



The University of Melbourne

**Policy on the
Management of Research Data and Records**

Approved by: Academic Board, 24 February 2005
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The University of Melbourne
Policy on the Management of Research Data and Records

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Policy on the Management of Research Data and Records¹

1. Purpose of the Policy

The retention of complete, accurate and retrievable results is integral to the research process. Good research practice entails the retention of research data and records for periods of at least five years after the publication of results (or longer depending on regulatory or sponsor requirements and archival/historical value). This allows for the discussion of data and research methods with colleagues and for verification of the research such as might be required to refute allegations of falsification of data.

The purpose of this Policy is to assist departments and individual researchers to fulfill their responsibilities with respect to the storage and retention of data and records associated with, and arising from, their research activities.

2. Key Principles

The [University's Code of Conduct for Research](#) specifies that:

- research methods and results should be open to scrutiny and debate;
- data must be retained intact for a period of at least five years from the date of any publication which is based upon it;
- research units and departments must establish formally documented procedures for retention of data; and
- research workers must comply with these retention procedures.

Researchers should ensure that:

- Research data and records are accurate, complete, authentic and reliable. Research data and records should correctly reflect what was communicated, decided or done. Research data should be recorded in a form that is adequate for verification of research results.
- Research data and records include sufficient detail to establish their authenticity and confirm the validity of the conclusions and to enable responses to questions that may result from unintentional error or misinterpretation. Statistical formulas, equipment calibration, experiment set up, equipment operation logs, concentration of solutions, codebooks, computer data input files used to generate data may be crucial elements in establishing authenticity and validity.

The requirements described in this Policy are also informed by the [Joint NHMRC / AV-CC Statement and Guidelines on Research Practice](#) which specifies:

- Data (including electronic data) must be recorded in a durable and appropriately referenced form. Data management should comply with relevant privacy protocols, such as the Australian Standard on personal privacy protection.
- The department or research unit must establish procedures for the retention of data and for the keeping of records of data held.
- Data must be held for sufficient time to allow reference. For data that is published this may be for as long as interest and discussion persists following publication. It is recommended that the minimum period for retention is at least 5 years from the date of publication but for specific types of research, such as clinical research, longer retention periods apply
- Wherever possible, original data must be retained in the department or research unit in which they were generated. Individual researchers should be able to hold copies of the data for their own use. Retention solely

¹ This Policy was approved by Academic Board on 24 February 2005. It replaces the *Guidelines for the Management of Research Data and Records* (Oct 1997).

by the individual researcher provides little protection to the researcher or the institution in the event of an allegation of falsification of data.

- Data related to publications must be available for discussion with other researchers. Where confidentiality provisions apply (for example, where the researchers or institution have given undertakings to third parties, such as the participants in the research), it is desirable for data to be kept in a way that reference to them by third parties can occur without breaching such confidentiality.
- Confidentiality agreements to protect intellectual property rights may be agreed between the institution, the researcher and a sponsor of the research. Where such agreements limit free publication and discussion, limitations and restrictions must be explicitly agreed.
- It is the obligation of the researcher to enquire whether confidentiality agreements apply and of the Head of the Department or research unit to inform researchers of their obligations with respect to these provisions.
- All confidentiality agreements should be made known at an early stage to the head of the research institution, or nominated representative.
- The procedures formulated by institutions must include guidelines on the establishment and ownership of and access to data bases containing confidential information, and any limits on this.
- When the data are obtained from limited access data-bases, or via a contractual arrangement, written indication of the location of the original data, or key information regarding the data-base from which it was collected, must be retained by the researcher or research unit.
- Researchers must be responsible for ensuring appropriate security for any confidential material, including that held in computing systems. Where computing systems are accessible through networks, particular attention to security of confidential data is required. Security and confidentiality must be assured in a way that copes with multiple researchers and the departure of individual researchers.

3. Definitions

For the purposes of this document the following definitions are used:

- **Confidential Research Data and Records**

Confidential research data and records are those which, in research involving humans, link the research participant with the research study.

