Research Data Management Policy

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) This Policy forms part of the Charles Sturt University (the University) governance framework for research data management by recognising research data as a valuable product of research activity that can assist in promoting open enquiry and debate, complementing research outputs and publications, providing research transparency, and justifying research outcomes.

(2) This Policy allows for research collaboration opportunities within the University and externally; will assist in increasing the research impact for the University and researchers by raising the profile of individuals; and contribute to innovation.

(3) The purpose of this Policy is to ensure a coordinated approach to research data management, which in turn will ensure improvement of research tools and services for researchers by:

  a. enabling the University to be consistent with relevant legislation and to comply with the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, hereto referred to as 'the Code'. This includes but is not limited to compliance with retention, accessibility, storage, and security standards;
  b. establishing a best-practice culture of data management within the University research community;
  c. where appropriate making existing data available for purposes other than its original intention; and
  d. improving research efficiency and effectiveness by the sharing of data that can be re-used.

Scope

(4) This Policy applies to all research conducted by or on behalf of all Charles Sturt University academic and general staff, adjuncts, contractors, consultants, partners, volunteers and students engaged in the creation, management, curation and use of research data in which ownership is vested in the University. This includes all disciplines across all faculties, divisions and research centres of the University.

(5) In addition to this Policy, all research is subject to the provisions of any relevant contracts or funding and/or collaboration agreements.

Section 2 - Glossary

(6) In this Policy:

  a. the University means Charles Sturt University.
  b. Code means the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research.
  c. Dataset means a collection of research data.
  d. Guidelines means the University's [Research Data Management Guidelines](#).
  e. Higher Degree Research (HDR) Student means a student registered in a Higher Degree Research (HDR) program of study, namely a Masters-by-Research degree or a Doctoral degree.
  f. Managing records means any action relating to the life cycle of a record, including the storage, assignment of

metadata, retrieval, transfer, preservation, and eventual destruction of records.

g. Metadata describes information about a dataset, such that a dataset can be understood, re-used, and integrated with other datasets. Information described in a metadata record includes where the data were collected, when they were collected and last updated, who is responsible for the dataset, why the dataset was created, and how the data are organised. Metadata generally follow a standard format, making it easier to compare datasets and to transfer files electronically.

h. Research data security refers to the protection of research data from unauthorised access, use, disclosure and destruction, as well as the prevention of unwanted changes that can affect the integrity of research data. Ensuring research data security requires paying attention to physical security, network security, and security of computer systems and files.

i. Research data relates to data collected, generated or used in research. This includes but is not limited to data in the form of facts, observations, images, computer program results, surveys, recordings, measurements or experiences on which an argument, theory, test or hypothesis, or another research output is based. Data may be numerical, textual, descriptive, visual or tactile and includes artifacts. It may be raw, learned or processed, and may be held in any format or media. Research data is collected or created, not authored.

j. Research data management means all the processes and actions required to manage and curate data throughout the research life-cycle to enable it to be preserved and accessible by a controlled audience for current and future research. It may include: data organisation; backups; archiving data for long-term preservation; data sharing or publishing; ensuring security of confidential data; and data synchronisation and disposal.

k. Data management means the whole research lifecycle including planning and designing, data collection and analysis, write up and dissemination of findings, and upon completion, storage, and/or disposal of the research project and all related data.

Section 3 - Responsibilities

(7) Researchers have a responsibility to:

a. ensure they understand and are aware of their legal, contractual and legislative obligations around the use of data in research activities;

b. develop a research data management plan in accordance with the [Research Data Management Guidelines](#);

c. make research data available for use by other researchers unless prevented by ethical, privacy, legal, and Intellectual Property (IP) and/or confidentiality matters;

d. retain research data for at least the minimum period specified as required by legislation, convention and policy or while interest and discussion persist following publication;

e. retain all relevant data and materials if the results are challenged or may be relevant to allegations or research misconduct until the matter is resolved;

f. keep clear and accurate records of the research methods and data sources, including any approvals granted, during and after the research process;

g. ensure that research data and primary materials are kept in safe and secure storage provided, even when not in current use;

h. provide the same level of care and protection to primary research records, such as laboratory notebooks, as to the analysed research data;

i. retain research data, including electronic data, in a durable, indexed, and retrievable form;

j. maintain a catalogue of research data in an accessible form; and

k. manage research data and primary materials according to ethical protocols and relevant legislation.

