



MANAGING RESEARCH DATA

Why do you need to manage your research data?

Research data needs to be organized, stored, shared and protected appropriately so that you have robust evidence to justify your findings.

Research data management requirements are outlined in Curtin's [Research Data and Primary Materials Policy](#), [Information Management Policy](#) and the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#).

What do you need to consider before starting a project?

At the time of developing a project proposal you should also create a plan for how you will manage your data, as it may have an impact on the project budget and contract negotiations.

Key questions to consider are:

• What kind of data will you be capturing?	• Who owns the data?
• Where will it be kept?	• Who will have access to it?
• Will it be sensitive or confidential?	• How will the data be protected?
• What volume of data will be collected/generated?	• How will the data be shared?
• Does it need to be available to non-Curtin collaborators?	• Will those collaborators be based outside of Australia?
• How will the data be organised?	• How long will it need to be kept for?
• Will it be in hard copy, electronic or both?	• If the data is coming from a third party, are there restrictions on its use or storage?
• What is the anticipated lifespan of the data, is it going to be utilised for years to come?	• What will you do with the data once the project is completed?

A key part of your research project plan is a **Research Data Management Plan**.

What is a Research Data Management Plan?

A [Research Data Management Plan \(RDMP\)](#) describes how you will manage your research data.

Prior to completing a RDMP, review the research data management [Research Data Management LibGuide](#) which covers topics such as Data Management Plans, describing data, file management, storage, access, preservation, publication and re-use.

Completing a RDMP is compulsory for all ethics and Higher Degree by Research (HDR) candidacy applications. It is also a requirement before you can be allocated space on the [Research Drive \(R Drive\)](#) which is the key place to store digital research data at Curtin. If your data is in a format or system that cannot be saved into the R Drive, refer to the [LibGuide](#) and/or contact [Digital and Technology Solutions \(DTS\)](#). HDR students will require their supervisor to request R drive access on their behalf.

What to do with your data at the end of the Project

Research data generated and/or managed by Curtin academic staff (and HDR students) is owned by the University (*unless otherwise specified in a legal agreement*) and, therefore, needs to be kept for set periods of time. The length of time will depend upon the significance of the research. Details of these periods can be found in the [Western Australian University Sector Disposal Authority \(WAUSDA\)](#) and are built into the RDMP template. A brief summary of the time periods is provided over the page:

DESCRIPTION OF RECORDS	RETENTION INSTRUCTIONS
Major research data, analysis and results.	Curtin to retain permanently.
Minor research data, analysis and results involving use of high risk material such as teratogens and carcinogens, ionising radiation or dangerous drugs.	Curtin to keep for at least 50 years after date of publication, or 50 years after the project ends, whichever is later.
Minor research data, analysis and results, but involving clinical trials.	Curtin to keep for at least 15 years after date of publication, or 15 years after the project ends, whichever is later.
Minor research data, analysis and results, but involving children (<18 years).	Curtin to keep for at least 7 years after publication or project completion, or the subject/s have reached 25 years of age, whichever is later.
All other minor research data, analysis and results	Curtin to keep for at least 7 years after date of publication, or 7 years after the project ends, whichever is later.
Research data, analysis and results relating to short-term research projects undertaken by students for assessment purposes (e.g. <i>undergraduate degree projects</i>).	Curtin to keep for at least 12 months after the project ends.
Large scale datasets collected for the purpose of future research opportunities. May include observational (such as radio telescope data) or machine generated data.	Curtin to keep for at least 12 months after last action
Routine observational data generated by radio telescopes deemed unusable.	Delete once deemed unusable
Research data where consent for use has been withdrawn by the participant.	Retain until notified of withdrawal, then destroy

Please note that even once the data has been kept for the minimum period required by the WAUSDA, the only Curtin Information Management and Archives staff are authorised to destroy or delete it.

Digital data

If your data is in the R Drive then leave it there and Curtin will ensure it is kept for the appropriate time as per your Research Data Management Plan. If your data is held elsewhere contact Curtin Information Management and Archives for advice.

Hard copy data

Once hard copy research data is no longer being used it should be processed and submitted to Curtin Information Management and Archives for storage or destruction. It is recommended that you work with staff in your area who have been specifically trained to submit hard copy information to us. If there is no-one in your area then please contact us for further assistance.

Information supporting research data

Don't forget that information you may generate or use that supports the research data (e.g. consent forms) also needs to be properly managed and kept for the set periods of time.

Further Assistance

If you require assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us via phone on 9266 7050 or by email at: InformationManagementandArchives@curtin.edu.au.