It includes identifying information such as names and addresses, signed consent forms, master lists of names or matching codes for a current study or similar listings which may be held for a period of time for a follow up study; data which is sensitive (for example identified highly personal data, data which may be incriminating either to the provider of the data or to a third party, personal data which although not identified by name is in such a form (such as a case study or life history that it may be able to identify the subject; data which even if not sensitive may identify people (for example photographs, videotape, audiotape).

- **Electronic Data and Records**

Data and records created and maintained by means of electronic equipment and which may also be communicated through electronic means.

- **Research**

The careful study and investigation of new information concerning a particular subject.

- **Research Data**

Data are 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.

- **Research Records**

Records are documents containing data or information of any kind and in any form (including both paper-based and electronic format) created or received by an organisation or person for use in the course of their work and subsequently kept by that organisation or individual as evidence of that work, or because of the informational value of the data that such documents contain. Records associated with the research process include correspondence (including electronic mail as well as paper-based correspondence); project files; grant applications; ethics applications; technical reports; research reports; master lists; signed consent forms; and information sheets for research participants.

- **Researchers**

A researcher is any staff member who in the course of their employment conducts research.

- **Student Researchers**

A student researcher is any honours or postgraduate student undertaking a research thesis.

4. Responsibilities

4.1 Researchers

Researchers are responsible for:

- Conducting research in accordance with the provisions of the Code of Conduct for Research and other relevant University and departmental policy and procedures;
- Developing appropriate procedures for the collection, storage, use and retention of the research data and records associated with their research program, including confidential research data and records;
- Establishing and documenting clear procedures for the collection, ownership and storage of research data and records when involved in a joint research project, collaborative research or research undertaken in accordance with a contractual agreement. (When a research project is undertaken under a contractual agreement the Principal Investigator has overall responsibility for the management of data and records. In the case of multi-institutional projects the institution of the Principal Investigator is ultimately responsible.);
- Ensuring that the integrity and security of their data and records is maintained, and that this material is stored in an identifiable and retrievable way;
- Reporting any breach of confidentiality to the Head of Department;
- Negotiating with their Head of Department for the relocation of data and records within the University; and
- Making recommendations to the Head of Department for destruction of research data and records in accordance with all of the relevant requirements and legislation.

4.2 Heads of Department

Heads of Departments are responsible for:

- Authorising the procedures adopted by researchers and student researchers (following consultation with their supervisor) for the storage of their research data and records;
- Authorising the destruction of research data and records on the recommendation of the researcher;
- Authorising the destruction of student researchers' data and records;
- Negotiating with researchers for the relocation of research data and records within the University;
- Ensuring that staff conducting human research, and students under their supervision, are aware of all of their responsibilities such as the confidentiality of research data and records collected in the course of their research;
- Ensuring that staff are aware of the need to report any breach of confidentiality to the Head of Department;

- Ensuring that staff conducting human research are aware of their responsibilities to ensure that their practices, and those of students under their supervision, conform to University and departmental policy and procedures;
- Establishing and implementing departmental procedures for the storage and retention of research data and records;
- Ensuring that University and departmental policy and procedures are disseminated to researchers;
- Providing storage space for research data and records that meets security and confidentiality requirements, particularly in the case of human research data and records;
- Assigning the responsibility for the management of central or shared storage area(s) within the department to a staff member;
- Ensuring the provision of expert advice on the storage and retention of electronic data including advice on technological obsolescence and migration requirements; ensuring systems reliability and continuing operation; and facilitating access to electronic data of continuing value over time.

