

Research Data Management Policy

Section 1 - Background and Purpose

- (1) This Policy sets out the requirements for La Trobe University researchers to manage their research data and primary materials in accordance with University policy, and legal, statutory, ethical and funding bodies' requirements.
- (2) The Procedure supports the implementation of the Policy and provides instructions for researchers in the management of research data and research primary materials. This Procedure applies to all La Trobe researchers.
- (3) Research Data management is a shared responsibility. The University expects researchers, academic units and central administrative units to work in partnership to implement good Research Data management practice.

Section 2 - Scope

- (4) This Policy applies to all researchers engaged in activities involving the creation, use, curation and management of research data and primary materials at La Trobe. The policy applies across all schools and departments, campuses and to research conducted external to the University, but under the University's auspices.

Section 3 - Policy Statement

- (5) The [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research \(2018\)](#) (the Code) outlines expectations for the proper management and retention of research data and primary materials. This policy ensures the University meets its continuing role in the management of research materials, and researchers retain sufficient research data and primary materials to justify the outcomes of their research and to defend them if challenged.
- (6) The principles of managing, sharing and re-using research data are essential to good research practice, promote quality research, and enhance the reputation of researchers and the University. La Trobe is committed to improving the quality and impact of research, and recognises that a systematic approach to research data management and preservation is fundamental to excellence in research and to research integrity.
- (7) Research data and primary materials, and registers of those materials, are University records and must be stored and disposed of in accordance with the Code, the University Records and Archives Management Policy, and the Victorian Public Records Act.
- (8) Research data and primary materials generated from research will be:
- Accurate, complete, authentic and support verification of research results
 - Attributable and citable through applying persistent identifiers
 - Identifiable, retrievable and available with minimal barriers
 - Managed through Research Data Management Plans which clearly document how research data and primary materials will be collected, owned, retained, stored and preserved

- e. Owned in accordance with La Trobe University's [Intellectual Property Statute 2009](#), subject to any relevant third party agreements, or licences in favour of the University
- f. Made available to others as soon as it is available, subject to any contractual or other legal restrictions, and appropriate ethical, defence related, data sharing and open access principles
- g. Secure from loss and degradation
- h. Held in a manner that is compliant with legal obligations, ethical responsibilities and the rules of funding bodies
- i. Retained for as long as they are of continuing value or interest to the global research community or other interested parties, and as specified by any research funding agreement, professional standards, legal or other requirements.

Section 4 - Procedures

Part A - Governance

(9) The University is responsible for maintaining a governance framework for research data management. A Research Data Management Sub-Committee of the Research and Graduate Studies Committee will oversee the direction and implementation of research data management across the University.

Part B - Responsibilities

(10) The University is responsible for:

- a. Establishing and communicating processes to manage research data and research records in accordance with the Victorian [Public Records Act](#), or as otherwise determined by other statutory requirements, funding agency guidelines or contractual arrangements with research partners
- b. Providing or securing approved facilities for the safe and secure storage of research data and primary materials and for maintaining records of where research data and primary materials are stored
- c. Ensuring backup, archival and monitoring processes are in place to prevent loss of research data and primary materials
- d. Providing a mechanism to make research data available for use by other researchers except where the sharing of data is prevented by privacy, confidentiality or other ethical matters, or other contractual or legal obligations
- e. Providing training, support, advice and guidelines that promote a best-practice approach towards Research Data management
- f. Monitoring compliance of its researchers with this policy and associated procedures.

(11) Heads of School and other organisational units (or equivalent) are responsible for:

- a. Providing storage facilities in their school/departments for physical research data and primary materials to meet security, confidentiality and safety requirements, and maintaining clear and accurate records that help to locate and retrieve stored data and materials.
- b. Ensuring their researchers are aware of their responsibilities for research data and primary materials.

