DE MONTFORT UNIVERSITY LEICESTER

Research Services Directorate

Policy on Managing Research Data at DMU

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INTRODUCTION

1. De Montfort University is committed to research excellence and integrity and seeks to promote high standards of research data management throughout the research data lifecycle. The University is working towards compliance with the principles of the UK Concordat on Open Research Data and believes that making data 'as open as possible, as closed as necessary' (European Commission FAIR Data Guidelines 2016) is key to research transparency, integrity and engagement.

2. This document sets out our policy on Open Research Data and on the management of data in the research lifecycle in accordance with funder requirements, and supersedes and replaces DMU's 'Guidelines for Managing Research Data'. It should be read alongside the following policies:

   Guidelines for Good Research Practice
   Policy on Conducting Sensitive Research
   Data Protection
   DMU Figshare Terms & Conditions
   Faculty-specific Guidelines for Research Ethics

SCOPE

3. This policy applies to all DMU staff who undertake academic research, as well as postgraduate research students, external consultants, visitors and contractors conducting research at or on behalf of the University (collectively referred to as 'DMU researchers'), whether externally funded or not, unless otherwise indicated.

4. The term 'research data' refers to the evidence that underpins the answer to the research question and can be used to validate findings, regardless of its form (e.g. print, digital or physical). These might include quantitative information or qualitative statements collected by researchers in the course of their work by experimentation, observation, modelling, interview or other methods, or information derived from existing evidence. They may include (but are not limited to) statistics, collections of digital images, sound recordings, transcripts of interviews, survey data, fieldwork notes, artwork, archives, found objects, published texts or manuscripts. The primary purpose of research data is to provide the information necessary to support or validate a research project's observations, findings or outputs (Concordat on Open Research Data, 2016).

5. Open research data are those research data that can be freely accessed, used, modified and shared, provided that there is appropriate acknowledgement, where required (Concordat on Open Research Data, 2016).

POLICY STATEMENTS

6. All research data created by DMU researchers are the intellectual property of the University, unless subject to a grant, contract or other legally binding agreement signed by the University that stipulates otherwise. For the avoidance of doubt, where legislative requirements apply, those legislative requirements will take precedence over this policy.

7. All new research proposals for external funding must include research data management plans or protocols (DMPs) in line with the relevant funders' policies (bearing in mind that some funders may require a DMP to be in place even if they do not ask for it to be submitted to them). DMPs are also encouraged for research that is not externally funded, in order to enable cross-checking and validation, and support research integrity. Additionally, it may be the case that individual Faculty Ethics Committees might require a DMP to be submitted with ethics applications.

8. All DMPs should include responsibilities for data collection, documentation and metadata, ethical and legal compliance, storage and backup, selection of data of long-term value, preservation and data sharing.

9. DMPs should ensure that research data are available for access and re-use wherever appropriate and with appropriate safeguards. For example, where the openness of data is restricted as outlined in sections 16 and 17, it may be that metadata is still made available and data sharing for re-use agreed with specific individuals/organisations under an appropriate legal agreement such as a data sharing agreement or a non-disclosure agreement. This would need to be detailed in the DMP.

10. All research data of continuing value to the researcher and/or wider research community, or specified by funding bodies or publishers, or required for legal or other regulatory purposes, must be made openly available unless restrictions apply (see sections 16 and 17).

    a. In the case of digital data, this may be achieved by depositing data to a specific domain repository (see section 11 below), or to the University data repository at https://dmu.figshare.com

    b. In the case of non-digital data, this may be achieved by digitising the data and treating it as digital data, or by storing the data, e.g. with DMU Library Special Collections (the University's archive service) and recording the metadata on the University data repository at https://dmu.figshare.com, including details of how to access the data.

11. It is recognised that the most appropriate location for making data open may be a specific domain repository. This may be because a funder requires it (e.g. UK Data Service for ESRC-funded research), or because it is the most appropriate for a particular discipline (e.g. Archaeology Data Service). Data should be deposited in the most appropriate repository, and metadata recorded and made openly available via the University data repository at https://dmu.figshare.com.

12. To enable research data to be discoverable and effectively re-used by others, sufficient metadata should be recorded and made openly available via the University data repository (https://dmu.figshare.com).

13. Research data that may be of future historical interest, including data that substantiate research findings, should normally be offered and assessed for deposit and retention in an appropriate data service, domain repository, the University data repository or (in the case of non-digital material) with DMU Library Special Collections (the University's archive service).

14. The legitimate interests of the subjects of research data, and future historical interests, must be protected, e.g. in accordance with data protection laws, research ethics, human rights and duty of confidence.

15. Where a funding body, publisher or their agent requests exclusive rights to publish or re-use University research data without any assurance that it will be made openly available upon publication, the University's default position will be to refuse such a request, unless required to grant such rights as part of the terms and conditions of a grant, or under a legal obligation.

16. Where any research is subject to any associated contractual arrangements and/or grant conditions that conflict with this policy, the provisions of such contractual arrangements and/or grant conditions will take precedence.