(8) The University has a responsibility to provide secure research data storage and record-keeping facilities enabling

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researchers to:

a. retain their research data and primary materials;

b. ensure security and confidentiality of research data and primary materials; and

c. promote the responsible conduct of research, which includes and is not limited to:

i. promoting awareness of guidelines and legislation relating to the conduct of research;

ii. providing documents setting out procedures and policies that make the Code clear and transparent to the research community;

iii. encouraging mutual cooperation with open exchange of ideas between peers and respect for freedom of expression and inquiry;

iv. establishing good governance and management practices surrounding research data management that will ultimately promote quality in research while enhancing the reputation of researchers and the University; and

v. providing information and training to all research staff and students in regards to research methods, ethics, confidentiality, and research data management, as well as policies and governance surrounding research at the University.

Section 4 - Data Management

Storage

(9) For research conducted by or on behalf of Charles Sturt University, the University will provide facilities or access to facilities for the safe and secure storage of research data and for maintaining records of where research data are stored. This includes the research data of undergraduate and post graduate by course work students researching/publishing in affiliation with the University.

(10) During the active research phase research data must be stored in suitable storage facilities either in the school, centre or institute, or centrally provided by the Division of Information Technology.

(11) After completion of the active research phase when research data needs to be in long-term storage, research data should be transferred to central storage facilities. Research data should be kept in durable formats to aid preservation and access, and it may be necessary to convert data into newer or more accessible formats over time.

(12) Where more than one institution is involved in a project, agreements will be developed from the outset in regards to storage of research data and primary materials in accordance with the Code.

Retention

(13) Data should be retained in a durable and retrievable format. The minimum recommended period for retention of research data is five years from the date of the last publication related to the data or five years from the date the data was last accessed. However, in any particular case, the period for which data should be retained is determined by the specific type of research. Detailed information for the types of research can be found in the Research Data Management Guidelines.

Disposal

(14) There is no requirement to dispose of research data. There is a minimum period that research data should be retained for and there is a requirement for the safe and secure storage of research data.

(15) If a decision is made to dispose of research data (after the minimum period has elapsed depending on the specific

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type of research or the period of time required to retain the research data has elapsed following the research being challenged or an allegation of research misconduct) then as a general rule, only after obtaining approval from the Records Management Unit or CSU Regional Archives, disposal of research data should be planned and deliberate, using secure disposal mechanisms (for example using a professional data erasing service to remove data on hard disk drives) so that they cannot be re-used in unauthorised ways.

Section 5 - Access to Research Data

(16) Research data must be easily identified, quickly retrievable and discoverable.

(17) Where appropriate, research data and primary materials should be made available for use by other researchers for further research unless precluded by the conditions under which they were obtained, privacy, or confidentiality matters. Researchers re-using data should consult with the original creator or collector or the current owner regarding access to data and primary materials. The original collectors and creators of research data should be acknowledged in future work and publication by subsequent users of data via the usual academic conventions and principles of citation.

(18) Researchers given access to confidential information must maintain that confidentiality.

Section 6 - Security of Research Data and Primary Materials

(19) Research data and primary materials must be maintained securely to prevent unauthorised access, destruction, alteration or removal, accidental or intended damage.

(20) Researchers must be aware of any relevant contractual and/or confidentiality agreements and the restrictions on the use of the research data, including but not limited to transfer of data, storage, and access.

Section 7 - Ownership of Research Data and Primary Materials

(21) Ownership of research data and primary materials for researchers and students is determined by the University's Intellectual Property Policy and Copyright Policy.

(22) Researchers must be aware that ownership of research data and primary materials may be influenced by funding agreements for projects.

Section 8 - Appendices (or Attachments)

(23) Refer to:

  a. Research Data Management Guidelines;
  b. possible additional attachments:
     i. an attachment providing resources to assist researchers in their data management planning, e.g. Tools for reference (bookmark for referral in your research practice);
     ii. Australian Research Data Commons (ARDC), data management planning resources;
     iii. Digital Curation Centre checklist, and online planning tool and other resources;
     iv. Purdue University Data Management Plan (DMP)Self-Assessment Tool;

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v. University of California Curation Centre DMP Tool.

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Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	1st August 2014
Review Date	26th January 2019
Approval Authority	Academic Senate
Approval Date	1st July 2014
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Unit Head	Michael Friend Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation)
Author	Andrea Bishop
Enquiries Contact	Office of Governance and Corporate Affairs +61 2 63384207