Postgraduate Research Student Data Management Plan
Pilot: Policy and Procedure

Introduction

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 included in the Postgraduate Research Student Data Management Plan Policy Pilot. Participating students will be enrolled in the Pilot for the duration of their PhD programmes. Students entering the DTCs in subsequent years will automatically be enrolled in the Pilot, unless it is discontinued.

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

All documentation supporting the Pilot is available at http://www.reading.ac.uk/reas-PGR-DMP.aspx.

Policy

Participating PhD students are required to submit an up-to-date Data Management Plan (DMP) and complete the relevant part of the Annual Review (DMP Pilot) Report Form as part of their annual review if they will collect or create primary data in the course of their research project.

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 into a new database.

A DMP is not required if no primary data will be collected or created by the student, for example if the research is based solely on the interpretation of published and archive materials, as may be the case in literary and historical studies.

Students participating in the Pilot are required to complete the Annual Review (DMP Pilot) Report Form instead of the standard Annual Review report form for each annual review. The student must complete section A.2, stating whether or not primary data will be collected or created in the course of the research project. Where data will be collected or created and a DMP is required, the student must include a first/updated version of the DMP using the template provided.

Submitted DMPs will be assessed by the Supervisor. In the report to the Monitoring team the Supervisor will indicate whether the DMP is satisfactory, and record any comments or recommendations for improvement, which will be returned to the student in the Monitoring team’s report.

The DMP submitted for the first annual review is regarded a first version; an updated version, incorporating amendments and additions, should be submitted for annual reviews in subsequent years.

Completion of a satisfactory DMP is strongly encouraged, but it is not a requirement for progress.
The DMP should be completed using the template provided, and with reference to the detailed guidance document.

Training and support
For advice on completing the DMP or to request a DMP review 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.

Procedure
Start of programme and Learning Needs Analysis
As the Pilot will commence in March 2019, the procedure described here cannot be followed in full with Year 1 students in the 2018-19 academic session. It is recommended instead that the Supervisor discuss the DMP with the student in the earliest opportunity.

At the start of the research programme, the Supervisor is expected to make the student aware of the requirement to submit a DMP where primary data will be collected or created in the course of the research project.

Where it is established that a DMP will be required, this should be recorded by the Supervisor, so that progress developing the DMP can be discussed in future meetings.

The Supervisor is expected to discuss data management in the Learning Needs Analysis, and to recommend training on ‘Managing data and research material’ and/or ‘Writing a data management plan’ (delivered via RRDP). Information about support materials and services should be signposted.

The Supervisor may help the student to develop their DMP throughout the research programme, for example, by informally reviewing versions of the DMP outside of formal assessments and discussing the student’s data management needs as occasion arises.

Where the proposed research will not collect or create any new data, the Supervisor should record that the student is expected to submit a statement of exemption in their annual report.

If the Supervisor is in any doubt whether a DMP is required, a request for clarification should be submitted to the Research Data Manager.

First year annual review
The student is required to complete the Annual Review (DMP Pilot) Report Form instead of the standard Annual Review report form. The student must complete section A.2, stating whether or not primary data will be collected or created in the course of the research project. Where data will be collected or created and a DMP is required, the student must submit a first/updated version of the DMP using the template provided. A detailed guidance document is provided to help the student complete the DMP.

Where the student has stated in the Annual Review (DMP Pilot) Report Form that no primary data will be collected or created in the course of the research project, this will be confirmed by the Supervisor in section B.5 of the form.
Where a DMP is required, the Supervisor will record whether this has been submitted. Where a DMP has been submitted, this will be reviewed by Supervisor with reference to the DMP Review Guidance for Supervisors and the DMP Review Checklist. The Supervisor will record whether the DMP is satisfactory, and will note any comments and recommendations on the Annual Review (DMP Pilot) Report Form.

The assessment, and any comments or recommendations, will be recorded in the Annual Review (DMP Pilot) Assessor Form and made available to the student.

The main aim of the assessment in the first year is to establish that at least the outlines of a DMP are in place, and that the student has considered critical aspects of their data management plan, such as use of appropriate storage media/services, and seeking consent for data sharing from research participants. The Supervisor will identify any concerns or support requirements in their report and where necessary may recommend training/referral to Research Data Manager.

The records of annual reviews and copies of students’ Data Management Plans will be made available to the Research Data Manager for purposes of assessing the Pilot and providing support to students and supervisors as required.

Subsequent annual reviews

Unless exempt, the student is required to submit an updated version of their DMP using the template provided for each annual review, following the procedure set out above.

It is expected that the DMP will evolve in detail as the student’s research progresses. The Supervisor’s assessment will determine whether all relevant sections of the DMP should have been completed, all critical data management requirements have been taken into consideration, even if only in a provisional manner, and the student’s plan is appropriate to the research project and realistic.

Beyond the second year, the DMP may change in detail, but substantially it may not alter greatly. It will be helpful for the student to highlight where the DMP has been updated in the Changes from previous version section at the front of the DMP template.

The Supervisor will review the DMP to ensure that it remains relevant and appropriate to the research activity, but this should be a light-touch exercise focusing on areas where the DMP has been updated.

Deposit of awarded thesis and supporting data

When a student deposits the electronic version of their awarded thesis in CentAUR, and they have collected or created primary data in the course of their research, it is expected that:

- the data supporting the thesis will be deposited in a suitable data repository and made publicly accessible where possible, or, where it is necessary to protect confidentiality or proprietary interests, accessible to authorised applicants under controlled conditions;

- the thesis will include an actionable reference by DOI or other persistent unique identifier to the supporting data where appropriate in the body of the thesis and a full citation for the supporting data in the list of references;

- The URL link to the data will be included in the CentAUR metadata record.

The Research Data Manager will review deposited theses for compliance with these expectations.
Guidance on selecting a suitable data repository can be found at http://www.reading.ac.uk/reas-WheretoArchive.aspx.