PGR Data Management Plan Pilot: Policy

Introduction
In the 2019-20 academic session the University will enter the second year of its Postgraduate Research Student Data Management Plan Pilot. Following the first year of the Pilot, these changes have been made:

- participation for students in the designated Doctoral Training Centres (DTCs) is voluntary;
- submissions will now take place at the end of the Summer term, but will not be part of the Annual Review.

About the Pilot
PhD students whose enrolment in any of the AHRC SWW, ESRC SeNSS or NERC Scenario Doctoral Training Centres commenced on or after September 2018 are invited to participate in the Pilot for the duration of their programmes. Year 1 and Year 2 PhD students in the 2019-20 academic session in the specified DTCs are included in the Pilot.

The Pilot is supported by the Scenario Director and the local leads for SeNSS and SWW. Students are strongly encouraged to take part in the Pilot, but participation is optional.

The Pilot is being implemented by the University’s Research Data Manager in conjunction with the Graduate School. Feedback is welcome. Please send any comments to Robert Darby, Research Data Manager, at r.m.darby@reading.ac.uk / extension 6161.

Documentation supporting the Pilot is available at http://www.reading.ac.uk/res-dmp-pgr.aspx.

Purpose of the Pilot
The policy being piloted is designed to equip PhD students with an essential professional research skill.

A data management plan (DMP) is an instrument used by a researcher or research team to document how they will manage their data and supporting materials (such as software code) throughout the research project, and how they will preserve these materials and make them accessible to others on completion of the research and publication of findings.

Data management and data sharing are essential to the conduct and communication of research. Many research organisations, funders and publishers expect that data collected in the course of research which support published findings will be preserved using a suitable data repository and made openly accessible wherever possible.¹

The ability to write an effective DMP is a key research skill. It will enable students to become more efficient researchers, to identify requirements and manage risks, and to apply appropriate solutions. It is also an essential professional skill for the career researcher, as many funders of research now require applicants for grant funding to submit a DMP as part of their application.

Policy

Participating PhD students are requested to submit to the Graduate School by the end of Summer term, Friday 12th June 2020, either a completed DMP or a completed statement of exemption form:

- if primary data will be collected or created in the course of the research project, an up-to-date DMP with the cover sheet completed by the Supervisor should be submitted;
- if primary data WILL NOT be collected or created, a statement of exemption form countersigned by the Supervisor should be submitted.

Primary data may be collected or created by means of experiment, observation, simulation, and processing or aggregation of existing data sources.

Creation of primary data from existing sources may occur, for example, through processing of observational data to provide inputs into a numerical model, or compiling information from disparate archival and published sources in a database.

A DMP is not necessary if no primary data will be collected or created: for example, if the research is based solely on the interpretation of published and archive materials, as in some literary and historical studies. Participating students are asked to submit a statement of exemption form in such cases as evidence that they have given consideration to data management requirements, even if the end result is that they decide no DMP is needed.

How the pilot works

Primary data is to be collected or created

Where primary data will be collected or created and a DMP will be submitted, the student is expected first to discuss the DMP with their Supervisor. The Supervisor may help the student to develop their DMP throughout the research programme, by discussing their data management needs and reviewing versions of the DMP as it is developed. The student is encouraged to attend training on writing a data management plan via RRDP and may contact the Research Data Manager for advice and assistance.

In preparation for submission, the student should complete a first/updated version of the DMP using the template provided, and forward this to the Supervisor. A detailed guidance document is provided to help the student complete the DMP.

The Supervisor should then review the DMP for relevance and quality, and complete the cover sheet, noting any comments or recommendations. To assist the Supervisor, DMP Review Guidance for Supervisors and DMP Review Checklist documents are provided.

The completed DMP and cover sheet can then be returned to the student, who should submit the final document to the Graduate School, where possible no later than the end of Summer term, Friday 12th June 2020. Completed DMPs should be submitted to Melina Aston, Postgraduate Research Administrator, at m.aston@reading.ac.uk.

Students who submit a completed DMP to the Graduate School by the end of Summer term will be eligible to receive a full review of their DMP by the University’s Research Data Manager, with written feedback, and a 1-1 data management consultation.

This process is to be repeated annually, with the DMP being updated by the student and reviewed by the Supervisor for subsequent Summer term submissions.
**No primary data is to be collected or created**
Where primary data will not be collected or created, a **statement of exemption** form, countersigned by the Supervisor, should be submitted to the Graduate School by the student in their first year, where possible no later than the end of Summer term, Friday 12th June 2020. Exemption forms should be submitted to Melina Aston, Postgraduate Research Administrator, at m.aston@reading.ac.uk.

Once a statement of exemption has been submitted to the Graduate School, no further annual submissions need be made, unless the research plan changes to include collection of primary data, in which case it would be advisable to complete and submit a DMP in the following year, according to the procedure described above.

**Training and support**
For enquiries about the Pilot and data management, contact Robert Darby, Research Data Manager, at r.m.darby@reading.ac.uk / 0118 378 6161 or email researchdata@reading.ac.uk.

Training on ‘Managing research data and material’ and ‘Writing a Data Management Plan for your research project’ is delivered termly through the Reading Researcher Development programme. For more information see [http://www.reading.ac.uk/gs-reading-researcher-development-programme.aspx](http://www.reading.ac.uk/gs-reading-researcher-development-programme.aspx).