4.3 Student Researchers and their Supervisors

- Student researchers are jointly responsible with their supervisor, for the collection, storage, security and use of research data and records including confidential research data and records, in accordance with University and departmental policy and procedures.
- During the research process, student researchers must establish collection and storage procedures for their research data and records that are acceptable to their supervisor. In certain circumstances research data and records may need to be deposited with the supervisor at specific stages of the research process rather than waiting until the completion of the research project and the thesis submission.
- Student researchers undertaking research involving human participants must negotiate appropriate arrangements for the security of the research data and records with their supervisor. These arrangements should be outlined in their application for ethics clearance.
- In certain circumstances, related for example to confidentiality of data, it may be agreed that the student will store and retain the research data and records outside of the department. In such situations the specified arrangements must be satisfactory to the supervisor and Head of Department, and the department must keep a record of this arrangement in the department register of stored research data and records.
- When submitting a thesis for examination the student researcher should be required to make a declaration that they have complied with the Code of Conduct for Research and that research data and records collected, used and maintained in the conduct of their research will be retained for five years from the point of thesis submission unless publication, or public release of the work of research subsequently occurs, in which case the research data and records will then be retained for five years after publication, or public release, of the work of research. These declarations are included on the form "*Submission of a PhD Thesis: statement by candidate, supervisor and chairperson of examiners*" that must be submitted to the School of Graduate Studies when a PhD thesis is submitted for examination. Such declarations should also be incorporated into Faculty forms for the submission of Masters by Research theses.
- At the point of thesis submission, student researchers must arrange with their supervisor for the storage of their research data and records in the department. This is because the University may need to respond to allegations of falsification of data. It is also required in all cases where the University has filed a patent application to protect commercially exploitable research outcomes. Except where restrictions apply (eg. confidentiality or contract agreements) student researchers may keep a copy of their research data and records for their own use.

5. Period of Retention of Data and Records

- Research data and records should be maintained for as long as they are of continuing value to the researcher and as long as specified by patent law, legislative and other regulatory requirements..
- The minimum retention period for research data and records is five (5) years from the date of any publication or public release of the work of the research.
- Clinical trials require that records and data be retained for a minimum of fifteen (15) years from the date of termination of the study and preferably for the lifetime of the product.

- The Australian Psychological Society advises members that files/records of adult clients should be maintained for a minimum period of seven (7) years from the last date upon which the client received services. In the case of children the records should be kept for a minimum period of seven (7) years after the child reaches the age of 18.
- Time intervals for the retention of data are generally based on those established by external organisations, such as the NHMRC, and may be amended from time to time.
- Funding bodies may have specific requirements for the retention of research data and records.
- Where there are known disciplinary practices or codes establishing norms for retention of research data and records these should be adopted.
- In many instances, departments and researchers will resolve to retain research data and records for a longer period than the minimum requirement.

6. Storage of Data and Records

- Research data and records should be able to be quickly and easily identified and retrieved when required. (Even if access is limited to one person for confidentiality reasons it must be possible to demonstrate that they can be retrieved.)
- Wherever possible research data and records should be stored in the department or the laboratory in which they were generated.
- Research data and records may be retained securely within the department in the researcher's own office, or transferred to a central or shared storage area within the department.
- Responsibility for the management of a central or shared storage area(s) within the department should be formally assigned to a staff member. A departmental register (paper or electronic) should be maintained specifying the location of research data and records including paper, electronic data, and audio-visual data. The departmental register should include a description of the research data and records, the name(s) of the researchers, and the location of the data. Research data and records should be correspondingly boxed and labeled with the researcher's name, project title, date of publication (or date of transfer to the central storage area) and number of boxes eg. Box 1 of 10. When research data and records are relocated or destroyed this action must be recorded in the departmental register. Records must be adequate to establish if data and records have been relocated or destroyed, relevant dates, and the authority on which this action was taken. The proforma [Register of Research Data & Records Stored in Department](#) in Section 13 may be used or adapted as required.
- Where there are multiple investigators or multiple projects it may be appropriate to establish a departmental master file identifying the projects, names, date and location(s) of data and records for the whole study.
- If research data and records need to be stored elsewhere (eg. because of confidentiality requirements), the relevant department (and student's supervisor, if relevant) must be advised of the location and access made available if required. The department should register the location of these data and records in the departmental register of research data and records.
- In some instances data has been obtained from limited access databases or in a contracted project it may not be possible to store the data in the department. In cases such as these a written description of the location of the original data or key information regarding the limited access database from which it was extracted should be kept as part of the research records for the project and recorded on the departmental register.

