

Definitions

Please refer to USC's Glossary of terms for policies and procedures. Terms and definitions identified below are specific to this policy and are critical to its effectiveness.

The Code: the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research.

Higher Degree by Research (HDR) students: students enrolled in a research master's or doctoral degree.

Primary materials: physical or virtual objects acquired or derived through a process of scholarly investigation from which research data may be derived. It includes, but is not limited to, ore, biological materials, questionnaires or recordings.

Research: as defined in the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research.

Research data: any data collected during research that could be used to validate the research findings and/or facilitate the reproduction of the research. This includes data in all forms (e.g. electronic, lab notes, surveys, field notes, datasets, audio recordings, test results).

Researcher: all staff, students, research trainees, adjunct and conjoint appointments, visiting academics, and research fellows who engage in research activity under the auspices of USC.

APPROVAL AUTHORITY

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation)

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation)

DESIGNATED OFFICER

Director, Office of Research

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1. Purpose of procedures

1.1 This document outlines the responsibilities for the storage and management of research data and materials in compliance with the Code, the Responsible Research Conduct – Governing Policy, and other relevant legislation.

1.2 These procedures apply to all staff, students, research trainees, adjunct and conjoint appointments, visiting academics, and research fellows who engage in research activity under the auspices of USC.

1.3 USC acknowledges that it may not always be possible to retain all primary materials; however, durable records derived from them (such as assays, test results, transcripts, and laboratory and field notes) must be retained and accessible.

1.4 Please refer to section 7.1 'Management of research data and primary materials' of the Responsible Research Conduct – Governing Policy when consulting these procedures.

2. Management of research data and primary materials

2.1 In accordance with the Responsible Research Conduct – Governing Policy, where possible, all research data and related materials must be stored at USC. Electronic storage facilities are managed by the USC Library (R drive). Where R drive is not sufficient, Information Technology Services (ITS) may provide alternative storage solutions. Physical storage options are to be provided by schools, research centres, and/or departments.

2.2 A research data management plan (RDMP) assists USC researchers to consolidate information regarding the management of data for their research projects and is required for access to electronic storage facilities managed by the library. Research students will need to complete the RDMP in conjunction with their supervisor.

2.3 RDMPs may be required for externally funded research projects; therefore, in addition to USC requirements, researchers will need to consult the specific grant conditions to ensure they comply with data storage requirements.

2.4 RDMPs are recommended regardless of the data storage facility being used, and should be completed prior to the start of the research project and updated throughout the lifecycle of the project to reflect changes.

2.5 Where the RDMP is not completed, researchers must use the Location of Research Data and Materials form and lodge it with the USC Library to be recorded on the data registry.

2.6 In cases where research data cannot be stored at USC, the Location of Research Data and Materials form must be completed and submitted to the Office of Research for approval prior to the start of the research project. Once approved, the form will be lodged with the USC Library and information recorded on the data registry.

3. Researcher responsibilities

Researchers are required to:

- 3.1 Complete a RDMP plan or Location of Research Data and Materials form as per section 2 of these procedures.
- 3.2 Create and maintain full and accurate records of the research methods and data sources, such as notes, diary entries, questionnaires, laboratory books, etc., and ensure the data are stored securely in accordance with section 2 of these procedures.
- 3.3 Manage research data and materials and related records according to protocols approved by the human research or animal ethics committees, if applicable, and in accordance with relevant laboratory and legislative requirements.
- 3.4 Ensure that adequate backup, archival and monitoring strategies are in place to prevent the loss of research data and materials, and to minimise delays in the completion of the research.
- 3.5 Meet the minimum retention periods for research data and primary materials in accordance with the Queensland State Archives University Sector Retention and Disposal Schedule.
- 3.6 Ensure a written agreement is developed prior to the beginning of the project covering ownership of research data and materials for projects operating across institutions.
- 3.7 Store all electronic data on the local server as outlined in section 2 of these procedures. Working files may be stored on an individual's computer hard drive, USB drive or personal laptop, but particular care must be taken to ensure that portable devices are not lost and are backed up on the server frequently (daily if possible, but at least every 48 to 72 hours). Where working files are stored in such a manner, data must be stored in at least two locations to mitigate complete loss of one copy. Files within the folder should be clearly named so that researchers/supervisors and appropriate delegated officers can find relevant documents, spreadsheets, analysis and other data.
- 3.8 Store electronic data with appropriate metadata describing how, when and where it was generated, state instrument settings and software used.
- 3.9 Consult Information Technology Services (ITS) to determine the appropriate current mechanisms to store data sets, if relevant. Large data sets should have RDMPs, risk assessments and transition or disengagement plans, with the latter necessary where the research data are created from data owned by a third party. Large data sets may need risk assessments to include risks associated with long term storage.
- 3.10 Ensure any physical research data and primary materials are stored securely at USC, the location of which is documented in accordance with section 2 of these procedures.

