Research Data Access and Management Policy

1 Background

A 2008 HEFCE-funded report defines research data as "the evidence base on which academic researchers build their analytic or other work." Data management, including planning for long-term storage and sharing, is an increasingly important aspect of the UK Research funding environment. Most grant applications for research which will generate digital data sets require a data management plan that meets the 2011 Research Councils UK (RCUK) policy; this states that: 'Publicly funded research data are a public good, produced in the public interest, which should be made openly available with as few restrictions as possible in a timely and responsible manner that does not harm intellectual property:'
http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/research/Pages/DataPolicy.aspx.

As of May 2012, RCUK required all funded universities to have a data management policy and road map in place, that will be fully implemented by 2015 to meet their expectations for data sharing, as follows:

- publicly funded research data should be made openly available in a timely manner;
- data with acknowledged long term value should be made accessible;
- RCUK recognises that there are legal, ethical and commercial constraints on release of research data. To ensure that the research process is not damaged by inappropriate release of data, research organisation policies and practices should ensure that these are considered at all stages in the research process;
- Research Council funded work may be entitled to a limited period of privileged use of the data.

A summary of funder data management/sharing requirements can be found here:
http://www.dcc.ac.uk/resources/data-management-plans/funders-requirements

2 Guidelines for researchers on Open Data

1. In general, access to the data underlying research has a range of advantages - it promotes the progress of research as a whole, allows for the validation and reproduction of research findings, and enables the efficient and cost-effective creation of additional social and economic value.

2. Queen Mary University of London (QMUL) is committed to the general principle of open access (OA) to research, and the data underlying such research, subject to the necessary constraints of any funder, legal and ethical requirements, and following QMUL policies, guidelines and standards. For OA please see the *QMUL Guidelines on Open Access*, and for research data, please see the *Research Data Access and Management Policy* below.

3. The process of fully implementing appropriate repositories and resources for implementing OA to research data within QMUL will take a number of years, and it is expected that researchers will gradually increase the use of such resources over such a period.

4. Data identified for open access will be offered for deposit either in a QMUL or an appropriate external repository, in accordance with relevant standards and community best practice, which may be determined by the area of research activity.

5. Links to repositories and descriptions of the means of access are expected to be made via the QMUL Publists system as this evolves.

6. The Research Data Management Group will set up and manage the necessary resources for the implementation of the research data access and management policy, and will be issuing further guidance as this project continues.

Further information

For information about open access please see the Queen Mary Library research webpages
http://www.library.qmul.ac.uk/openaccess

The *QMUL Guidelines on Open Access* are available at
http://www.library.qmul.ac.uk/sites/www.library.qmul.ac.uk/files/users/user15/OA__Principles%20&%20Guidance.pdf

For information about IT Services support for IT resourcing and data management requirements please see the ITS webpages at
http://www.itstrategy.its.qmul.ac.uk/research/researchdatamanagement/

3 Research Data Access and Management Policy

1. Queen Mary University of London (QMUL) is committed to the general principle of Open Access to research, including to research data[i] within the necessary constraints of any funder, legal and ethical requirements, and following QMUL policies, guidelines and standards.

2. Due to the particular concerns around access to medical-related data, access to data that is associated with medical research will be governed by the relevant funder's policies on datasharing. If a funder does not have such a policy, then the MRC's policy on data-sharing should be the default policy [ii]

3. Where reasonably practicable, publicly funded research data should be made available for access, subject to such conditions as are necessary to ensure compliance with legal, data protection, ethical, confidentiality, IP protection, security or funder obligations.

4. Data identified for open access will be offered for deposit either in a QMUL or an appropriate external repository, in accordance with relevant standards and community best practice, which may be determined by the area of research activity.

5. Data must be retained intact in an appropriate format and storage facility according to funder requirements and consonant with any data management plans approved as part of any funding.

6. The rights of researchers to the exclusive use of research data that they generate as part of a well-defined research project will be protected up until the point of publication or public availability.

7. Where data is made available on request rather than via straightforward open access the rationale for this must be made public, and such availability should not be unreasonably withheld.

8. Data arising from research involving human subjects can only be made accessible if those subjects give their informed consent in advance in writing for the future public release of their data, with clear and study- specific explanations of how the data will be anonymised so that it will not be possible for those in receipt of the data to identify any individuals. Where it has been determined that it would be inappropriate to make such data accessible, for example because it might lead to identification of research subjects or because seeking consent would make it unlikely that subjects would participate in the research, then the data will remain confidential.

9. For research collaborations, any open access arrangements can only take place with the agreement of all research partners.

10. Where retention is not specified as a condition of funding, data storage and disposal will be determined by the nature of the research activity and would normally be retained for a period of at least 10 years for non clinical and at least 20 years for all clinical based activities from the date of any publication which is based upon it, as specified in the QMUL Records Retention schedule.

11. Protocols for research in which data will be generated or reused should include data management plans that explicitly address data capture, management, integrity, confidentiality, retention, sharing and publication. These plans will be retained by QMUL to guide future management of the data.

12. The Principal Investigator, or most senior QMUL researcher, in a research project, has responsibility for ensuring that research data management requirements are observed during a research project or programme that they are undertaking.

13. Those responsible for research staff and students should ensure that researchers in their areas are aware of this policy and any associated guidelines and procedures.

14. All researchers are expected to familiarise themselves with and act in accordance with this and other QMUL policies relating to research practice. This information will be made accessible from the QMUL research webpages, both external and internal.

15. QMUL will provide advice, training and support regarding research data management.

16. The Research Data Management Group will set up and manage the necessary resources for the implementation of this policy.

17. Any queries on the application of this policy should be directed to the Vice-Principal (Research).

18. Appeals against the withholding of data may be made in writing to the Vice-Principal (Research), who will review the case from the researcher or their representative for withholding data, and the appeal case, in the light of this policy and other relevant policies, and make a final decision.

---

[i] QMUL research data here refers to the final forms of information which are essential to the understanding of the published or otherwise publicly available final research output that represents the completion of a well-defined research project. This information is generated by Queen Mary researchers for the purposes of the research project, for example via experimentation, observation or interview. It may include samples and related material used or created in the course of the research. Published materials, bibliographies, and data acquired from third parties (generated outside QM) are not included in this definition.

[ii]http://www.mrc.ac.uk/Ourresearch/Ethicsresearchguidance/datasharing/Policy/index.htm

Approval

This policy was approved by the Senate of Queen Mary University of London on 5 December 2013