7. Security and Protection

- Research data and records should be maintained securely to prevent unauthorised access, destruction, alteration or removal, accidental or intended damage or destruction. Refer to the [University's Records Management Policy and Procedures Manual](#).
- Confidential research data and records should be stored securely in lockable filing cabinets or a lockable room with controlled access. When confidential research data and records are stored electronically (for example on a personal computer) precautions should be taken to control access to the research data and records. Such precautions include password access and 'locking' datafiles. The signed consent forms for a particular project

should be stored separately from the collected research data for that project. Refer to the [University IT Security Policy](#) for information about secure storage and disposal of electronic data and records.

- Audio-visual data. If there is only one copy it may be advisable to make another copy and retain the original as a master copy.
- Electronic data and records. Refer to the [University's Records Management Policy and Procedures Manual](#). There is also advice in [Managing Your Electronic Mail](#).
- Web Pages. Refer to the University's [Web Archiving Strategy \(WAS\) Project](#) for information on how to archive web pages or data collected via the web.

8. Access to Research Data and Records

- Research data related to publications should be made available for discussion with other researchers, except where confidentiality provisions prevail (2.1.5 [Code of Conduct for Research](#)). Confidentiality provisions relating to research data and records will apply in circumstances where the University or the researcher has made or given confidentiality undertakings to third parties or where disclosure would involve the unreasonable disclosure of information relating to the personal affairs of any person (including a deceased person) or when confidentiality is required to protect the intellectual property rights (2.1.6 [Code of Conduct for Research](#)). Confidentiality provisions should be recorded on the departmental register.
- When data involving human participants has been collected for research, only the named researchers can have access to it without further permission from the approving human ethics committee.
- In the event of legal action, research data and records may be accessed by the University and its legal advisers to determine their relevance to any litigation and, if relevant, removed for use in the litigation.
- Research data is subject to subpoena including confidential research data and records.
- Researchers should be aware that under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Vic), the University is required to allow persons access to documents which are in the University's possession under defined circumstances. Further information may be sought from the [Office of the University Secretary](#) and on the University's website at [Freedom of Information](#).

9. Removal or Movement of Data and Records

- The original research data and records must be kept at the University, normally in the department where the research was conducted. This is because the University may need to respond to allegations of falsification of data. It is also required in all cases where the University has filed a patent application to protect commercially exploitable research outcomes.
- In the event of the researcher leaving the University, they may negotiate with the Head of Department to take copies of their research data and records for their own use, but original data and records are to remain in the department.
- If the researcher moves to another department within the University they may make a request to relocate the original data and records to their new department. In such cases the head of the original department is required to authorise the relocation. Refer to the proforma [Register of Research Data & Records Stored in Department](#) in Section 13. The departmental register of research data and records should include all details of the new location and the date when the records were moved.

10. Destruction of Records

- The destruction of research data and records should be authorised by the Head of Department on recommendation of the researcher. A record of the recommendation and approval must be maintained in the departmental register. Refer to the proforma [Register of Research Data & Records Stored in Department](#) in Section 13. This form may be used or adapted as required.

- If after five years (or required period) from the completion of the research project the research has not been published or otherwise publicly disseminated for any purpose to any other party, and the researcher declares an intention not to publish the data, the research data and records may be recommended for destruction.
- Research data and records collected, used and maintained by student researchers can be destroyed five years from the point of thesis submission provided there is no continuing value to the supervising staff member, department or University. If publication, or public release, of a work of research occurs after the thesis submission the research data and records should be retained for five years after the publication, or public release, of the work of research. The destruction of student researcher data and records left in the department should be authorised by the Head of Department and the signed record maintained in the department (refer Section 13).
- When confidential research data and records are destroyed it should be done in such a way as to ensure complete destruction of the information. Confidential research data and records in paper format should be shredded. Confidential research data and records in electronic format should be destroyed by reformatting or rewriting. 'Delete' instructions are not sufficient to ensure that all systems pointers to the data incorporated in the system software have also been destroyed. For audio-visual tapes a 'magnetic field bulk eraser' should be used to degauss the tape (i.e., remove the recording). At the time of destroying confidential data and records, researchers should ensure that they employ the most effective method since this may change over time with technological advances.

