Research Data Management Policy

VERSION 1.4 (December 2016)

**Context**
There is growing recognition that the maintenance of accurate and retrievable data arising from research projects is an essential component of good practice in the conduct of research. Indeed, the University considers that the appropriate and accurate management of research data to be a key component of research integrity.

At the same time the University recognises that research data arising from publicly-funded research should be treated as a public good, and made available to others wherever possible. In this regard the RCUK have set out a set of Common Principles on Data Policy. Whilst the effective management of data is particularly relevant for funded projects, the ultimate aim for this policy is to expand to any research data which researchers and students at the university believe has potential long term value in sharing and archiving. This will be achieved by recognizing different levels of priority. Application of this policy is essential where there is a funder requirement and this will be extended over time by supporting and encouraging changes in research practice to make archiving and sharing of research data achievable and productive for the researcher and discipline.

At the time of writing there is recognition that there is still progress to be made in research data management at Aston, and this policy seeks to address how we will achieve that.

**Scope**
This policy sets out the expectations that the University has of researchers and students with regards to the management of data arising from their research and the roles of the various individuals or services that will support this during the lifecycle of research data.

For the purposes of this policy, research data are defined as factual records, which may take the form of numbers, symbols, text, images or sounds, used as primary sources for research, and that are commonly accepted in the research community as necessary to validate research findings. Data may comprise primary raw data or secondary analysed data.

This policy should be used in conjunction with other University policies on:
- Intellectual Property (IP)
- Research Integrity
- Ethics
- Code of Conduct on Dealing with Allegations of Research Misconduct

**Expectations**
Research data should be:
- Accurate, complete, authentic and reliable;
- Identifiable, retrievable, and available when needed;
- Secure and safe;
- Kept in a manner that is compliant with legal obligations and, where applicable, the requirements of funding bodies and project-specific protocols approved by the University Ethics Committee;
- Able to be made available to others in line with appropriate ethical, data sharing and open access principles.

In addition:
• Publications are recommended to have Data Access Statement added prior to article submission where new research with long term value has been produced. This statement must include a persistent DOI which is linked to the landing page of the metadata. Note that this is an essential requirement of some funders.
• Aston Data Explorer (based on E-prints http://researchdata.aston.ac.uk/) should be used for recording the metadata associated with Research Data and linking this to publications.
• Data should be stored in a secure data repository suited to the data concerned. Aston provides a data archiving solution (Arkivum) linked to Aston Data Explorer. Any data which is retained outside Aston, for example in an international data service or domain repository, should be registered with the University by including the associated metadata and a link in e-prints.
• Data should be retained for a period which follows best practice in the discipline or funder requirements. If none exist, data will be retained by default for a period of 10 years after which a review takes place in deciding whether the data is worth keeping for longer.

Responsibilities
Researchers are responsible for:

• Managing research data and records in accordance with the principles and requirements set out in the expectations of this policy;
• At the outset of a research project, a Data Management Plan should be considered which documents clear procedures for the collection, storage, use, re-use, access and retention or destruction of the research data;
• 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 Executive Dean or her/his 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.

Research Group Heads or Associate Deans for Research are responsible for:

• Ensuring that researchers in their area are aware of this policy and their responsibilities in relation to it.
• Defining protocols or producing guidelines to assist researchers in their area to meet the requirements of this policy.

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 via Library Services;
• Providing the necessary resources to those central services (expected to be Library Services, the Research and Enterprise Office and IT Services) responsible for the provision of these services, facilities and training.

Review date
The implementation of this policy will be overseen by the University Research Committee and reviewed by this committee every two years.