4. Responsibilities of HDR supervisors

Supervisors of HDR students are required to:

- 4.1 In consultation with the student, prepare a RDMP or location of research data and materials form before the research commences, as per section 2 of these procedures.
- 4.2 Share responsibility for the storage and management of research data and materials for the student's research project.
- 4.3 Familiarise themselves with the legislative and regulatory requirements and funding body or collaboration conditions relating to the research project.

5. Limited access databases

5.1 In cases where research data have been obtained from limited access research databases, or in a contracted project, it may not be possible to store the research data in accordance with the above requirements. In such cases, a written description of the location of the original research data, or key information regarding the limited access research database from which it was extracted, should be kept as part of the records for the project.

6. Access

- 6.1 Research data and materials giving rise to publications must be available for discussion with other researchers, subject to any confidentiality, contractual, privacy or patent protection requirements.
- 6.2 During the research activity, requests by other researchers to access data and materials should be directed to the lead researcher who may refer the request to the relevant head of school or research centre director. Transition management plans for provision of research data to other researchers should be considered.
- 6.3 On completion or abandonment of any research project, all access requests shall be directed to the relevant head of school or research centre director who shall:
 - consult with the researcher and their supervisor
 - consider the ethical, privacy, contractual, confidentiality and patent protection issues

- consider the potential value of the research data and materials and related records for further research, particularly where the research would be difficult or impossible to repeat
- ensure the independence of the research project, and
- optimise areas of synergy with other USC research projects or research collaborators.

6.4 Access authorisations may be reviewed by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) on the request of any researcher.

6.5 Researchers given access to confidential research data and materials must maintain that confidentiality.

7. Retention and disposal

7.1 The minimum retention period for research data and primary materials will be according to the Queensland State Archives University Sector Retention and Disposal Schedule. Some research data may be permanently retained, for example, where the project is of high public interest or significance to the discipline.

7.2 Disposal of research data and materials, including orphaned data, must be in accordance with relevant legislative requirements and the minimum retention period outlined in the Queensland State Archives University Sector Retention and Disposal Schedule.

7.3 Where the location of research data and materials and related records is changed within the university, the RDMP or Location of Research Data and Materials form must be updated by the person responsible to reflect the new location and the form submitted to the USC Library to be recorded in the data registry.

8. Retention of duplicate copy

8.1 As per section 7 of the Responsible Research Conduct - Governing Policy, all original research data and materials and related records must remain at USC.

8.2 Researchers who leave USC may negotiate with the relevant head of school or research centre director to take copies of research data and materials and related records for projects which they have conducted during their time at USC for their own use.

8.3 Duplicate copies may be disposed of at any time by the researcher. Permission to dispose of copies and duplicates is not required; however, due care must be taken to ensure that disposal is secure and takes account of the confidentiality and possible sensitivity of the research data and materials and related records.

9. Transfer of research data or primary material

9.1 Before transferring any research data or materials to or from USC (either domestic or international), a material transfer agreement (MTA) or a collaboration agreement defining the rights and obligations of both parties in respect of the research data or materials must be developed.

9.2 Prior to importing or exporting any material, researchers must familiarise themselves and ensure compliance with all customs, export trade controls, Australian Quarantine Inspection Service (AQIS) rules, regulations or laws.

9.3 If a researcher transfers from USC to another institution, or from another institution to USC, a written agreement must be developed between both institutions and the researcher in respect of ownership, custodianship, transfer of responsibilities and any desirable ongoing access to the research data and materials by USC.

END

Appendix

Location of Research Data and Materials form

- For staff – refer to MyUSC.
- For HDR Students – refer to BlackBoard, under Research and Research Training.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

Authorship and Dissemination of Research Findings - Procedures
Disposal of Digitised Records - Procedures
Information and Records Management - Procedures
Information Management Framework - Governing Policy
Managing and Investigating Breaches of Responsible Research Conduct - Procedures
Responsible Research Conduct - Governing Policy

LINKED DOCUMENTS

Responsible Research Conduct - Governing Policy

SUPERSEDED DOCUMENTS

Research Data and Materials - Procedures

RELATED LEGISLATION / STANDARDS

Right to Information Act 2009 (Qld)
Public Records Act 2002 (Qld)
Queensland Information Standards
Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2018)