11. Special Requirements

11.1 Laboratory Notebooks

- Laboratory notebooks being the prime record of scientific research should document all aspects of the research process from the conceptualisation of a hypothesis or research problem, through to the formulations of research methodologies, the design of equipment and techniques used, the conduct of experiments and observational data.
- A laboratory notebook should be kept for all scientific projects.
- Separate notebooks must be kept for each project. This is particularly important when undertaking contract research simultaneously with publicly-funded research (eg. NHMRC or ARC grants) in the same or similar subject area to ensure that intellectual property rights remain clear.
- Refer to Section 14. [Instructions for Keeping Experimental Laboratory Notebooks](#).
- Scientific researchers may also find [Laboratory Notebooks – A Guide to Good Practice \(Reviewed January 2006\)](#) produced by Phillips Ormonde & Fitzpatrick Patent and Trade Mark Attorneys (Melbourne, Australia) to be a useful resource.

11.2 Patents

- Where a patent has been granted all research data and records must be retained for the life of the patent (whether granted in Australia or overseas).
- In the cases of commercially exploitable research, and research data and records that concern a patent application filed by the University, it is necessary for original research data to be retained at the University.
- The originals (ie. not copies) of all correspondence, deeds and contracts associated with the commercial exploitation of the patent must be returned to the University's Patents and Royalties Officer.
- It is often difficult during the research process to identify if a project will result in a patent. For this reason it is advisable in relevant disciplines to maintain research data and records as *if* the project will produce patentable outcomes. Researchers are required to disclose inventions to the University. This will provide a means of assessing the potential value of the intellectual property.
- Researchers should be aware that there are specific recordkeeping requirements for patent applications in the United States. The standard of proof (for non USA applicants) required for demonstrating 'first to invent' is the same as that required as if the invention had occurred in the USA. Therefore recordkeeping in relation to the making and documentation of inventions must comply with US standards. One means of achieving this is

the maintenance of a data notebook in accordance with the [Instructions for Keeping Experimental Laboratory Notebooks](#) in Section 14.

11.3 Privacy

- The University Privacy Policy details how the University deals with personal and health information it collects to ensure that it complies with the Information Privacy Act (VIC) 2000 and the Health Records Act (VIC) 2001. This policy outlines the obligations of staff and students if they are dealing with health and personal information. The University takes its privacy obligations very seriously and a breach of the Privacy Policy may have serious consequences for the University and for staff.
- In some instances the University may be contractually bound to comply with Commonwealth privacy laws. This will be when information is received or collected under a contract between the University and a Commonwealth body or agency.
- University researchers who are collecting information from or about individuals for their research should also be aware of the requirements and implications of privacy legislation, both state and federal and any privacy policy of relevant organisations and how this may affect the data collection, storage, use and disclosure of the information they wish to collect.
- Researchers may need to consult:
- [University Privacy Policy](#)

The University of Melbourne Privacy Policy details how the University deals with personal and health information it collects to ensure that it complies with the Information Privacy Act (VIC) 2000 and the Health Records Act (VIC) 2001. In the privacy policy a reference to 'information' is a reference to both health information and personal information.

Privacy Officer: The University's Privacy Officer is the University Secretary Mr Len Currie. He has overall responsibility for privacy issues but privacy is an important issue for all staff.

The Information Privacy Act (VIC) 2000 sets standards for the way Victorian government organisations, statutory bodies and local councils collect and handle personal information (except for health information). There are ten Information Privacy Principles which are the core of the Information Privacy Act. Non-government organisations that work for government under contract may also be covered, depending on the contract.

The Health Records Act (VIC) 2001 creates a framework to protect the privacy of individuals' health information. It regulates the collection and handling of health information. The Act applies to the health, disability and aged care information handled by a wide range of public and private sector organisations. This includes health service providers, and also other organisations that handle such information. Researchers are subject to the act when they collect or handle health information.

Privacy Act 1988 (Cth). Section 14 of the Privacy Act sets out eleven Information Privacy Principles (IPPs) to govern the conduct of Commonwealth agencies in the way those agencies collect, use, storage and disclose personal information. Section 95 of the Privacy Act (Appendix 2) provides a process to resolve any conflict that may arise between the public interest in privacy and the public interest in medical research.

