

# RESEARCH MATERIALS AND DATA MANAGEMENT POLICY

<b>Category</b>	Policy		
<b>Review</b>	1 year from date of Approval		
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<b>Contact</b>	policy@imc.edu.au		
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## 1. PURPOSE

The Australian National Institute of Management and Commerce (the Institute or IMC) values the materials and data generated by research. It recognises that research data and materials provide the basis from which subsequent research publications and other outcomes may be derived. Research data and materials must be managed to ensure their security and integrity, to allow for the potential of further research and to enable verification of claims made in publications.

This policy explains IMC’s expectations regarding managing research materials and data. It outlines the responsibilities of IMC, its academic staff and researchers. It also provides information on the retention, storage, accessibility, and disposal of research data and materials. The policy accords with the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2018 (the Code)* and other legislative, ethical and contractual requirements and should be read in conjunction with IMC’s *Code of Conduct for Research Policy*.

## 2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all staff, including honorary, adjunct, and sessional staff working under the auspices of IMC, and students who carry out research as part of their enrolment at IMC. It includes theses and dissertations but excludes coursework units.

## 3. DEFINITIONS

**Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research** (Australian Code) means the code developed by the National Health and Medical Research Council and Universities Australia.

**Metadata** means the characteristics of research data, including content, format, location and access rights.

**Open Access** means the free availability of research outputs without restrictions on use, such as copyright agreements.

**Research** has the meaning provided in the Australian Code p. 5: The concept of research is broad and includes the creation of new knowledge and/or the use of existing knowledge in a new and creative way to generate new concepts, methodologies, inventions and understandings. This could include synthesis and analysis of previous research to the extent that it is new and creative.

**Research Data** means the data, observations, results, records or other evidence that comprise research observations, findings or outcomes regardless of the form or the media in which they may be recorded.

**Research Materials** means primary materials, which exist as physical objects, including survey questionnaires and recordings.

**Research Materials and Data Management** means the process used to manage materials and data throughout a research project to enable it to be preserved and accessible for current and future research.

**Researcher** means a person who systematically investigates and studies materials, sources, or data to establish facts, advance knowledge, and/or develop new insights in their chosen field. In the context of higher degrees and university research, this includes students enrolled in research programs, academic staff, and other contributors who engage in scholarly inquiry, applying appropriate methodologies to produce original research outputs, contribute to existing knowledge, and adhere to ethical research standards.

## 4. PRINCIPLES

### 4.1 Responsibilities

IMC is responsible for:

- ensuring research is conducted according to the Australian Code
- establishing best practices and governance of research data management
- providing facilities for safe and secure storage and retrieval of research data and materials
- funding the development and maintenance of a digital repository for research data
- enabling inter-institutional sharing where data are of national importance; and
- maintaining a record of the location of all research data generated under the auspices of IMC.

The Research Services Manager is responsible for:

- overseeing the management of retention, sharing and disposal of research materials and data; and
- developing and disseminating this policy and supporting documents.

The IMC Librarian and Information Technology support staff are responsible for:

- maintaining centrally supported computer storage for research data; and
- developing procedures for research data management and providing training and support for IMC researchers and staff.

The Academic Board, Deputy President (Education) or delegate and the Research Committee (RC) are responsible for:

- implementing guidelines and procedures on the retention, safe and secure storage, and disposal of research materials as appropriate to the discipline and compliant with IMC policies; and
- providing training to researchers and staff on their obligations and best practices regarding storing data on IMC's data storage system.

Research Supervisors are responsible for:

- assisting research students in understanding the requirements of research materials and data management relevant to their discipline; and
- sharing responsibility with their research students for managing research materials and data.

Researchers are responsible for:

- developing and maintaining a comprehensive data management plan for each research project with a register of these plans kept by the RC. This plan should be created at the beginning of the project and updated regularly throughout its lifecycle.

The plan must include:

- The types of data to be collected or generated
  - The standards to be used for data and metadata format and content
  - Policies for access and sharing, including provisions for appropriate protection of privacy, confidentiality, security, and intellectual property rights
  - Policies and provisions for re-use and re-distribution of data
  - plans for archiving data and preserving access
- maintaining accurate records of research materials and data and advising the Research Service Manager of the generation, storage and disposal of research data and materials using the *Location of Research Data Form*
    - ensuring adequate security for confidential material, giving particular attention to material held in computing systems
    - managing the storage of and accessibility to their research materials and data in a durable, indexed and retrievable form
    - ensuring that their research data are stored in centrally supported storage and retaining the data for the required minimum period
    - enabling the sharing of their data
    - disposing of research materials and data safely at the end of the retention period
    - understanding and acting according to the requirements of this policy and the *Code of Conduct for Research Policy*

## 4.2 Ownership

- 4.2.1 Research materials and data and the associated intellectual property are owned by IMC unless otherwise agreed in writing between the researchers and IMC. Agreement to arrangements other than those specified earlier shall not be unreasonably refused by IMC
- 4.2.2 Subject to any agreement reached in 4.2.1 above, IMC will remain the custodian of research materials and data acquired through research undertaken by its researchers. If a researcher moves from IMC, research materials and data must remain at IMC unless a written agreement is produced through the IMC Legal Office that states otherwise.
- 4.2.3 Where a research project is undertaken in collaboration with another institution, a written agreement that covers the ownership, storage, retention and disposal of research materials and data must be developed.
- 4.2.4 In cases of collaborative research involving multiple institutions, a formal agreement must be established at the outset of the project. This agreement should clearly define:
- Ownership of research data and materials
  - Stewardship responsibilities during and after the project
  - Protocols for data sharing among collaborators
  - Procedures for data access and reuse post-project
  - Processes for managing data when researchers move between institutions
- 4.2.5 When researchers move to another institution:
- They may negotiate to take copies of research data with them, subject to confidentiality restrictions and appropriate approvals
  - The original data must remain at IMC unless otherwise agreed in writing
  - Researchers must provide IMC with details of the location and nature of the copied data.