(12) Chief Investigators (CI) are responsible for:

- a. Considering research data and primary materials issues at the earliest point of a research project, and documenting decisions made for the creation, storage, sharing and retention of research data and primary materials in a Research Data Management Plan (RDMP)
- b. Allocating appropriate resources (time and financial resources) for data management in any related grant

proposals

- c. Identifying and establishing the storage requirements of their research data and primary materials throughout the various stages of the research lifecycle, and managing all research data in accordance with this Policy and the University [Information Security Management Policy](#)
- d. Ensuring research personnel collecting or handling research data are appropriately qualified and aware of their responsibility to comply with University policy, ethical requirements and relevant legislation
- e. Reporting any breach of security or confidentiality to their Head of School, CIO or the relevant ethics or biosafety committee as appropriate
- f. Ensuring research data are formatted and stored in a manner that renders it open to scrutiny and review, and available for reuse in further research and analysis
- g. Where possible publishing Research Data in the Library's research data portal or other appropriate public repository concurrently with the research outputs that rely on the data while observing privacy, ethical and legal constraints
- h. Ensuring that research data are maintained in a condition adequate for the verification and provenance of research results and in accordance with the University [Records and Archives Management Policy](#).

(13) La Trobe researchers are responsible for:

- a. Ensuring research data are accurate, complete, authentic and reliable
- b. Keeping clear and accurate records of the research methods and data sources, including any approvals granted, during and after the research process
- c. Applying data management practices in research projects that ensure compliance with the University Privacy Policy and all regulations attending the privacy and confidentiality of data
- d. Ensuring research data and primary materials are retained for as long as they are of continuing value or interest to the global research community or other interested parties, and as specified by any research funding agreement, professional standards, legal or other requirements.
- e. Other responsibilities as directed.

(14) Supervisors of students enrolled in a higher degree by research are responsible for:

- a. Ensuring their students enrolled in a higher degree by research understand their responsibilities as researchers under this Policy
- b. Taking joint responsibility with their students enrolled in a higher degree by research for the management of the students' research data and primary materials.

Part C - Research Data Planning

(15) All new research proposals must include a Research Data Management Plan (RDMP) that clearly documents research data management issues, such as the collection, ownership, retention, export or supply, storage and preservation of research data and primary materials. At a minimum, documentation must address what data is to be generated by the research and the plans for managing the data.

(16) Research data and primary materials must be collected and managed in accordance with best practice standards within research fields and disciplines, as well as meeting legal, statutory and ethical requirements.

(17) Research involving human participants, materials, samples or data requires approval from the University Human Ethics Committee (UHEC) in accordance with its guidelines.

(18) When research is conducted across multiple organisations, agreement should be reached in writing which clearly specifies the principles of control, storage, transfer and retention of research data within each organisation.

(19) When sourcing secondary data from parties within or outside the University CIs must ensure they have the required permissions to use the materials as part of their project. All licence agreements or permissions should be reviewed by Legal Services to ensure terms and conditions granted by rights holders meet the legal/licencing requirements of the research project.

(20) Confidential information and personal information must be managed in accordance with University privacy policies, contractual obligations, and ethical approval requirements for each project.

(21) If conducting research involving Indigenous people CIs must:

- a. Apply the [AIATSIS Guidelines for Ethical Research in Indigenous Studies](#) and [Values and Ethics: Guidelines for Ethical Conduct in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research](#) or any equivalent guidelines in local jurisdictions when formulating a research data management plan; and
- b. Consult with research participants and communities regarding the methods of collecting, storing and accessing the data.

(22) Research involving the use of animals, including observational research, requires approval from the Animal Ethics Committee (AEC) in accordance with its guidelines.

(23) Research involving gene technology, genetically modified organisms (GMOs) or microorganisms classified as Risk Group 2 or higher requires approval from the La Trobe Institutional Biosafety Committee (LTIBC) in accordance with its guidelines.

Part D - Storage of Research Data and Primary Materials

(24) Researchers must ensure research data and primary materials are stored securely in a durable and accessible form. La Trobe has a number of research storage, sharing and computing services available for researchers.

(25) In the active research phase CIs must maintain clear and accurate records of where their research data and primary materials are stored. Record keeping must provide sufficient information to identify the location, attribution, ethical approvals, provenance, access provisions and terms of use of the data. Changes or developments in the project, such as moving working research data into long-term storage, must be updated in the project's RDMP.

