Research Integrity - Research Data Management Procedure

Section 1 - Summary

(1) This Procedure describes the University's processes in relation to the management of Research Data at the University, from initial research conceptualisation through to research project conclusion and is related to the [Research Integrity Policy](#).

Section 2 - Scope

(2) This Procedure applies to all Victoria University staff, Higher Degree by Research (HDR) Candidates, students, adjuncts and visitors at all campuses of the University engaging in research, including instances where collaborating with researchers based at other institutions.

(3) This Procedure outlines minimum requirements in relation to research data management. Its application is subject to provisions outlined in any relevant research contract or funding/collaboration agreement.

(4) This Procedure does not apply to the management of Primary Materials.

Section 3 - Policy/Regulation

(5) [Research Integrity Policy](#)

Section 4 - Procedures

Part A - Summary of Roles and Responsibilities

Roles	Responsibilities
Senior Manager, Research Ethics and Integrity, GRS	Co-ordinate and monitor institutional policies in regards to Research Integrity Provide training for researchers
Researchers and Higher Degree by Research (HDR) Candidates	Complete a Research Data and Materials Plan for each research project Retention of clear, accurate, secure and complete records of all research data and primary materials and publication of research using research data Where possible and appropriate, allow access and reference to research data by interested parties Manage confidential and other sensitive information Acknowledge the use of others' data Complete required and relevant training

Roles	Responsibilities
Graduate Research School – Researcher Professional Development	Provide ongoing training and education that promotes and supports responsible research conduct for researchers and those in other relevant roles Ensure supervisors of research trainees have the appropriate skills, qualifications and resources
Research Services – Research Data Reporting and eResearch within Research Services	Research Data and Reporting: Support the VU researcher in meeting reporting obligations to the University and the Government Provide assistance with accessing research technology Maintain availability and access to the R Drive Co-ordinate and monitor Research Data and Materials Plans for research projects or activities E-Research: Advise in relation to eResearch – costing of technology aspects of proposals, software, online web portals, database and data analysis, and digital research methods
Victoria University –Digital and Campus Services	Ensure availability and security of R Drive, and cyber security checks across VU's IT ecosystems/infrastructure
Victoria University Library	Assist researchers with the inclusion of research publications into the research repository so that they can be made available to the public Support university-wide literacy on Data Management procedure. This includes: a. oversight of the Data Management Library Guide for HDR Students and Researchers including Sports Science Data b. Support HDR students and Researchers with RDM Plans and other issues c. Provide RDM workshops and Online Module d. Liaise with Moondani Balluk to ensure that Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Governance is integrated and supported by the library's literacy work on Data Management

Part B - Procedural Principles

(6) The University follows the conventions of attribution as set out in the Management of Data and Information in Research: A guide supporting the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, a guide supporting the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2018) (Cth).

(7) Research at Victoria University is conducted in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2025 and the Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes regarding ethical research. Also, in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council: Ethical Conduct in Research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and Communities: Guidelines for Researchers and Stakeholders, 2018 and the AIATSIS Code Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research.

(8) A potential breach of the Code is managed by the University in accordance with the National Guide to Managing and Investigating Potential Breaches of the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, 2018 (the Investigation Guide), the Victoria University Research Integrity Policy, the NHMRC good practice guide Authorship: A guide supporting the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, Peer Review - A guide supporting the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research and the University's Research Integrity - Guide to the Management of Potential Breaches of the Australian Code Procedure and other NHMRC good practice guides released

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in support of the Code.

Part C - Management of Research Data Awareness and Responsibility

(9) Research supervisors of staff and HDR candidates must take all reasonable steps to ensure those conducting research are aware, in advance of commencement of research and beyond, of their obligations under this Procedure and of the guidance provided at the Victoria University Research Data Management webpage.

(10) Data stored by the University is retained in accordance with national guidelines for retention and destruction of research data, any additional contractual or legal requirements, and with regard to ethics guidelines, privacy legislation, other relevant laws, and research-specific practices and standards. At Victoria University these include the Information Security Policy, Privacy Procedure, Records Management Policy and all related Procedures including the Records Management - Disposal of Records Procedure.

(11) Where possible, the University will follow the FAIR Data Principles in relation to ensuring findability, storage and accessibility of research datasets owned by Victoria University and the Indigenous Data Sovereignty principles in relation to the purpose, storage and accessibility of research datasets relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, created or held by Victoria University.

(12) Subject to the University's Intellectual Property Regulations 2013 or agreement with a third party, the University will assert ownership of research data and materials created or collected by employees in the course of their employment with the University, or by visiting researchers engaged in activities using the University resources.