## 4.3 Indigenous Data

For research involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities:

- Ownership of data and information should be determined through appropriate consultation with Indigenous owners
- Decisions about access to or reuse of this data or information must not be made without appropriate consultation
- Data management practices must respect cultural sensitivities and be consistent with ethical guidelines for research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- Researchers must consult the AIATSIS Guidelines for Ethical Research in Australian Indigenous Studies.

## 4.4 Data Retention Periods and Storage

- 4.4.1 Research materials and data must be retained for periods consistent with the Australian Code. Specific retention periods include:
- For short-term research projects that are for assessment purposes only, such as research projects completed by students, retaining research data for 12 months after the completion of the project may be sufficient

- If the work has community, cultural or historical value, research data should be kept permanently, preferably within a national collection
- For all other research, data should be retained for a minimum of five years from the date of publication

The specific retention period for each project should be determined at the outset and documented in the data management plan.

- 4.4.2 Research materials and data should be retained in the School in which they are generated and in a central location for as long as is practical. Individual researchers may hold copies of research data for their own use, but retention solely by an individual researcher is not permitted. A written record of the location of materials and data must be retained, and the Deputy President (Education) or delegate and Academic Board must have access to the material.
- 4.4.3 For sensitive or confidential data, researchers must:
- Implement security and privacy measures proportional to the risks associated with the data
  - Apply appropriate controls for storage, access, and sharing of the data
  - Consider using mediated access arrangements for sharing sensitive data
  - Apply a risk assessment framework when determining how to share sensitive data
  - Comply with all relevant privacy legislation and ethical guidelines
- 4.4.4 Sensitive or confidential data may include:
- Commercial-in-confidence materials
  - Data provided in confidence (e.g., secret religious or cultural practices)
  - Sensitive data subject to privacy legislation (e.g., identifiable human medical/health data)
  - Data subject to classification regimes and other controls (e.g., national security information)"

## 4.5 Access to Research Data

- 4.5.1 Researchers are encouraged to make their research data as open as possible. When sharing data, researchers should:
- Use standardized licences, such as Creative Commons licences, to clearly communicate how the data can be used and shared
  - Consider using the least restrictive licence option, such as a Creative Commons Attribution licence, where appropriate
  - Justify the use of more restrictive controls when necessary
- 4.4.4 Where possible, researchers should publish or make their research data available through:
- Data centres
  - National and international collections
  - Online repositories maintained by institutions and research communities
- 4.4.5 When publishing research data, researchers should ensure that:
- The data is findable, accessible, interoperable, and reusable (FAIR principles)

- Appropriate metadata is provided to describe the data's context, quality, and condition
- Consider options such as data journals or data papers to publish detailed descriptions of their datasets
- Digital Object Identifiers (DOIs) are used for datasets where possible

#### **4.6 Disposal of Research Materials and Data**

- 4.6.1 Research materials and data must not be disposed of before the end of the specified retention period or before the resolution of any challenge to the research results, whichever is the longer timeframe.
- 4.6.2 Research materials and data must be disposed of safely and securely following IMC policies.

#### **4.7 Complaints and Breaches**

- 4.7.1 Breaches of this policy relating to data management may include, but are not limited to:
- Falsification or fabrication of research data or primary materials
  - Failure to maintain clear, accurate, secure, and complete records of research data and primary materials
  - Inappropriate destruction of research data, records, or primary materials before the end of the required retention period
  - Failure to provide access to data as required by research agreements or approvals
  - Unauthorized disclosure of confidential data
  - Failure to obtain necessary approvals for the management of research data or primary materials
  - Failure appropriately to acknowledge the source of data used in research
- 4.7.2 The seriousness of a breach will be assessed by the RC as outlined in the Code of Conduct for Research Policy, considering factors such as:
- The extent of the breach
  - The number of breaches
  - The level of experience of the researcher
  - The intent and motivation behind the breach
  - The consequences of the breach
  - Any mitigating factors.
- 4.7.3 Complaints, breaches and non-compliance with this policy will be managed according to procedures outlined in IMC's *Code of Conduct for Research Policy*.

#### **4.8 Training**

- 4.8.1 IMC is committed to providing ongoing training and education to support responsible research data management. This includes the provision of.:
- Regular workshops on data management best practices
  - Training on the use of IMC's data storage systems and repositories

- Guidance on creating and maintaining data management plans
- Information sessions on data sharing and publication options
- Updates on relevant policies, laws, and ethical considerations

4.8.2 All researchers, including staff and students, are required to participate in relevant training provided by or through IMC.

4.8.3 Supervisors of research students are responsible for ensuring their students receive appropriate training in data management practices relevant to their discipline.

## 5. RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Code of Conduct for Research*
- Location of Research Data Form*

## 6. VERSION CONTROL

Historical Version	Approved by	Approval Date
2024.11	Academic Board	20 November 2024
2023.12	Academic Board	12 October 2023
2020.09	Academic Board	7 September 2020

*The Deputy President (Education) oversees the implementation and compliance of this policy. Please contact the Deputy President's office via - [policy@imc.edu.au](mailto:policy@imc.edu.au) for any enquiries or clarifications related to this policy.*