Schedule 3 of the amended Privacy Act sets out 10 National Privacy Principles (NPPs) to govern the conduct of private sector organisations in the way those organisations collect use, store and disclose personal information. The NPPs apply to businesses with an annual turnover of \$3 million and all health service providers.

The two sets of Guidelines issued under both Section 95 and Section 95 A of the Privacy Act 1988 provide a framework in which medical research involving personal information collected or disclosed by Commonwealth agencies or private sector organizations, respectively, should be conducted to ensure that an individual's personal information is protected against unauthorised collection or disclosure. The responsibility for applying Section 95 guidelines and Section 95A guidelines lies with the relevant Human Research Ethics Committee.

11.4 Research Involving Human Participants

Special additional requirements exist in relation to data and records collected, maintained and used for the purpose of human research. Researchers conducting human research must operate within the framework of

[University guidelines](#) for conducting research projects involving humans and the [NHMRC National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans \(1999\)](#).

11.4.1 Consent Forms

The informed consent of participants is a central principle in the conduct of research projects involving human participants. It is the responsibility of the investigator(s) to ensure that consent to participate is both informed and freely given by the participants of their research. Guidelines are provided in the University's Human Research Ethics Guidelines for Informed Consent.

Consent to participate cannot be seen to be either informed or given freely unless the potential participant has available to them a full description of the project in language they can understand, the nature of their participation and the implications in terms of risks and benefits of participating in the research, including information about what will happen to their information, how it will be used, stored and when it will be disposed of. In most research projects participants are given a plain language information sheet with information about the project and a consent form which outlines what the participants will do if they agree to take part and researchers agree. The signed consent form and the information sheet together are proof of the process of informed consent and should be kept together as evidence that the consent to participate was informed and freely given.

In the event of a dispute arising between the researcher and the participant during or after the completion of the project, for example claims that the consent was not informed or freely given or claims of personal injury (physical, psychological or social) as a result of participation in the project, the signed consent form and the information sheet together will be evidence of the process of informed consent. Like all research data and records they may be discoverable in the event of litigation.

It is the researcher's responsibility to maintain, and retain for an appropriate period (5 years minimum), consent forms and the information sheets. Consent forms for a project therefore should be retained for the same period of time as all other research records for the project. Signed consent forms should be stored separately from the data to protect the confidentiality of those who participated in the study. A copy of the plain language information sheet provided to participants should be stored together with the collected data e.g. completed survey forms, so that it is apparent which study the forms are associated with. Consent forms and research data are to be stored separately and securely, for example, in lockable filing cabinets or in password protected files.

11.4.2 Clinical Trials

Clinical trials require that records and data be retained for a minimum of fifteen (15) years from the date of termination of the study and preferably for the lifetime of the product.

There are specific recordkeeping requirements in relation to planning, conduct, analyses and assessment of clinical trials. These are outlined in the [Therapeutic Goods Administration Note for Guidance on Good Clinical Practice \(July 2000\)](#) which is an internationally accepted standard for designing, conducting, recording and reporting of clinical trials.

11.5 Sponsored Research - Conditions of Award (Grant or Contract Research)

Funding bodies may have specific requirements for retention of research data and records. Researchers should be aware of the conditions of any awards or contracts supporting their research.

Research funded by the ARC, for example, is subject to the [ARC Conditions of Award](#). Each scheme is bound by a Funding Contract/Agreement and includes clauses relating to the research data and records associated with the project or other activity. This information is detailed in those Contracts/Agreements under various headings including *Materials produced under this Agreement/Contract* and *Access to Premises and Records*. The ARC definition of 'material' includes documents, equipment, software, goods, information and data stored by any means.

