



RESEARCH DATA SERVICES

AUBURN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

Managing your research data effectively benefits other investigators, the community, future scholars...and you.

PLAN

Research data management is most efficient when it follows a plan. Whether or not your grant requires a data management plan, it's best to design data management procedures into the research project from the beginning to prevent problems down the line. Certain sponsors even allow (and expect) costs associated with data management to be part of the budget.

▷ We provide consultations on creating data management plans and help train research personnel, including graduate students, in proper data management procedures for your project.

DOCUMENT

Good data documentation is good research practice. Appropriate metadata is necessary to discover and reuse datasets, even within the same lab. However, the complex workflows and expansive collaborations typical of modern research increase the risk of losing important documentation and metadata. Metadata created in one program may be lost as files are copied or processed by another. When datasets are published, inadequate metadata reduces the potential for reuse and citation.

▷ Contact us to help you integrate data management into your workflow. We can introduce you and your staff to tools that make documentation and version control easier.

ARCHIVE

Research data maintains its value when protected against degradation and loss, and funding agencies often have data retention policies. Additionally, while not all data can be shared, investigators who do share data raise their research profile and their citation count – datasets can be cited just as books and articles are, and new metrics are available to track their research impact.

▷ We can help you safely archive your work to ensure its preservation and long-term compatibility. We can also walk you through the repository deposit process to ensure others can use and cite your data.

For data-related inquiries
or consultations contact:

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Frequently Asked Questions

What is the rationale behind best practices in research data management?

Good data management is designed to facilitate meaningful reuse of data in the future. Preservation of data is important, but it is not enough – data without documentation often can't be understood, much less interpreted, later on.

I can't or don't want to share my data. Do I still need to worry about data management?

Yes. Management is not synonymous with sharing. Confidential and protected data also need to be well-documented and stored securely. In addition, stakeholders benefit when data is managed appropriately, even if those data will never be made widely available.

I'm not concerned about reuse after publication. Is data management relevant to me?

The people most likely to reuse your data are you and your collaborators or students. Good data management improves the chances that you can continue to publish new analyses or insights from your work. Sound data workflows also help identify what is still useful and what can be discarded.

I want to manage my data correctly, but I'm already swamped. How can I justify the additional effort?

You don't have to do everything by yourself. Contact the research data management librarian to set up a consultation or to train your students and staff so you can delegate these tasks with confidence. Research data management is a fast-developing field – we are here to help.

Additional Resources

Research Data Services at the Library: libguides.auburn.edu/researchdata

DMPTool: dmptool.org

DataONE (environmental/earth sciences): dataone.org

ICPSR (social sciences): icpsr.umich.edu

Digital Curation Centre: dcc.ac.uk

Center for Open Science: cos.io