Aston Data Explorer is Aston’s research data repository, based upon the E-prints software, which aims to maximise the visibility, usage and impact of research at the university to a global audience. Input of datasets will be through the Aston Data Explorer web interface (http://researchdata.aston.ac.uk/) which can be accessed by all researchers using their university login credentials, with both the metadata and data being stored. Long term archiving of the research data will be through Arkivum, where data will be pushed to from Aston Data Explorer. The repository is able to give dataset unique persistent identifiers (PID) in the form of Digital Object Identifiers (DOI) using the latest Datacite Metadata Schema.

The governance issues in this policy support the operation of Aston Data Explorer and need to be read in conjunction with Aston University Research Data Policy, Aston Data Explorer Terms and Conditions of Deposit, Aston Data Explorer Takedown Policy and the following Aston University Policies: Cookies and Privacy, Intellectual Property and Data Protection.

1. **What should be included in Aston Data Explorer**

1.1 **Research Data**

Metadata and data files underlying research publications including journal articles, conference papers, theses, technical reports and/or any data of long term value should normally be included. Datasets must have been produced at Aston by an Aston author or must have been funded by an Aston grant. The quantity of data to be shared must be decided by the author. A minimum amount of metadata is required before validation can take place, following the latest Datacite Metadata Scheme. Data can be either digital or physical. Digital data is recommended to be shared in a non-proprietary format or a commonly used file format. There is no limit in upload size. Physical data needs to be described by rich metadata which detail how it can be accessed. For funder compliance purposes, and to ensure data are discoverable and can be cited by others, we recommend that new datasets are routinely added by authors.

1.2 **Age of data**

Any research data output, no matter how old may be included, as long as it does not infringe copyright.

1.3 **Preferred format**

Non-proprietary formats are strongly recommended, although other formats are also acceptable if they are commonly used. On rare occasions, proprietary formats may be accepted if there are no alternative.

1.4 **Retention**

Data will be stored for a period of time which meets funder requirements. If no requirement exists, data will be stored for a period of 10 years following last access. Following this 10 year period, datasets will be retired and not appear on the live repository. On rare occasions, where the author of the dataset has justified their reasoning, datasets may appear on the repository for longer.

1.5 **Datasets from staff who leave Aston**

The deposits of staff who leave Aston University will remain in the repository. Staff who leave cannot archive their datasets in another repository the same dataset/s cannot have more than one persistent identifier.

1.6 **Publications from new members of staff**

Staff should only include datasets which they produce at Aston.

2. **What should not be included in Aston Data Explorer**

Data where any of the following apply should not be made publicly available in Aston Data Explorer. Authors should contact [Library Services](#) so ensure that access is properly restricted:
- If the material is to be commercialised, i.e. it relates to a patent. It is however expected that once a patent has been granted, data should be shared with appropriate restrictions/embargos applied
- Its inclusion would compromise confidentiality or individuals’ privacy
- It contains security sensitive information which may pose a security risk
- Its inclusion would infringe a legal commitment by the University and/or the author
- Was produced at another institution and is not the property of Aston University

Aston Data Explorer focuses on research, so University administrative or learning and teaching datasets are excluded.

3. **Preservation**

The repository will try to ensure continued readability and accessibility. Datasets will be migrated to new file formats where necessary. Long term preservation will be undertaken using Arkivum at their data centres around the UK under the ISO 27001 data security certification.

In the event of Aston Data Explorer being discontinued, best efforts will be made to transfer the contents to another appropriate repository.

4. **Copyright and Legalities**

4.1 **Access and Re-use of the contents of Aston Data Explorer**

- Metadata will be accessible to anyone free of charge. The metadata may be re-used in any medium without prior permission and re-sold commercially provided the repository is mentioned.
- Datasets can be accessed free of charge can be reused according to the licence which they come under.

4.2 **Copyright**

- If no external contract exists, all primary research data generated at Aston University during the course of research by researchers working at the university falls under the ownership of Aston University.
- The University may choose to restrict access to works, whether in part or in full, if copyright permission is in doubt or unavailable.
- Any copyright violations regarding the content of the datasets are entirely the responsibility of the authors/depositors. If the repository receives proof of copyright violation, the relevant item will be removed immediately.
- Datasets added without appropriate permissions may be removed at the request of the author/copyright holder.

4.3 **Takedown Policy**

In the event of a complaint from a user, the institution will adopt a safety-first approach and will have as a first action the removal of the dataset, and where necessary the metadata, from public view. The University Research Repository Specialist is responsible for the removal of the record, which should be actioned within 24 working hours of receipt of the complaint. Once removed from public view, the University Research Repository Specialist(s) are responsible for investigating the complaint and deciding whether it should be upheld, or whether the item can be reinstated. Acceptable reasons for withdrawal include:

- Proven copyright violation or plagiarism
- Legal requirements and proven violations
Withdrawn items are not deleted *per se*, but are removed from public view. Withdrawn items' identifiers/URLs are retained transiently. URLs will continue to point to 'tombstone' citations, to avoid broken links and to retain item histories, with a link to a replacement version, where available.

If necessary, an updated version may be deposited. The item's persistent URL will always link to the latest version. There will be links between earlier and later versions, with the most recent version clearly identified.

5 *Roles*

Authors are responsible for depositing sufficient metadata so that the dataset can be identified within the timescales as specified by funder or institutional policies. More sophisticated metadata may be added by a Research Repository Specialist.

Research Repository Specialists will load metadata where it is available from external sources e.g. publishers or databases such as Figshare. This is a supporting route to adding datasets and does not remove the author’s responsibility to deposit their publications.

The validity and authenticity of the content of submissions is the sole responsibility of the author making the deposit.

Authors may delegate the depositing, but although the depositor should take due care to ensure the validity and authenticity of the content of a submission, the final responsibility for ensuring the authenticity of a submission must rest with the author.

The Research Repository Specialist(s) validate records before they are published to ensure that metadata and data quality meet the repository’s criteria and are in line with funder and journal policies.