(26) Researchers must regularly back-up all original materials collected or organised on portable devices or personal facilities onto approved University storage infrastructure. Personal, confidential or sensitive data that is being held or transferred on a portable storage device should be encrypted to prevent unauthorised access to data.

Part E - Ownership of Research Data and Primary Materials

(27) La Trobe owns or has rights to use research data created by University staff in accordance with the University's [Intellectual Property Statute 2009](#) and Intellectual Property Policy, subject to any third party agreements in relation to that data.

(28) Students and honorary staff of the University will normally own research data they create in accordance with University's [Intellectual Property Statute 2009](#) and Intellectual Property Policy, but the University may from time to time request students or honorary staff of the University to assign or licence certain rights to their research data on agreed terms.

Part F - Access to and Transfer of Research Data and Primary

Materials

(29) Access to research data and primary materials must be controlled by appropriate security measures to prevent unauthorised access and comply with any agreements in place relating to confidentiality, consent or commercial interests.

(30) Where there is a dispute concerning the provision of access to research data or primary materials, the University Legal Services must be consulted. On the advice of Legal Services the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Industry Engagement) or nominee will determine whether the research data or primary materials should be made available.

(31) In situations where access to data is governed by an agreement with a third party, access to the data will be handled on a case by case basis upon legal advice.

(32) All research data intended to be transferred outside of Australia must be assessed by the CI to determine if the transfer of the research data is affected by export control laws. All permit applications must be sought through La Trobe University registered personnel, and records of transfers must be maintained for the approved duration period by the CI. Records must be made available to the University for annual review.

Part G - Sharing Research Data

(33) Research data must be made available for re-use or re-purposing where possible, subject to privacy, ethical, contractual or legal limitations that prevent the sharing of data.

(34) Research data and primary materials underpinning research at La Trobe must be recorded in a durable and appropriately referenced form.

(35) Electronic research data is to be deposited in an appropriate public repository in accordance with any contractual obligations required by funding bodies or publishers.

(36) All research data affected by defence export control legislation must comply with the requirements for exporting, supplying, publishing and brokering.

Part H - Retention and Preservation of Research Data and Primary Materials

(37) As a general rule, research data and primary materials must be retained for sufficient time to allow reference to them by other researchers and for as long as interest and discussion persist following publication.

(38) The minimum retention periods for various classes of research data is available on the [Research Integrity webpage](#).

(39) Data deemed to be of ongoing value to the research community, and required for the potential defence of the veracity of the data or its analysis must be retained in an approved University archive, repository or other storage infrastructure.

- a. Digital research data that underpins published or reported findings must be deposited into Library's research data portal or other approved facility.
- b. Non-digital data (e.g. materials, samples, printed materials, pre-digital recordings) should be retained in the School or research unit in which they were generated or other approved facility.

(40) Digital and physical curation to ensure research data remains available for re-use must be applied when research data and primary materials move from the active research stage into preservation and long-term storage.

(41) At the point of publication research data and primary materials must be evaluated in accordance with any contractual or other legal or ethical requirements with regard to that data to determine what must be retained and what can be disposed of.

(42) When identifying research data and primary materials for preservation CIs should consider the potential value of the materials for future research, especially where the research would be difficult or expensive to repeat. Sufficient research data and primary materials must be retained to justify the outcomes of research and, if necessary, to defend them against challenge.

(43) To preserve the value and investment made in research, the data must be well organised, clearly labelled, and saved in durable file formats that will support long term preservation of the materials.

(44) Researchers must create clear and accurate records whereby the research data and primary materials can be discovered and retrieved by an authorised person other than the researcher. The records must include:

- a. The location of data and primary materials
- b. The location of physical keys, passwords, or other devices necessary to access them
- c. Information on indexes, catalogues or other finding tools necessary to access them
- d. Conditions of access

(45) At the end of a research project, research data and primary materials relating to outputs must be appraised, archived and assessed for retention in perpetuity unless there are conditions (such as ethics approvals, contractual obligations, or legislative requirements) which mandate that the data and materials are destroyed at the end of the project.