(13) The University will not assert ownership of research data and materials created or collected by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders nor Victoria University Higher Degree candidates except where there is a written agreement between the University and the candidate or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander assigning ownership to the University. However, the University still requires compliance with University guidance in the appropriate handling and storage of research data to ensure that research outcomes can be justified and defended and to ensure compliance with related legislation, such as privacy and information security as is mentioned in clause (10).

(14) The University will provide guidance to its researchers and Higher Degree Research candidates through this Procedure on the appropriate handling of research data, such that the outcomes of the research can be justified and defended, and to facilitate the availability of data for further research where practical.

(15) The University will assist researchers to access adequate storage facilities to ensure the safe and secure storage of research data created by University researchers and Higher Degree Research candidates.

(16) Where Victoria University researchers or Higher Degree Research candidates contribute to research data as a named investigator, a Research Data and Materials Plan will be submitted to the University outlining storage arrangements, access, and ownership of the research data.

(17) Where research data or materials are created in collaboration with another institution or individuals external to Victoria University, a written agreement must be formed between the parties which sets out the ownership, storage, access and management of the research data.

(18) Training will be provided to Victoria University researchers and Higher Degree Research candidates to facilitate compliance with the Research Integrity Policy and this Procedure.

(19) The University will facilitate access to data and data sharing, as appropriate, in accordance with current national principles.

(20) If a Victoria University researcher leaves Victoria University and moves to another institution an agreement may be formed to transfer research data or materials to that institution, subject to this Procedure.

Part D - Data Management Responsibilities

(21) Researchers are required to complete a [Research Data and Materials Plan](#) for each new research project.

(22) The [Research Data and Materials Plan](#) will set out:

a. the location/s where the research data and materials will be stored

b. in what form the research data and materials will be stored (identified, coded, de-identified), the location of the code key or identifiers, if any, and risk management strategies regarding avoidance of possible re-identification

c. the duration for which research data and materials will be stored and the reason for the nominated duration

d. custodianship, and details of who will have access to the research data, identifiers and materials, including any third parties, and limitations of their rights to access

e. ownership of the research data and materials, and limitations or restrictions applying to access, storage, disposal, sharing and re-use of data, and

f. whether the research data and materials are required to be submitted to an external party (e.g. as a contractual requirement of the funding agreement or publisher), or whether a Material Transfer Agreement (MTA) will be needed, (in the case of transfer of biological materials between universities) see the Victoria University [Biosafety - Packaging and Transport of Biological Materials Procedure](#).

g. Note: in relation to Indigenous research data management factors such as [AIATSIS Code Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research](#) (4.1) consider:

    i. how and by whom the data will be stored or archived;

    ii. who can access the data, who can use the data and for what purpose;

    iii. from whom permission is to be sought to access or use the data and potential secondary use of data in the future — an individual, group or organisation;

    iv. benefit to Indigenous partners or participants;

    v. practical steps that will be taken to ensure that the data is of a suitable qualitative standard and preservable and manageable in accordance with the views of communities and individuals.

(23) A [Research Data Materials Plan](#) is required for each research project or activity. Staff and student researchers must submit their [Research Data and Materials Plan](#) to Research Services via the VU Support Hub R: Drive request if they are applying for a R drive folder.

(24) HDR candidates must ensure that the [Research Data and Materials Plan](#) relating to their project is completed and submitted prior to commencing research.

(25) Staff conducting research and HDR candidates must review their [Research Data and Materials Plan](#) annually and provide a revised Plan, as necessary.

(26) The [Research Data and Materials Plan](#) is required to be finalised at the time of the Final Report on a research project, or the final submission of the thesis to the University by submission to eResearch@vu.edu.au.

Part E - Data Storage

(27) Staff conducting research and HDR candidates are required to store electronic copies of research data, materials and related materials securely at all times throughout the life of a project on the R Drive or for physical forms, in locked filing cabinets to ensure adequate protection in accordance with the [Information Security Policy](#) and [Records Management Policy](#). The University will assist researchers to access the R Drive for centralised storage of research data, materials and related records.

(28) Original or master copies of research metadata, materials and related records should not be stored on portable

hard drives, USB devices or laptops.

(29) A master copy of all research metadata, materials and related records must be stored on University approved data storage infrastructure.

Part F - Data Retention and Disposal

(30) Research data, materials and related records must be retained for at least the minimum periods in accordance with the [Records Management Policy](#) and any requirements stipulated by ethical approvals or contractual agreements. Metadata should continue to be available even if the data themselves are unavailable.

