University of
Reading

EPSRC UPDATE

University progress towards meeting the EPSRC Expectations

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INTRODUCTION

This document sets out the current state of research data management service provision in the University of Reading, and the outlook for September 2015 and beyond, with respect to the nine Expectations held of Universities by the EPSRC in its *Policy Framework on Research Data.*[1]

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[1] http://www.epsrc.ac.uk/about/standards/researchdata/Pages/expectations.aspx

Expectation 1

Research organisations will promote internal awareness of these principles and expectations and ensure that their researchers and research students have a general awareness of the regulatory environment and of the available exemptions which may be used, should the need arise, to justify the withholding of research data.

Current position

A University Research Data Management Policy[2] was approved by the University Board for Research and Innovation in February 2015 and has been promoted internally. The Policy sets out the University's commitment to manage research data in accordance with the expectations of public funders, and the requirements that research staff and students must observe in the management, preservation and sharing of research data. The University Code of Good Practice in Research also requires researchers to comply with all 'legal, ethical, funding body and organisational requirements for the collection, use and storage of data'.

There are University policies to make researchers aware of their obligations under relevant legislation, including the Data Protection Act, Freedom of Information Act, Environmental Information Regulations, the Copyright Designs and Patents Act, and applicable ethical regulations. The University Information Management and Policy Services provide training and support for staff in respect of their obligations under applicable information legislation. The University Research Data Manager can advise researchers who have reason to withhold their research data.

Since the appointment of a Research Data Manager in April 2014 a communication and engagement strategy has been established to promote awareness among University researchers of research data management principles and practices, and of funders' research data policies. The main elements of this strategy are:

- Key messages about research data management requirements and University services are cascaded to research staff and students through Research Deans and Research Division Leaders and published via other channels, such as the University monthly email newsletter;
- Targeted communications are made directly to the stakeholders concerned. All EPSRC grant-holders and funded research students are informed of the EPSRC policy and expectations, and the University services that can help them meet these expectations;
- Information sessions on Research Council Open Access and research data policies will be provided through the Graduate School for Research Council-funded students from the 2015-16 academic session;
- A University Research Data Management website[3] provides information about research data management, with details of funders' and University policies and legal requirements, and guidance on good practice. The website includes links to useful resources and services;
- A Research Data Management training course for research staff is offered termly through the University's People Development programme, and the Graduate School runs courses on managing research data through the Reading Researcher Development Programme;
- Tailored Research Data Management information and training sessions are provided to Schools/Departments/research groups on request. The Research Data Manager has delivered a number of presentations and seminars to research staff and students in the University;

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[2] http://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/res/ResearchDataManagement/reas-Background.aspx

[3] http://www.reading.ac.uk/reas-ResearchDataManagement.aspx

- A research data management helpdesk service allows researchers to submit requests for support which are handled by the Research Data Manager.

Outlook

The Research Data Manager will continue to implement and extend the communication and engagement strategy, using ongoing service development and delivery activities to promote and maintain awareness of research data management requirements and services.

Expectation 2

Published research papers should include a short statement describing how and on what terms any supporting research data may be accessed.

Current position

Information about the *RCUK Open Access Policy* and the *EPSRC Policy Framework on Research Data*, with guidance for researchers in meeting this expectation, is provided via the Research Data Management website. The website has a page with guidance on how to include data access statements in publications, and examples that can be followed. This requirement is also communicated in training and information sessions, and ad hoc through the helpdesk.

The Research Data Manager monitors requests for Open Access funding and accepted manuscripts authored by Research Council-funded researchers as they are recorded in CentAUR, the University's publications repository, and records compliance with this requirement. Where it has not been met, the Research Data Manager works with researchers to facilitate compliance.

Outlook

Information and guidance will continue to be provided through the means specified and the Research Data Management Service will continue to develop more effective means of monitoring and ensuring compliance with relevant policies.

Expectation 3

Each research organisation will have specific policies and associated processes to maintain effective internal awareness of their publicly-funded research data holdings and of requests by third parties to access such data; all of their researchers or research students funded by EPSRC will be required to comply with research organisation policies in this area or, in exceptional circumstances, to provide justification of why this is not possible.

Current position

The University of Reading Research Data Archive was launched in September 2015,[4] and provides the means to log requests for access to data held in the service. Where data support published research findings arising from Research Council-funded research, researchers are expected either:

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[4] http://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/res/reas-RDArchive.aspx

- to use a suitable external service (or internal archive storage in the case of non-digital data) to preserve the relevant data, and to register the details of the dataset with the University by creating a metadata record in the Archive; or
- to deposit the relevant data in the Archive and create an associated metadata record.

Outlook

The Research Data Manager will use all relevant channels to raise awareness of the University Research Data Archive among research staff and students and will encourage researchers to use the service to register, preserve and publish their data. Administration processes will enable Archive administrators to monitor and report on requests to access data recorded and held in the service or under the authority of the University. It is expected that any suitable external data services will also have the means to record and report on requests to access data they hold.

Expectation 4

Publicly-funded research data that is not generated in digital format will be stored in a manner to facilitate it being shared in the event of a valid request for access to the data being received (this expectation could be satisfied by implementing a policy to convert and store such data in digital format in a timely manner).

Current position

The University Research Data Management Policy requires researchers to preserve data that substantiate published research findings in accordance with the policies of their funders. The University Research Data Archive can be used to create online metadata records for non-digital data holdings under the authority of the University. Provision of accommodation for non-digital research data is devolved to Schools, but information and support for researchers in meeting this expectation is provided via the Research Data Management website and helpdesk. The University can undertake digitisation of research materials at the request of researchers and make these available via the Research Data Archive as required.