Part I - Exit Planning

(46) When a researcher leaves La Trobe they must ensure custodianship of their data is transferred to an appropriate researcher as determined by the Head of School or other organisational unit. All original data must remain at La Trobe, unless otherwise agreed with the researcher or the researcher's new organisation (if any) covering ownership and storage of the materials.

Part J - Disposal of Research Data and Primary Materials

(47) Research data and primary materials, and registers of those materials, are University records. When the specified period of retention has finished they must be disposed of in a secure and safe manner in accordance with the Code, the University [Records and Archives Management Policy](#), and the Victorian [Public Records Act 1973](#). All Disposal of research data is coordinated by the University's Records and Archives Services (R&AS).

Section 5 - Definitions

(48) For the purpose of this Policy and Procedure:

- a. [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research \(2018\)](#) (The Code): Jointly developed by the National Health and Medical Research Council, the Australian Research Council and Universities Australia, the purpose of the Code is to guide institutions and researchers in responsible research practices. Compliance with the Code is a pre-requisite for receipt of National Health and Medical Research Council and Australian Research Council funding.
- b. Curation: Curation of digital materials involves active interference to mitigate digital obsolescence, for example by migrating data to ensure compliance with evolving industry standards to ensure it continues to be accessible.

This may require migration from one storage technology to another, or data manipulation to meet new standards for data recording and presentation in human or machine readable forms.

- c. Data Management: Data Management is those activities that control how data is collected, organised, used, disseminated and disposed of. It includes measurement, monitoring, and auditing of all these activities. Data Management excludes the use of data in research, but includes recording entities and processes involved in producing and influencing the data in order to assist reproducibility.
- d. Disposal: A range of processes associated with implementing records destruction or transfer decisions which are documented in retention authorities.
- e. Metadata: Metadata is information or facts about research data for the purpose of attribution, description, management and discovery.
- f. Preservation: Preservation of digital materials refers to the retention of digital materials in the format in which they were generated. Preservation is a precondition for later curation.
- g. Primary Research Materials: Primary research materials comprise data and materials generated or collected by the researcher as part of their research.
- h. Records: (AS ISO 15489.1-2002, s.3.15): Information created, received, and maintained as evidence and information by an organisation or person, in pursuance of legal obligations, or in the transaction of business.
- i. Research: Original investigation undertaken to gain knowledge, understanding and insight.
- j. Research data: Any data collected during research which would be used to validate the research findings and/or facilitate the reproduction of the research.
- k. Research Data Management Plan: A Research Data Management Plan (RDMP) is a document that describes how you will collect, organise, manage, store, secure, back up, preserve and share your data.
- l. Research materials: Any materials used or generated in the course of conducting research.
- m. Researcher: In this procedure the term researcher refers to anyone undertaking or piloting research in association or affiliation with La Trobe including but not limited to academics, students, higher degree by research candidates, professional staff and third party associates.
- n. Retention: The act of retaining and ensuring readability of records for specified periods.
- o. Secondary Data: Secondary data is data collected by someone other than the researcher.
- p. Staff: All employees of the University or affiliated enterprises with which the University has a formal agreement and includes casual employees, clinical staff and unpaid members of the University such as Honorary and Adjunct appointments, all of which are registered on the HR system.

Section 6 - Stakeholders

Responsibility for implementation – DVC(RIE); APVCs Research; Research Office; University Library; Heads of School; Researchers.

Responsibility for monitoring implementation and compliance – La Trobe, through the Research Office Ethics and Integrity team, and the Library shall be responsible for monitoring and ensuring compliance with this policy.

Status and Details

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Status | Current |
| Effective Date | 6th December 2016 |
| Review Date | 11th May 2019 |
| Approval Authority | Academic Board |
| Approval Date | 2nd December 2016 |
| Expiry Date | Not Applicable |
| Unit Head | Alistair Duncan Executive Director, Research Office |
| Author | Barbara Doherty Manager, Ethics and Integrity |
| Enquiries Contact | Ethics and Integrity |