

UCL Research Data Policy

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Topic: Research data

Type of initiative: Policy / strategy / plan

Implementation scale: Local

Responsible agents: Universities (governing bodies), Researchers, Libraries

Location: United Kingdom

Keywords: FAIR data, repositories, open data, digital preservation

Start and end date: 2020 -

Sustainability: Yes

Summary

The University College London (UCL) Research Information and IT Services group develops UCL's research data management policy, which includes:

- Policy background: definitions, research data management, and challenges.
- Policy objectives.
- Policies.
- Responsibilities, roles, and recommendations for students and researchers, departmental research leadership positions, and information-related services such as IT and libraries.
- Implementation of the research data management policies.

At the same time, UCL provides procedural guidance on data planning and preparation, the data creation process, data storage and preservation, and data discovery, search, and reuse.

Promoting organizations

The UCL Research Data Policy is driven and maintained by the UCL Research Information and IT Services Group (RIISG), within UCL's central information services. Its implementation is supported by UCL Research Data Services and UCL Library Services (the Research Data Management team). Institutional oversight lies with the Vice-Provost (Research) and the Provost, and periodic reviews are carried out by the UCL Office for Open Science.

Objectives

The purpose of these policies is to provide a framework that defines the responsibilities of UCL staff and students in managing their research data, with the aim of facilitating access to and preservation of the data and making them available in order to increase their impact.

The research data policy seeks to ensure that data are created to be FAIR (findable, accessible, interoperable and reusable), meaning that they are:

- Accurate, complete, authentic and reliable.
- Attributable and citable.
- Identifiable, retrievable and accessible with as few barriers as possible.
- Protected against loss and information degradation.
- Preserved for at least 10 years after publication or release.
- Compliant with legal and ethical obligations and aligned with funder requirements.

Beneficiaries and stakeholders

The main beneficiaries will be researchers and knowledge professionals, students, and ultimately society as a whole, which will benefit from shared knowledge that will in turn generate new knowledge.

Results

As a direct result of implementing these policies, a set of information resources and services around research data has been developed so that everyone with responsibilities in the creation, management, and handling of data knows what they need to do with them at each stage.

In addition to establishing [UCL's research data repository](#), the university also provides access to a wide range of resources to learn how to work with research data and make them FAIR: access to MANTRA (an online tool developed by the University of Edinburgh to strengthen skills and practical knowledge in research data management), online information and training on data security, introductory research support courses aimed mainly at doctoral students, and subject-specific resources for managing research data.

Among other materials, UCL offers tailored resources for research groups and researchers, students, and librarians, IT managers, and facilitators, to address the specific needs of these communities in relation to research data management.

Challenges

The main challenges addressed fall into four areas: cultural factors related to incentives to accept and commit to open science; technical factors such as the accessibility of infrastructures and data; organizational factors such as training and guidance (know-how); and, finally, economic factors, especially those related to supporting researchers and scientific publishing.

Interest and transferability

The statements of this policy will ensure:

- That data are as open as possible and as closed as necessary.
- That responsibilities for managing and preserving data are shared across all members of UCL.
- That primary research data are preserved in the long term and made accessible for as long as needed.
- That clear lines of responsibility are established for data and their preservation.
- That all datasets, regardless of whether they are deposited or how open they are, should be registered in UCL's Research Publications Service or in the UCL Research Data Repository.

This policy is considered a good practice in research data management and in open science more broadly because it not only sets out the overarching framework and statements of intent, but also provides a set of technical guidelines and procedures aimed at ensuring these policies are implemented as efficiently and clearly as possible.

As part of this approach, UCL provides a research data repository whose benefits include long-term data preservation; appropriate storage that enables global access and sharing; compliance with funder mandates and the FAIR principles; support for multiple formats to ensure interoperability and reuse; increased data citations through the use of unique identifiers; improved data discovery; the option to embargo data when necessary; and support for collaboration between research teams.

Bibliography

- UCL Research Data Policy:
https://www.ucl.ac.uk/isd/sites/isd/files/ucl_research_data_policy_v6.pdf
- Research Data Management: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/library/research-support/research-data-management>

- Lifecycle-based Research Data Management How-to Guides (by phases):
<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/library/research-support/research-data-management/best-practices/how-guides>
- UCL Research Data Repository: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/library/open-science-research-support/research-data-management/ucl-research-data-repository>
- Research Data Services – Objectives and Policies:
<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/isd/services/research-it/research-data-services-objectives-and-policies>

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