to data generated in research projects and excludes those derived as part of the University’s operations.

**Research data management plan:** a document developed by the researcher to describe the collection, organisation, management, storage, security, back-up, preservation and sharing of research data during and beyond the life-cycle of the research project. It deals with matters such as retention and disposal, archiving, accessing, sharing or publishing the data, and conditions or restrictions for data reuse.
Researchers: staff, visiting fellows and researchers, adjuncts, academic title holders and students of the University who conduct research for the University.

3. Scope
This policy applies to:

- all University staff and researchers engaged in the collection, access, use, analysis, disclosure, storage, retention, disposal, sharing and re-use of research data at the University irrespective of their work location, and
- all research data, regardless of format, but subject to the provisions of any relevant contracts or funding/collaboration agreements.

The University expects all researchers, academic units, the library, information technology, and administrative support units to work collaboratively to implement good research data management practice.

In cases where this policy conflicts with the legal requirements stipulated in research contracts (commercial or otherwise), the contract terms will take precedence over this policy. This does not cover the management of data derived as part of the University’s operations.

4. Principles
This policy reflects the following principles:

- the University ensures that research data required for validation of research results are managed according to the recommendations made in the Code and applicable legal, statutory, ethical and funding body requirements
- both the University and individuals engaged in research have a shared responsibility to manage research data and primary materials effectively, including ownership, storage, security, retention and access issues.

5. Responsibilities

5.1 Torrens University Australia
The University is the research data custodian and is responsible for providing policies, processes and facilities for the safe and secure storage of research data, the maintenance of research data records and for the secure and safe disposal of research data and primary materials when the specified period of retention has finished. The University has a responsibility to ensure that research data management facilities, including information technology, comply with privacy requirements and other relevant laws, regulations and guidelines, and research discipline-specific practices and standards related to safe and secure storage of data and information.

5.2 Researchers (includes student researchers)
Researchers are responsible for adhering to the University’s policies related to management of research data and information, relevant laws, regulations and guidelines, and research discipline-specific practices and standards. Researchers must:

- retain and be able to produce on request all relevant approvals, authorisations and other administrative documents, such as ethics and financial approvals, receipts and consent forms,
- where possible and appropriate, allow access to research data and primary materials, in particular, to enable the sharing of research data. This access should be facilitated by the use of indexes or catalogues of
data and information generated, accessed and used during the research,
• respect any project-specific conditions of consent or confidentiality obligations,
• adhere to project-specific protocols that require measures beyond those required by institutional policy or relevant laws, regulations and guidelines, or research discipline-specific practices and standards,
• report any inappropriate use of or access to or loss of data, in accordance with applicable institutional policies and, where relevant, other reporting schemes such as the Notifiable Data Breaches scheme,
• ensure that agreements are in place to govern circumstances in which researchers leave the project or move from one institution to another during the course of the project,
• ensure that agreements are in place between institutions for managing responsibilities set out in this guide for data and information in multicentre or collaborative research projects,
• engage with relevant training and education provided by or through the University.

Researchers should develop a research data management plan (RDMP) as early as possible in the research process. The RDMP should cover aspects including:
• physical, network, system security and any other technological security measures,
• policies and procedures,
• contractual and licensing arrangements and confidentiality agreements,
• training for members of the project team and others, as appropriate,
• the form in which the data or information will be stored,
• the purposes for which the data or information will be used and/or disclosed,
• the conditions under which access to the data or information may be granted to others, and
• what information from the data management plan, if any, needs to be communicated to potential participants.

5.3 Special responsibilities

5.3.1 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples
With respect to the ownership of data and information used in or generated by research involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities, the University or researchers may hold data or information. The University shall not make decisions about the access to or reuse of this data or information without proper consultation with its Indigenous owners, if any, as per the Guidelines for Ethical Research in Australian Indigenous Studies (AIATSI 2012). This policy shall be administered in conjunction with the Values and Ethics: Guidelines for Ethical Conduct in Research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and Communities (NHMRC 2018) and “Managing research: Use, storage and access. Principle 13: Guidelines for Ethical Research in Australian Indigenous Studies, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSI 2012).

5.3.2 Consumer and community participation in research
It is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator to monitor data management and storage practices when there is consumer or community involvement in the research process. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Statement on Consumer and Community Participation in Health and Medical Research (Statement on consumer and community involvement in health and medical research 2016).
6. Storage of research data and primary materials

The University is responsible for provision of facilities for the safe and secure storage of primary materials and research data including protection against theft, misuse, damage or loss and, for maintaining records of where research data are stored. This includes both physical storage space where needed or electronic data capture facilities and a digital repository of data.

While it may not be practical to keep all the primary material (such as ore, biological material, questionnaires or recordings), durable records derived from them (such as assays, test results, transcripts, and laboratory and field notes) must be retained and accessible.

All research data and related materials must be stored at the University. The Institutional Repository enables the efficient storage and sharing of research data. Each research staff or student is assigned server space to facilitate the storage and sharing of data. Researchers are encouraged to publish data along with research outputs to increase their visibility and the citability of their research outputs. See Appendix A. Online Data Storage Details.

7. Ownership of research data and primary materials

Unless owned by a third party, and subject to any relevant research contracts, research data and primary materials acquired through research will be owned by the University. However, the researcher/s undertaking the research may request to retain a copy of that research data and primary materials for further use with written authorisation from the relevant Academic Unit on the condition that:

- that data and materials may only be used for commercial purposes if a licence is agreed with the University (which licence may require a financial return to the University); and

- publications based on that data and materials acknowledge the University’s participation in a manner reasonably acceptable to the University.