For example: the following clauses are extracted from the [2004 Discovery - Projects Program Funding Agreement](#)

18. Material produced under this Agreement

- 18.1 *The Institution/Organisation shall establish and comply with its own procedures and arrangements for the ownership of all material produced as a result of any Project under this Agreement.*
- 18.2 *For any Material produced under this Agreement, the Institution/Organisation shall ensure that all Specified Personnel:*

- (a) take reasonable care of, and safely store any data or specimens or samples collected during, or resulting from the conduct of the Project;
- (b) make arrangements acceptable to the ARC for lodgement with an appropriate museum or archive in Australia of data or specimens or samples collected during, or resulting from their Project; and
- (c) include details of the lodgement or reasons for non-lodgement in the Final Report for the Project.

11.6 Archival Value

Consideration should be given to the long term preservation of research data and records of archival value. For example data and records that:

- document significant projects that made a major contribution to research;
- document projects that were controversial, subject to extensive debate or aroused wide interest;
- document projects that involve the use of major new or innovative techniques;
- document “first of a kind” process or product or significantly improve on an existing product or application;
- are the work of an eminent researcher such as a widely acknowledged authority in their field or a person who has in some other way achieved prominence;
- have value for research in other disciplines eg. history and philosophy of science, history and sociology.

Where research data and records are thought to be of archival value the researcher should consider depositing the research data and records in an appropriate archives institution.

The [Funding Agreements](#) for ARC Discovery Projects Program, Indigenous Researcher Development Program and Federation Fellowships Program contain specific references to the deposit of data, specimens or samples within appropriate archive for secondary use by other investigators.

Further advice on archival value and archival institutions can be obtained from [The University of Melbourne Archives](#) and [Records Services](#).

11.7 Discipline Specific Practices or Codes

Researchers should be aware of, and adopt, the relevant practices or codes within their research discipline that establish norms or best-practice for the retention of research data and records researchers.

For example:

ARC Grants and Fellowships states in section 15.8 that “any machine-readable data arising from a project involving research relating to the social sciences should be lodged with the [Australian Consortium for Social and Political Research Inc \(ASPRI\)](#) or any other appropriate archive for secondary use by other investigators. This should normally be done within two years of the conclusion of any fieldwork relating to the Project research. If a Chief Investigator is not intending to do so within the two year period they should include the reasons why in their final report.”

11.8 Research and Data Collection in Indigenous Communities

Researchers should be aware of and sensitive to the particular issues raised when undertaking research and conducting research in indigenous communities. In addition to the *Joint NHMRC / AV-CC Statement and Guidelines on Research Practice* researchers should consult the [NHMRC Values and Ethics: Guidelines for Ethical Conduct in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research](#) (June 2003).

Where research is funded by the AIATSIS (Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies) researchers should consult the [AIATSIS Guidelines](#).

11.9 Ethnographic Data

Special attention should be given to the long term storage of ethnographic data, recorded with speakers of small and potentially endangered languages. Such material should be properly described and archived so that members of the families and communities represented can have access to the material in the future. Consent to keep this data should be obtained from the appropriate people and their communities.

Researchers should investigate and utilise the repositories that exist in their field for the safe preservation of ethnographic data.

For example: [PARADISEC](#) (Pacific And Regional Archive for Digital Sources in Endangered Cultures) offers a facility for digital conservation and access for endangered materials from the Pacific region, defined broadly to include Oceania and East and Southeast Asia.

12. Where To Get Advice

- Academic colleagues
- Fellow student researchers
- Student project supervisors
- Heads of Department
- Associate Deans (Research and Research Training)
- Departmental Managers
- Melbourne Research and Innovation Office (Tel: 8344-2000)
- School of Graduate Studies (Tel: 8344-8599)
- University of Melbourne Postgraduate Association (UMPA) (Tel: 8344 8657)

The University's [Records Services](#) coordinates a range of training and information sessions, and offers a consultancy service to departments seeking to establish or review their recordkeeping procedures.

Department of [insert department name]

13. Register of Research Data & Records Stored in Department

Identification number: **Year:**
(All stored data and records associated with this project should be labeled with this unique identification number and the year stored.)

Name of Principal Investigator (academic staff member or student researcher):
.....

Names of all other researcher/s (include student researchers where relevant):
.....
.....
.....
.....

Name of supervisor (where applicable, ie. student researcher project):
.....

