

Data Sharing & Curation Policies across the UK Research Councils

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Drivers

- Public good obligations, eg OECD Principles.
- RCUK Position Statement on Access to Research Outputs.
- PSRE sustainability and exploitation.
- Legislation – FoI / EIRs / RPSI.
- Good scientific practice.
- Must reflect the scientific need.

Cross council summary

AHRC – Arts & Humanities	Detailed in funding guidance – a policy all but in name.
BBSRC – Biotechnology & Biological Sciences	Data sharing policy statement in draft. Formal policy in place by mid-2006.
EPSRC – Engineering & Physical Sciences	No formal policy, as does not overly intervene in the research dissemination process.
ESRC – Economic & Social	Formal data policy. Current version dates from 2000, but to be updated soon.
MRC - Medical	Data sharing and preservation policy – applies to new grants awarded from January 2006.
NERC – Natural Environment	Data policy handbook. Current version from 2002, currently being updated.
PPARC – Particle Physics & Astronomy	Data curation policy has been agreed in principle April 2005.
<i>CCLRC – Council for the Central Laboratory of the Research Councils</i>	<i>A number of policies dealing with the curation of CCLRC data on a per-project basis.</i>

Curation

AHRC	Joint JISC & AHRC supported Arts and Humanities Data Service
BBSRC	No curation facilities supported as yet – however, recognise need for resources to support long-term, sustainable management.
EPSRC	Data managed in a durable form under control of the institution of origin.
ESRC	Joint JISC & ESRC supported UK Data Archive, including the Economic and Social Data Service.
MRC	Encourages curation and long-term management. Onus is on the PI and their institution. Considering data curation facilities.
NERC	NERC supported Designated Data Centres.
PPARC	Supports long-term curation of selected data sets. Driven by the science, data centres supported as projects. Not appropriate to maintain all data.
CCLRC	<i>A number of curation activities – including the Atlas Data Store</i>

Obligations on researchers

AHRC	For grants awarded where a significant product is the creation of an electronic resource, data and documentation must be offered to AHDS within 3 months.
BBSRC	Under consideration as part of policy development.
EPSRC	Encourages PIs to manage primary data as the basis for publications securely and for an appropriate time in a durable form under the control of the institution of their origin.
ESRC	Applicants must carry out a data review to ensure funds not requested for data that are already available. Data must be offered to the Data Archive within 3 months of end of award.
MRC	From January 2006 applicants must produce a plan for data sharing and preservation.
NERC	Programmes must have data management plans. PIs offered reasonable time for first use, all data must be offered to a NERC data centre.
PPARC	Under consideration as part of policy development. PIs will have to consider data curation and sharing activities.

Monitoring and enforcement

AHRC	Each AHRC grant panel has a data specialist in an advisory capacity. AHDS sees proposals and advises PIs as necessary. End loop not closed.
ESRC	Data archive are made aware of all ESRC grants awarded. ESRC will not sign off award until data archive indicate are happy with data situation.
NERC	Directed Mode programmes have data management plans and strong links to data centres. Need stronger linkage between non-directed PIs and data centres – too many grants to monitor everyone. End loop not closed.

Between a hard rock and a hard place!

Too much enforcement can antagonise key members of the community.

Key elements & good ideas

- Data curation must be seen as part of the process of doing research – and not addressed as an afterthought.
- Formal data review – can existing data be reused?
- Curation plans driven by the ‘science’ – with the best will in the world some data will have no long-term value. Therefore, need to identify criteria to identify that which has long-term value.
- Provision of data management support and guidance to the PIs.
- Provision of data curation facilities – either through RC facilities, or funded facilities with long-term funding security.
- Accession review – need to have curation and retention policies. Not practical to keep everything for ever or is it?



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