### Curation policies and support services of the main UK research funders

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### Terminology clarifications
- **Published outputs**: a policy on published outputs e.g. journal articles and conference papers
- **Data**: a data policy or statement on access to and maintenance of electronic resources
- **Time limits**: set timeframes for making content accessible or preserving research outputs
- **Data plan**: requirement to consider data creation, management or sharing in the application
- **Access / sharing**: promotion of OA journals, deposit in repositories, data sharing or reuse
- **Curation**: stipulations on long-term maintenance and preservation of research outputs
- **Monitoring**: whether compliance is monitored or action taken such as withholding funds
- **Guidance**: provision of FAQs, best practice guides, toolkits, and support staff
- **Repository**: provision of a repository to make published research outputs accessible
- **Data centre**: provision of a data centre to curate unpublished electronic resources or data
- **Costs**: a willingness to meet publication fees and data management / sharing costs

**KEY:**
- ● full coverage
- ○ partial coverage
- ○ no coverage

See related guidance at: [www.dcc.ac.uk/resources/policy-and-legal/overview-funders-data-policies](http://www.dcc.ac.uk/resources/policy-and-legal/overview-funders-data-policies)

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Published outputs
Funders’ expectations on access to published outputs are summarised in the joint RCUK position statement\(^1\) which was first issued in June 2005. All advocate open access to outputs from their funded research and many provide a repository service in support of this.

Data
In 2011, RCUK issued a set of Common Principles on Research Data Policy.\(^2\) These push for data to be made openly available with as few restrictions as possible in a timely and responsible manner. Most research funders have issued data policies, however the extent and coverage of these varies greatly. In some cases researchers are also directed to good practice guides, which provide recommendations on documenting and maintaining research. The only research council without a formal policy as yet is the STFC.

Time limits
Most funders expect research papers to be deposited in an accessible repository within 6 months of publication. Data are to be made openly available as soon as possible, typically on publication of results. Embargo periods are permitted as appropriate to the field.

The ESRC and AHRC (only for archaeology) expect an offer of data to their data centres within three months of the end of the award. NERC expects data to be deposited as soon after the end of data collection as is possible, which may be well before the end of the award.

Expected periods for preservation vary. The AHRC expects access to be maintained for 3 years while Cancer Research UK notes a minimum period of 5 years. The BBSRC, MRC and Wellcome Trust meanwhile state a period of ten years after the completion of a research project. The EPSRC expects data to be securely preserved for a minimum of 10 years from the date that any privileged access period expires or from the last date on which access to the data was requested by a third party - so realistically 15+ years.

Data plan
Most research funders require applicants to submit data management and sharing plans at the grant proposal stage. The expected coverage of this statement varies by funder.\(^3\) The biomedical funders (BBSRC, Cancer Research UK, MRC and Wellcome Trust) focus heavily on data sharing. Neither the EPSRC nor STFC require data management and sharing plans.

Access / data sharing
The Research Councils have signed a statement on open access to research outputs, which advocates making publications widely accessible.

Steps are also being made to link publications with underlying data. The EPSRC and NERC require that all research publications include a statement on how the supporting data can be accessed, and the RCUK Common Principles reiterate this. Repositories such as UK PubMed Central\(^4\) and DRYAD\(^5\) are accepting data related to publications.

There is a general expectation that data will be made available with as few restrictions as possible. The ESRC and NERC facilitate data sharing through their funded data centres. Since 2011, environmental data held by NERC data centres is freely available without any restrictions on use. The AHRC provides access to archaeology data through the Archaeology Data Service and requires other award holders keep data accessible for a minimum of three years. Other funders such as the BBSRC, CRUK, EPSRC, MRC and Wellcome expect data sharing but do not mandate places of deposit.

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1. [http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/research/Pages/outputs.aspx](http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/research/Pages/outputs.aspx)
2. [http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/research/Pages/DataPolicy.aspx](http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/research/Pages/DataPolicy.aspx)
4. [http://ukpmc.ac.uk/](http://ukpmc.ac.uk/)

See related guidance at: [www.dcc.ac.uk/resources/policy-and-legal/overview-funders-data-policies](http://www.dcc.ac.uk/resources/policy-and-legal/overview-funders-data-policies)

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**Long-term curation**
Most of the data policies cover long-term curation. Many funders emphasise the need to create resources according to appropriate standards to enable reuse and preservation.

Expected periods for preservation range from 3 years to 10+ years. The EPSRC expects the period of preservation to extend based on third party access requests.

**Monitoring**
Around half of the funders note that they will monitor compliance with their policies, typically via the final report process. The EPSRC notes that it will monitor progress and compliance on a case by case basis. Both the ESRC and the NERC could withhold the final grant payment if data are not properly managed and offered for deposit. The extent to which such penalties are applied is unclear.

**Guidance**
The extent to which guidance and support services are provided varies significantly. The best served researchers are those funded by the ESRC and NERC, which provide extensive curation guidance and support through their designated data centres. The AHRC runs a similar service for archaeology researchers and has legacy guides online for researchers in other fields.

The MRC and STFC provide some best practice guides and toolkits. The BBSRC and Wellcome Trust provide extensive guidance to accompany their data policies and assist researchers with data management and sharing plan requirements, while the EPSRC directs researchers to the JISC, DCC and ICO for support.

**Repository**
Most research funders provide a publications repository for their funded researchers. ESRC, NERC and STFC all run their own services while BBSRC, Cancer Research UK, the MRC and Wellcome Trust are partners in PubMed Central. The only Councils that do not provide a repository for published outputs are the AHRC and EPSRC. Researchers supported by these Councils are expected to use any institutional or subject based repositories.

**Data Centre**
Provision of data centres is patchy - very few funding bodies have a full service in place to support their researchers. The exceptions are the ESRC and NERC, which both provide comprehensive preservation and support services through the ESDS and NERC data centres. The AHRC provides a data service for researchers in the area of archaeology through ADS and there are several services supported by STFC, such as the UK Solar System Data Centre and Atlas data store. Science and medical funders often contribute to joint initiatives, for example at the European Bioinformatics Institute.

For research that falls outside subject data centre remits, the institutions in which funded researchers are based are expected to maintain outputs in the long-term.

**Costs**
Over half of the funders agree to meet publication fees. The MRC and Wellcome Trust also encourage, or in cases where they have paid publication fees require, licences that allow articles to be freely copied and reused for purposes such as text and data mining.

The BBSRC, EPSRC, ESRC, NERC and the Wellcome Trust also state that costs associated with data management and sharing can be included in grant proposals.

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6 [www.ahds.ac.uk/about/publications/index.htm](http://www.ahds.ac.uk/about/publications/index.htm)
7 [www.esds.ac.uk/](http://www.esds.ac.uk/)
8 [www.nerc.ac.uk/research/sites/data/](http://www.nerc.ac.uk/research/sites/data/)
9 [http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/](http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/)
10 [www.e-science.stfc.ac.uk/services/](http://www.e-science.stfc.ac.uk/services/)