Project title and description (include sufficient detail to identify the type and nature of the research eg. animal or human research, classroom research):
.....
.....
.....
.....

Funding body/bodies (if applicable):
.....
.....

Date project commenced:

Date project completed or thesis submitted:

Relocation of data and records

Original data and records may be relocated to another department within the University, but may **not be removed** from the University.

I request approval to relocate the research data and records for this project, currently held in the department, to:

.....
.....

(Give full description of location, ie .building and room number or departmental office storage area location)

Reason for relocation:
.....
.....

Collaborators have been advised of the relocation.

Principal Investigator:(signature) Date:

<p>Approval to relocate data and records</p> <p>Head of Department:(signature) Date:</p> <p>Date removed:</p>

Disposal of Research Data and Records:

Complete all items in the following checklist. If the response to any item is “No”, the issue must be resolved before any data and records are destroyed.

	Yes	No	N/A
5 years have passed since the publication, or public release, of the work of research OR 5 years have passed since completion of the research project and there is no intention to publish, or publicly release, the work of research. OR 5 years have passed since the thesis was submitted (in case of project by student researcher) and there is no intention to publish, or publicly release, the work of research.			
Any additional time intervals established by external organizations for the retention of this type of data and records eg. Clinical trials, 15 years (NHMRC); psychological records, 7 years (APS), have passed.			
All specific requirements of funding bodies have been met.			
Archival value of records has been considered and appropriate actions taken to ensure the retention of potentially valuable materials.			
Any discipline specific codes or best-practices for the retention of data and records in the field of this research project have been adopted.			
Collaborators have been consulted.			
Confidential data and records will be destroyed by appropriate means and confidentiality protected throughout the disposal process.			

I recommend that the research data and records for this project, held in the department, be destroyed.

Principal Investigator: (signature) Date:

<p>Approval to destroy data and records:</p> <p>Head of Department: (signature) Date:</p> <p>Date destroyed:</p>
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14. Instructions for Keeping Experimental Laboratory Notebooks

Purpose

The laboratory notebook is used as a record of experimental data and ideas. It provides a complete record of laboratory work which can be understood and repeated by yourself and others. If used appropriately it will afford maximum patent right protection. A notebook should be kept for all scientific projects.

As follows:

1. The notebook must be bound so that pages cannot be added or removed.
2. Each page of the notebook must be numbered in sequence.
3. Each page must include a space for signatures by the researchers and at least one witness and the date on which the witness signed the page. The witness must be someone who is competent to understand the work but does not claim to be an inventor.
4. The entries in the notebook must be written in permanent ink. Erasures are not permitted. Do not use "white-out". To delete an entry draw a line through it so that the original entry is still legible. If any entry is modified, make a new entry which is signed, dated and witnessed. Changes made after the page has been witnessed should be initialled by both researcher and witness and dated the current date.
5. Additional items such as photographs, chromatographs, spectral data etc. may either be stapled or taped to the notebook and witnessed as above, or put in a separate file. The identification and location of the separate file should be referred to in the notebook along with cross-referenced numbers (eg experiment numbers, compound numbers, page numbers etc.). These objects should be witnessed in the same manner as the notebook pages. Once a page is finished and witnessed, do not make changes or add to it.
6. Do not skip pages. If a page is left blank, rule a diagonal line across the page and indicate that the page is intentionally left blank. Sign and witness in the usual way.
7. The notebook serves as a complete and continuous day-by-day running record of the activities of the researcher. Record sufficient information. All procedures, reagents, equipment, references, conditions must be recorded as the work is being done, as should be the reasons serving as a basis for decisions. Abandoned approaches or unsuccessful attempts should be included.
8. Record the date and sign your name at the bottom of each page.
9. The notebook and its contents are to be considered as a confidential document and of great value. Every care should be exercised in looking after it. The notebook remains the property of the University.
10. Reserve a page or two at the beginning of the notebook for a table of contents. Return the book to the authority responsible for its safekeeping when it is filled and is of no further day-to-day use by the researcher.
11. New ideas must be recorded and witnessed as soon as they occur to establish priority of inventions.