The University will remain the custodian of any research data and primary materials acquired through research unless they are owned by a third party or are subject to a formal collaboration agreement.

Where research is conducted partly or entirely using data or materials that are owned by another party, documentation regarding the source of the data or materials and description of the access arrangements to allow justification and verification of the outcomes of research must be included.

Custodianship does not override intellectual property rights (see Copyright Compliance and Intellectual Property Policy). Where projects span multiple institutions, an agreement must be developed at the commencement of the research covering the ownership, control and management of primary materials and research data. In general, all materials and data retained at the end of a project are the property of the institution that hosted the project unless otherwise agreed at commencement of the project or subject to funding requirements.

8. Retention of research data and records

The minimum recommended period for retention of research data is five years from the date of publication. However, in any particular case, the period for which data should be retained should be determined by the specific type of research, for example:

- for short-term research projects that are for assessment purposes only, such as research projects completed by students, retaining research data for 12 months after the completion of the project may be sufficient,
- for most clinical trials, retaining research data for 15 years or more may be necessary,
- for areas such as gene therapy, research data must be retained permanently (e.g. patient records), and
- if the work has community or heritage value, research data should be kept permanently, preferably within a
For published research data, if the results from research are challenged, all relevant research data and primary materials must be retained at least until notification that the matter is resolved has been received from the University.

9. **Publication of research data and records**

Researchers have primary responsibility for deciding which research data and primary materials are required to be retained for the long-term. Researchers should:

- consider appropriate approaches to maximising the benefits of valuable data and information in the context of any required or reasonable restrictions on sharing the data or information. Researchers should be sensitive to the tension created by these competing imperatives,
- adhere to established national and international standards for data description and structuring to facilitate tracking of references,
- consider the options for licensing of research data in order to provide clear parameters around the use and re-use of this data. When considering licensing for this purpose, the least restrictive option, such as a Creative Commons Attribution licence, is encouraged.

10. **Access to research data and primary materials**

Subject to any relevant legislation (for example regarding the protection of personal information), any relevant research contract and the Copyright Compliance and Intellectual Property Policy, research data and primary materials should be made available by researchers for use by other researchers and interested persons for further research, after reasonable periods following the completion of the research. The Institutional Repository will be used to ensure access to research data can be both securely stored and shared. Appropriate restrictions can be classified as sensitive data to ensure it is not released publicly. See Appendix A - Online Data Storage Details.

Researchers given access to confidential information must maintain that confidentiality. Confidential information must only be used subject to relevant Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) approvals.

11. **Removal or movement of data and records**

Policy statements and agreements, and covering ownership and storage of research data can be reviewed whenever there is movement or departure of research staff including when researchers move between institutions or employers and when data are held or are to be transferred outside Australia.

12. **Destruction of records**

Generally, primary materials and research data will be destroyed at the end of the relevant retention period (see Section 8). Records that may be relevant to emerging or current allegations of research misconduct or any form of pending or threatened litigation must not be modified or destroyed but maintained until the matter is resolved.

13. **Collaborative research projects**

Where projects span several institutions, an agreement must be developed by the researcher/s prior to the commencement of data collection outlining the ownership and management of primary materials and research data during and following the research project. In general, all materials and data retained at the end of a project are the property of the Institution that hosted the project unless otherwise agreed at commencement of the project or subject to funding requirements.
14. References


### APPENDIX A - Online Data Storage Details

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 1 Assigning Server Space</th>
<th>System Administrator/Research Services Librarian</th>
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<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>Torrens University Institutional Repository (Torrens.figshare) has been designed to operate as both a digital institutional repository and a secure storage space for research data. The Repository enables data files to be shared with both internal and external collaborators. Data files created in Torrens.figshare are assigned metadata tags which include creation or edit date, subject heading, key words and contributors/collaborators. Data files and data sets can be published using the Repository Infrastructure, ensuring the ease of access to all collaborators.</td>
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<td>Step 2 Creation of data files/data sets</td>
<td>Research Staff and HDR Students</td>
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<td>Each research person (staff or student) is assigned server space to create, store and share data. An initial 20 GB is provided but this can be expanded when required. Accounts are created using Torrens University credentials, which are matched to a HR feed containing unique identifiers for each individual. It is not possible to access server space without a Torrens staff or student account.</td>
<td>Researchers save files to their Repository space, which also enables them to share files or create project space to invite colleagues, supervisors or external collaborators (through email) to work on files. Shared files can only be accessed through a nominated email account related to the supervisor or collaborator. It is not possible to access these files without being nominated by the owner. Each file contains metadata tags, which include date of creation and modification. This enables the tracking of files during the project and at completion of project. Files are also linked to associated grants through an additional metadata tag.</td>
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<td>Step 3 Research data publication</td>
<td>Research Staff and HDR Students</td>
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<td>Researchers have the option of publishing research data, making it publicly viewable and citable. Upon publication, files are assigned DOIs, which increases research profile.</td>
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<td>Step 4 Retention and ongoing management of data</td>
<td>System Administrator/Research Services Librarian</td>
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<td>Compare HR feed data with metadata tags to locate lapsed or concluded projects. Contact project leaders or supervisors to resolve whether data is to be published or deleted. Delete, retain or publish files, based on retention policy listed in section 8 Retention of Research Data and Records of the Research Data Management Policy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Related: Recording of Theses</td>
<td>Research Services Librarian, HDR Students, Capstone Project Supervisors</td>
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<td>HDR students are required to submit an electronic copy of their completed thesis before graduating. This is published in the Institutional Repository and assigned a Digital Object Identifier.</td>
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