(31) As a minimum, research data and materials should be retained for at least five years after the date of last publication. The retention period can vary depending on the discipline and type of research and other institutional policies, for example:

  a. Clinical trials research data may be required to be retained for 15 years or more
  b. Gene therapy research data must be retained permanently
  c. Community and heritage value research data must be retained permanently
  d. If results from research are challenged, all relevant data and materials must be retained until the matter is resolved.

(32) Researchers (Staff/HDRs) are required to specify who will provide ongoing management for their data as part of their Research Data Plan and university exit strategy. Where researchers/HDRs have left the university and can't be contacted, the requirement that Institute Directors decide on whether data should be retained or destroyed addresses this gap.

(33) The [FAIR principles](#) state that research metadata should continue to be available even if the data themselves are unavailable and should not be destroyed.

(34) Research data identifier information must be preserved for long enough to ensure that participants can be traced in the event that evidence of long term health-related impacts related to the research emerges.

(35) Research which has community or heritage value should be retained indefinitely, and submitted to national collections, as appropriate in accordance with the [Records Management Policy](#).

(36) Research data and materials must not be disposed of at any time unless the owner of the data has been consulted and agreed to their disposal. It is strongly recommended that researchers should start developing an exit plan with their supervisors and immediate collaborators, at least a month before leaving the University. The exit strategy should ensure that any data leaving the University is also archived at University and state clearly who is responsible for the ongoing management and if relevant, the dissemination of data.

  a. All research data that are created by students during the course of their study are intellectual property of students
  b. Research data created by Victoria University staff are intellectual property of Victoria University.

Part G - Data Access and Re-Use

(37) Researchers undertaking research which has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee must adhere to the [National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2025](#), which requires research data and information to be stored in such a way that it can be used for future research projects, unless sufficient justification is provided to not make the data or information accessible.

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(38) Researchers engaged in publicly-funded research must adhere to the access and re-use requirements of the applicable funding body. Specifically, research funded by the Australian Research Council (ARC) must be managed in accordance with the [Australian Research Council (ARC) Open Access Policy](#) and research funded by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) must be managed in accordance with the [National Health and Medical Research Council's (NHMRC) Open Access Policy](#).

Part H - Breaches of the Code

(39) Failure to comply with this Procedure may result in a breach of the [Code](#) and are managed in accordance with the [Research Integrity Policy](#) and the [Research Integrity - Guide to the Management of Potential Breaches of the Australian Code Procedure](#).

(40) Examples of breaches of the Code include, but are not limited to:

a. falsification of research data or primary materials

b. fabrication of research data or primary materials

c. failure to notify the University and relevant authorities from whom the data is sourced, e.g. in the case of a biobank, as may be required in a timely manner of a data breach or instance of inappropriate access to data held by the researcher

d. failure to retain clear, accurate, secure and complete records of all research including research data and primary materials

e. failure to adhere to the conditions of this Procedure that relate to the retention, sharing or destruction of research data or primary materials

f. selective retention of research data or primary materials so as to hinder the verifiability of a research output or access request

g. failure to apply appropriate security controls to research data or primary materials

h. failure to obtain necessary approvals or acting inconsistently with a condition of any approval granted in relation to the management of research data or primary materials.

Section 5 - HESF/ASQA/ESOS Alignment

(41) HESF: Standards 4.1 Research; 4.2 Research Training; 5.2 Academic and Research Integrity; 7.3 Information Management.

Section 6 - Definitions

(42) Primary Materials: Physical objects acquired through a process of scholarly investigation from which Research Data may be derived. Includes, but is not limited to, ore, biological material, survey questionnaires, measurements, recordings, artefacts, texts, photographs, and computer results.

(43) Research Data: Facts, observations or experiences on which an argument, theory or test is based. Data may be numerical, descriptive or visual. Data may be raw or analysed, experimental or observational. Data includes: laboratory notebooks; field notebooks; primary research data (including research data in hardcopy or in computer readable form); questionnaires; audiotapes; videotapes; models; photographs; films; test responses. Research collections may include slides; artefacts; specimens; samples. Provenance information about the data might also be included: the how, when, where it was collected and with what (for example, instrument). The software code used to generate, annotate or analyse the data may also be included.

(44) Research Metadata: Information on specific research data or materials, and normally includes such details as the

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means of creation of the data, the purpose of the data, time and date of creation, the creator or author of the data, the location of the data, variables within a dataset, including what they measure and how they should be recorded, information about the context in which the data was created, including time, location and instrument, etc. Research metadata is descriptive information about research data that helps others find, verify, and reuse it. Metadata is crucial for making research data FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable).

(45) Staff: means all employees employed by the University, including those who are covered by the Victoria University Enterprise Agreement, and senior staff outside the Enterprise Agreement but employed under contract to the University and who still conduct research.

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