MAASTRICHT UNIVERSITY

Research Data Management Code of Conduct

Research data
Research data is valuable to Maastricht University (hereinafter: UM). It plays an increasingly important role in the scientific process and must be managed with care and integrity to ensure the reuse and verification of research data. Data management is indispensable to this process and includes all operations that make digital research data searchable, accessible and understandable in the long term. These operations include organisation, documentation, storage, sharing and archiving. Inherent security measures[1] and privacy legislation[2] play an important role, in addition to confidentiality, integrity and availability (the CIA triad). Data management works best when it is planned in the early stages of the research process. Data management plans, or data sharing plans, are excellent tools. In the context of data management, research data refers to all information that is collected during the scientific research process. There is a large variation in the type of research data. This can include text, images, sounds, spreadsheets, databases, statistical data, geographical data, etc. Depending on the research methods used, some data can be easily reproduced and others are determined by time and place. These qualities help determine the need for archiving the data.

1. Purpose

The purpose of research data management is to safeguard the accessibility of research data and protect it against theft, misuse, damage or loss. The researcher must ensure that his/her research data is properly documented, archived, retrievable and accessible to researchers at UM and other institutions and/or companies by way of (infrastructural) provisions for a sufficient period of time. This serves to support the underlying research (authentication, validation), to conduct new and innovative research based on existing information and to determine the necessary intellectual property rights involved in the research.

2. Storage

Research data must be stored and archived in the infrastructure facilities made available by UM at the end of the research project (or earlier depending on the relevant faculty guidelines or other applicable rules). If the research data is part of an external collection managed elsewhere, the UM researcher must adequately refer to this and include when (if applicable) and by whom this data can be consulted in the external collection.

---

[1] Please refer to the information security and classification guidelines on the UM website www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/informatiebeveiliging.
[2] The researcher must draft a privacy impact analysis (PIA) indicating the risks encountered and the measures employed to mitigate these risks, in accordance with the Dutch Data Protection Act. The PIA covers the entire research process (data acquisition, analysis, storage, retrieval, archiving and destruction). See also: www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/web/main1/sitewide/sitewide10/privacy.htm and the Personal Data Protection Act.

3. Retention period

To the extent that a long term is not required by a law, rule, contract, subsidy or faculty guideline, all research results must be stored for a period of at least ten years after the final publication of the relevant data.

4. Property

Research data generated by a researcher on behalf of UM in the context of employment, internship or secondment remain the principle property and the proprietary information of UM, unless otherwise agreed in a separate contract with a third party. The researcher must ensure that the data remains available for inspection and use by UM at all times during the retention period.

5. Retrieval

The researcher is responsible for ensuring that all data contains the necessary metadata. In the event of encrypted data, the researcher must store and archive the necessary key(s) separately from the data and in facilities provided by UM or third parties. This must be done at the end of the research project (or earlier depending on the relevant faculty guidelines or other applicable rules).

6. Public disclosure

Public disclosure of the research data by the researcher requires the written permission of the faculty dean (or a representative thereof), in accordance with Article 7. This consent shall not be unreasonably withheld and does not include scientific publications, such as articles, presentations or books. Should the researcher decide to publish the results, s/he must ensure that UM and/or third parties retain all intellectual property rights. The dean (or a representative thereof) may attach additional conditions to this clause.

7. Use of research data by other researchers

Should a researcher from UM or another institution and/or company submit a request to use the research data of a specific UM researcher, the latter (or a representative thereof) is authorised to grant or deny access. Additional conditions may apply to this authorisation process (on behalf of the UM researcher or a representative thereof).

8. Inspection by a non-mainstream external scientific party

Should a non-mainstream external scientific party wish to inspect the research data, the president of the Executive Board is authorised to grant permission. The president will, to the best of his ability, consult with the researcher and the dean of the relevant faculty before granting permission, with the interests of the researcher in mind. The president of the Executive Board may set additional conditions to this request procedure.

9. Privacy and confidentiality

Without prejudice to Point 5 of this guideline, research data may only be published or made available to third parties insofar as it does not conflict with any applicable statutory provisions (such as the Data Protection Act) or any other (confidentiality) agreements with regard to the research data (e.g. medical ethics committee, clients or partners based on contracts or subsidy agreements) and is not in conflict with the Guidelines Governing the use of Personal Information in Scientific Research.

10. Additional faculty guidelines

The faculty dean reserves the right to implement additional faculty guidelines governing research data management.

11. Compliance and monitoring

Compliance with these guidelines and other additional faculty guidelines is the primary responsibility of the researcher. The faculty dean is responsible for monitoring and ensuring this compliance within the faculty.

Executive Board, March 2014

2