17. It is recognised that there are sound reasons why the openness of research data may need to be restricted. For example (but not limited to) the following:

    a. where individuals' legitimate interests would be compromised (e.g. under the Data Protection Act);

    b. where data is commercially sensitive;

    c. where intellectual property rights do not permit;

    d. where the investment of time/money/resources would be disproportionate to the anticipated benefits to the University and/or research community.

18. These are decisions that individual researchers should look at on a case by case basis, for each dataset, and (where the project is funded) may have to justify their decision to the research funder.

19. It is recognised that DMU researchers who generate original data must have reasonable right of exclusive first use for an appropriate and well-defined period, which may vary by subject and discipline area. They may, therefore, wish to set an embargo on the publication of their data. This should be considered from the earliest stages of project planning and set out in the Data Management Plan.

DMU Researchers' Responsibilities

20. DMU researchers are required to comply with the conditions of their research funders' data management policies.

21. Responsibility for the creation of a DMP (where required), the updating of that plan, and the implementation of the plan throughout the research lifecycle during any research project or programme lies with the PI or most senior DMU researcher associated with the project.

22. All research data (through funded or unfunded projects) must be assigned a 'Data Steward'. This will normally be the most senior DMU researcher associated with the Project to which the dataset relates. The 'Data Steward' is responsible for ensuring the requirements of this policy are met and is the named contact for any enquiries about the data.

23. Where the research is part of a collaborative project led by an external partner, it is the responsibility of the most senior DMU researcher associated with the project to ensure that DMU is able to meet the requirements of this policy and to keep a copy of any DMP and other data agreements.

24. When undertaking research projects in collaboration with other institutions, organisations or individuals, DMU researchers should ensure that ownership and copyright of data generated and/or shared is specified in a data sharing agreement which sets out clearly the obligations and permissions of each party with regard to the data.

25. It is the responsibility of researchers to discuss with the relevant departments (e.g. ITMS, Library and Learning Services) whether there will be any cost to their project for the storage (including server patches), backup, deposit and retention of the project research data; and to ensure, before starting their research project, that any costs during the life of the project and after can be covered.

26. It is the responsibility of the researcher to handle personal data lawfully and according to DMU's internal data management procedures and according to the General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018.

27. It should be the default position that personal data cannot be treated as open data unless fully anonymised. However, it is accepted that in rare circumstances exceptions may need to be made, for example, with regard to oral history. Personal data should not be treated as open data in an un-anonymised form unless agreed by Research Services and, if necessary, by the Information Governance team.

28. DMU researchers should, where possible, include costs for storing and making data open in external funding applications.

29. Faculty Associate Deans for Research, Institute Directors and others responsible for research-active staff and students should ensure that DMU researchers in their areas are aware of the University's policy regarding research data management and its associated guidelines and procedures.

30. DMU researchers should ensure published results always include information on how to access the supporting data. Where data supporting publications is made open, it should be accessible by the publication date and in citeable format.

31. All 'external DMU researchers' agree to indemnify DMU in full for any legal costs incurred by DMU in relation to any legal action taken by DMU against any breach of this policy and or any policy mentioned within this policy.

DMU's Responsibilities

32. The University will provide access to training, support, advice and where appropriate, guidelines and templates for research data management and data management plans.

33. The University will provide the infrastructure for the storage, backup, deposit and retention of research data in support of current and future access, during and after completion of research projects. This may be charged to the research project (see paragraph 17).

Enforcement

34. In the event of any breach of this policy and any policy mentioned within this policy, by any 'DMU researchers' (as defined above) or 'external DMU researchers', DMU reserves the right to take appropriate legal action.

Definitions

"The University" and "DMU" mean De Montfort University

"Dataset" means a set of files containing Research Data, Metadata (including Published Metadata) and Documentation

"Data Steward" will be the most senior DMU researcher associated with the project to which the deposited dataset relates, or their authorised agent (e.g. a PGR student) who is responsible for ensuring the requirements of the Research Data Management policy are met and is the named contact for any enquiries about the data.

"DMU Researchers" refers to DMU staff who undertake academic research, postgraduate research students, external consultants, visitors and contractors conducting research at or on behalf of the University.

"Documentation" means any digital files such as a codebook, technical report or methodology which explain the Research Data's production, structure or use.

"External DMU Researchers" means external consultants, visitors and contractors conducting research at or on behalf of the University.

"Metadata" means descriptive or contextual information that is associated with the data to assist in the identification, location and retrieval of it by users.

"Personal Data" means any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person ('data subject'); an identifiable natural person is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data, an online identifier or to one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of that natural person;

 "Processing" means any operation or set of operations which is performed on Personal Data or on sets of Personal Data, whether or not by automated means, such as collection, recording, organisation, structuring, storage, adaptation or alteration, retrieval, consultation, use, disclosure by transmission, dissemination or otherwise making available, alignment or combination, restriction, erasure or destruction;

"Research Data" are defined as the evidence that underpins the answer to the research question and can be used to validate findings, regardless of its form (eg. print, digital or physical). These might be quantitative information or qualitative statements collected by researchers in the course of their work by experimentation, observation, modelling, interview or other methods, or information derived from existing evidence. They may include (but are not limited to) statistics, collections of digital images, sound recordings, transcripts of interviews, survey data and fieldwork, an artwork, archives, found objects, published texts or a manuscript.