

The University of Oxford is committed to supporting researchers in their data management activities. Facilities and services are available to enable you to manage your research data more effectively.

What is research data and why manage it?

This depends on your discipline. Research data can be textual, numerical, qualitative, quantitative, final, preliminary, physical, digital or print. At the start of every research project, issues surrounding the management of research data need to be considered.

This will ensure:

- Research data is consistent and can be easily located when needed
- Research data keeps its integrity and research results may be replicated
- Duplication of effort is kept to a minimum
- Data security is enhanced, thus minimising the risk of data loss
- Funding and regulatory body requirements are met

Common concerns:

- What are good ways to organise data and document it?
- How do I securely store my data and back it up?
- Do I need a data management plan as part of my funding application?
- What does my research funder require me to do with my data?
- What about legal and ethical issues surrounding my research data?
- Should I share my data? How? Where?

Data management planning

Many research funders require **data management plans or technical appendices** to be incorporated into a grant application. Consult your funding body's website for further details of their requirements.

Even if you are not seeking funding, planning can save you time in the long run, by helping you consider potential issues associated with storage, backup, documentation, copyright, intellectual property, ethical concerns, best formats for data creation, access and control, any sharing requirements, and long-term preservation.

The Digital Curation Centre provides a data management plan template and checklist.

Web: <http://www.dcc.ac.uk/resources/data-management-plans>



Image source: opensalon.com

Data backup, storage and security

Regular backups are essential to protect your data against accidental loss.

Oxford University's **HFS** service offers free backup and long-term file storage to staff members and postgraduates.

Web: <http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/hfs/>

Consider keeping copies of your data in multiple places, as a safeguard against fire or theft. In some cases, you may be able to make use of departmental server space. If you're dealing with sensitive or confidential data, you also need to ensure that your storage has an appropriate level of security.

Data sharing and access

Funding organisations are increasingly requiring their award holders to deposit their raw research data in appropriate public archives or repositories, in order to facilitate both the validation of results and further work by other researchers.

You need to consider how to maximise the impact of your research by disseminating the data or basic information about it, as well as how to meet the conditions of sharing data both legally and ethically.

For information on research funders' archiving mandates and guidelines, visit the **Sherpa JULIET** website, hosted by the University of Nottingham.

Web: <http://www.sherpa.ac.uk/juliet/>

The UK Data Archive, based at the University of Essex, facilitates sharing of social and economic data, and provides guidance about best practice for data creation and storage.

Web: <http://www.data-archive.ac.uk/>

Research data management support

Research Technology Services, part of OUCS, can provide technical advice to University research staff. Please contact them as early in the course of your project as possible.

Web: <http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/rts/rtservices.xml>

The **Central University Research Ethics Committee** (CUREC) can be contacted for guidance on the ethical review of research projects involving human participants.

Web: <http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/curec/>

Bodleian Libraries – ORA – The Oxford University Research Archive is an online repository of research publications and other research outputs by members of Oxford University. Please contact ORA@bodleian.ox.ac.uk to discuss depositing material.

The Digital Curation Centre is a national body offering advice about the long-term storage, management and preservation of research data. They also run periodic training events.

Web: <http://www.dcc.ac.uk/>

Other resources

Faculties and divisions frequently run their own **induction events** for graduate students, post-docs and new research staff. These will be advertised individually.

The Research Skills Toolkit is a new Oxford University resource (available online from early Michaelmas 2010). It provides a guide to a range of software tools, University services and other resources which may be useful to researchers.

Web: <http://www.skillstoolkit.ox.ac.uk/>

The **OUCS IT Learning Programme** provides a wide range of courses covering software packages and new technologies, plus some more specific topics such as database design.

Web: <http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/itlp/>

More information or help?

A University of Oxford research data management portal will be launched in Michaelmas 2010. This resource will provide advice and information about facilities and services available within Oxford and externally.

Web: <http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/rdm>



MANAGING YOUR RESEARCH DATA at the UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

