Policy on the Management of Research Data and Records

1. The University of Oxford seeks to promote the highest standards in the management of research data and records[1] as fundamental to both high quality research[2] and academic integrity.

2. The University recognises that accurate and retrievable research data are an essential component of any research project and necessary to verify and defend, when required, the process and outcomes of research. Research data are valuable to researchers for the duration of their research, and may well have long-term value for research, teaching and for wider exploitation for the public good, by individuals, government, business and other organisations, as a project develops and after research results have been published.

3. The University acknowledges its obligations under research funders' data-related policy statements[3] and codes of practice to ensure that sound systems are in place to promote best practice, including through clear policy, guidance, supervision, training and support.

4. Researchers[4], departments/faculties, divisions, central administrative units and service providers and, where appropriate, research sponsors and external collaborators, need to work in partnership to implement good practice and meet relevant legislative, research funder and regulatory requirements.

5. Research data and records should be:
    a. Accurate, complete, authentic and reliable;
    b. Identifiable, retrievable, and available when needed;
    c. Secure and safe;
    d. Kept in a manner that is compliant with legal obligations and, where applicable, the requirements of funding bodies and project-specific protocols approved under the University Policy on the Ethical Conduct of Research Involving Human Participants and Personal Data[5.]
    e. Able to be made available to others in line with appropriate ethical, data sharing and open access principles.

6. Research data and records should be retained for as long as they are of continuing value to the researcher and the wider research community, and as long as specified by research funder, patent law, legislative and other regulatory requirements. The minimum retention period for research data and records is three (3) years after publication or public release of the work of the research. In many instances, researchers will resolve to retain research data and records for a longer period than the minimum requirement.

---

[1] Research data and records are defined as the recorded information (regardless of the form or the media in which they may exist) necessary to support or validate a research project's observations, findings or outputs.

[2] Research is defined as per the Frascati manual, i.e. creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of man, culture and society, and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise new applications.

[3] An overview of the major research funders' data policies is available at http://www.dcc.ac.uk/resources/policy-and-legal/overview-funders-data-policies. See also the RCUK Common Principles on Data Policy (2011) at http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/research/Pages/DataPolicy.aspx

[4] Researchers are defined as members of the University including staff and doctoral students, and those who are not members of the University but who are conducting research on University premises or using University facilities.

[5] http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/curec/policystatement/

7. Where research is supported by a contract with or a grant to the University that includes specific provisions regarding ownership, retention of and access to data, the provisions of that agreement will take precedence.

8. If research data and records are to be deleted or destroyed, either because the agreed period of retention has expired or for legal or ethical reasons, this should be done so in accordance with all legal, ethical, research funder and collaborator requirements and with particular concern for confidentiality and security.

9. Researchers are responsible for:

- Managing research data and records in accordance with the principles and requirements in 5-8 above;

- Developing and documenting clear procedures for the collection, storage, use, re-use, access and retention or destruction of the research data and records associated with their research. This shall include, where appropriate, defining protocols and responsibilities in a joint or multi-institution collaborative research project. This information should be incorporated, where appropriate, in a research data management plan;

- Planning for the ongoing custodianship (at the University or using third-party services) of their data after the completion of the research or, in the event of their departure or retirement from the University, reaching agreement with the head of department/faculty (or his/her nominee) as to where such data will be located and how this will be stored;

- Ensuring that any requirements in relation to research data and records management placed on their research by funding bodies or regulatory agencies or under the terms of a research contract with the University are also met.

10. The University is responsible for:

- Providing access to services and facilities for the storage, backup, deposit and retention of research data and records that allow researchers to meet their requirements under this policy and those of the funders of their research;

- Providing researchers with access to training, support and advice in research data and records management;

- Providing the necessary resources to those operational units charged with the provision of these services, facilities and training.

11. The University's Research and Information Sub-Committee, a sub-committee of the University Research Committee, is responsible for guiding the development and updating of this policy.

Relationship with existing policies

12. This policy will operate in conjunction with other University policies such as:
- Academic Integrity in Research (http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/cops/researchintegrity/)
- Policy on the ethical conduct of research involving human participants and personal data (http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/curec/policystatement/)
- Intellectual property policy (http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/statutes/790-121.shtml#_Toc28143157)
- Data protection policy (http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/dataprotection/policy/
- Freedom of Information (http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/foi/)
- Information Security Policy (http://www.it.ox.ac.uk/infosec/ispolicy/)