Outlook

Research data management service development will enhance support for the management of non-digital as well as digital data assets.

Expectation 5

Research organisations will ensure that appropriately structured metadata describing the research data they hold is published (normally within 12 months of the data being generated) and made freely accessible on the internet; in each case the metadata must be sufficient to allow others to understand what research data exists, why, when and how it was generated, and how to access it. Where the research data referred to in the metadata is a digital object it is expected that the metadata will include use of a robust digital object identifier (For example as available through the DataCite organisation - http://datacite.org).

Current position

The University Research Data Management Policy requires researchers to preserve data that substantiate published research findings in accordance with the requirements of their funders. The University Research Data Archive provides the means for researchers and research students to deposit relevant data and create a metadata record to the required specification. The Archive metadata profile conforms to the DataCite Metadata Schema and a DataCite DOI will be assigned to any digital dataset published via the Archive.

The Research Data Manager monitors requests for Open Access funding and accepted manuscripts authored by Research Council-funded researchers as they are recorded in CentAUR, the University's publications repository, and records compliance with this requirement. Where it appears that a metadata record has not been produced for supporting data, the Research Data Manager will work with researchers to facilitate creation of an appropriate record in the Archive.

Outlook

Information and guidance will continue to be provided and the Research Data Manager will continue to develop more effective means of monitoring and ensuring compliance with relevant policies.

Expectation 6

Where access to the data is restricted the published metadata should also give the reason and summarise the conditions which must be satisfied for access to be granted. For example 'commercially confidential' data, in which a business organisation has a legitimate interest, might be made available to others subject to a suitable legally enforceable non-disclosure agreement.

Current position

The University Research Data Management Policy, Code of Good Practice in Research, and IMPS policies provide guidance on reasons for restricting access to data. The University Research Data Archive has processes for identification of data that are subject to access restrictions and provides a metadata field for recording any restrictions on access to data and any conditions that must be satisfied for access to be granted.

Outlook

Information and guidance will continue to be provided and the Research Data Manager will continue to apply relevant policies for management of access to restricted data.

Expectation 7

Research organisations will ensure that EPSRC-funded research data is securely preserved for a minimum of 10-years from the date that any researcher 'privileged access' period expires or, if others have accessed the data, from last date on which access to the data was requested by a third party; all reasonable steps will be taken to ensure that publicly-funded data is not held in any jurisdiction where the available legal safeguards provide lower levels of protection than are available in the UK.

Current position

The University Research Data Management Policy requires researchers to preserve data that substantiate published research findings in accordance with the requirements of their funders. The University Research Data Archive provides the means to maintain and inventory data holdings and to log and report on access requests. The Archive also serves as a register of data holdings in external services and will enable the Research Data Manager to check that appropriate external services are being used.

Outlook

Service development will address means of securing appropriate data preservation guarantees for data held in external services.

Expectation 8

Research organisations will ensure that effective data curation is provided throughout the full data lifecycle, with 'data curation' and 'data lifecycle' being as defined by the Digital Curation Centre. The full range of responsibilities associated with data curation over the data lifecycle will be clearly allocated within the research organisation, and where research data is subject to restricted access the research organisation will implement and manage appropriate security controls; research organisations will particularly ensure that the quality assurance of their data curation processes is a specifically assigned responsibility.

Current position

The University Research Data Management Policy makes a commitment to provide a Research Data Management Service to ensure that research data are properly managed, and to comply with all legal, ethical, funding body and organisational requirements for the collection, use, storage and sharing of data, especially personal and sensitive data, where particular attention must be paid to the requirements for ethical research conduct and of Data Protection legislation.

The University research data storage and archiving infrastructure are currently being developed by the IT service, to enhance central service capacity to safely store and control access to sensitive data that cannot be published via the Research Data Archive.

The Research Data Archive provides the means for researchers to preserve and enable access to data supporting published findings.

The University Policy clearly states the responsibilities of researchers for complying with their funders' data management requirements while research data are in their custody.

The Research Data Manager has defined responsibilities for organisational management of research data holdings in compliance with University policies and the policies of research funders.

Outlook

Ongoing development will enhance service capability to support data curation at all stages of the data lifecycle. This will be achieved through expansion of support services, further development of data storage and archiving infrastructure and embedding of good practice in data management and preservation. The University has planned for the appointment of a Research Data Officer to support the Research Data Manager from the 2016-17 financial year onwards.

Expectation 9

Research organisations will ensure adequate resources are provided to support the curation of publicly-funded research data; these resources will be allocated from within their existing public funding streams, whether received from Research Councils as direct or indirect support for specific projects or from higher education Funding Councils as block grants.

Current position

Strategic planning for research support across the University has committed resources for service development and delivery in the period 2015-2020. This includes continued funding for the Research Data Manager post; appointment of a Research Data Officer from the 2016-17 financial year onwards; investment in technical infrastructure to support the management of active research data and the archiving of completed project research data; and provision for ongoing service costs.

An internal charging mechanism has been established that allows researchers to include direct costs for additional research data storage in grant applications.

Outlook

As the Research Data Management Service becomes more operational, the Research Data Manager will develop a cyclical business planning process.

The Research Data Manager is currently working with IT and University Financial Services to establish a sustainable cost model for data archiving, so that costs may be recovered from Research Councils and other sponsors where this is applicable. The cost model is due to be introduced in 2016.