

## RDM policy and compliance discussion group

Discussion group participants included Angus White, DCC (facilitator), Verena Weigert, Jisc (notes), Ben Ryan, EPSRC and research data management support staff from a number of universities.

- Discussion group participants felt that generally most senior academics in their institutions have been supportive of the implementation of the EPSRC research data policy framework. In some cases there has been some reluctance due to confusion with 'Open Access' which led to the assumption that all data needs to be made openly available.
- One challenge has been to make it clear what is meant by 'data' as policies often cover a range of disciplines. The University of Bath has a good definition: <http://www.bath.ac.uk/research/data/introduction.html>
- It is difficult to engage researchers in Art and Design. Often it is not obvious how the term 'research data' applies to their work. Examples of work tackling this include outputs of the [Kaptur project](#) and the [RDMF 10 event](#).
- A useful tool to determine the costs for long term storage of research data is the [Archaeology Data Service Costing Tool](#).
- If the EPSRC could mandate the submission of DMPs with grant applications this would help with culture change in universities. The EPSRC's view is however that this should be part of an institutional policy. There is some resistance within EPSRC to mandate DMPs with grant applications. DMPs are for the benefit of the research process not the funders. As EPSRC does not mandate deposit in particular data centres it is less clear how they could monitor their effectiveness than it is for those Research Councils that do so. A way forward could be for the EPSRC to ask reviewers to consider applicants' data sharing intentions as part of the grant proposal review – this would be an incentive for researchers to think about data management from the start.
- Research Councils are actively looking at harmonising policies but it takes time to bring about change.
- What exactly is the EPSRC going to audit when monitoring compliance? The EPSRC doesn't want to create a culture of auditing. The priority will be to check if data that underpins the research record is available.
- After the summer break, the EPSRC will be 'dipstick' checking by randomly sampling the availability of data underpinning published research i.e. in papers published on or after 1<sup>st</sup> May 2015, and asking qualified people to assess whether the right data has been provided.
- If EPSRC finds out that data isn't available because the researcher did not make them available will the university be held accountable? In the short term the EPSRC would consider these checks as a learning experience and would seek to understand why the data isn't available. In the longer term EPSRC aims to establish a more formal self-assessment via the Research Councils' Audit and Assurance Services Group, with a view to the expectations being 'business as usual' by 2016. EPSRC will investigate any complaints that an organisation is failing to ensure research data is managed in line with their expectations. If they think a research organisation is not seriously engaging, EPSRC would consider whether it should be receiving funding. If they find that particular researchers are refusing to make data available despite their institution's policies they will be prepared to refuse to consider funding applications from them.

RDM readiness workshop on EPSRC compliance, 13<sup>th</sup> February, London

- What is the situation for data underpinning e.g. papers that were accepted for publication long time before 1<sup>st</sup> May 2015 so before necessary institutional RDM services were in place? The expectation that data underpinning published research will be shared, and that published papers will include a statement on that data has been in place since 2011, so there is scant excuse if papers published after 1<sup>st</sup> May 2015 fail to do so. If the data isn't cited and there is no data access statement in a checked article EPSRC would follow this up with researchers to find out why not and to verify where the data are stored.
- Where exactly is EPSRC expecting to see the data access statement? EPSRC's clarifications on their policy say it should be included in the research paper, preferably in the references in the form of a citation (to a landing page pointing to the data or to a statement on where/how it can be accessed). The University of Bath has good guidance on this at <http://www.bath.ac.uk/research/data/sharing-reuse/data-access-statement.html> Good practice is set out in the [DCC How to Guide](#) (currently being updated) and by the Forec11 Data Citation Implementation Group (<https://www.force11.org/datacitationimplementation>)
- Discussion group participants felt that there wasn't a need for another self-assessment tool to measure progress towards compliance but a checklist would be helpful. RDM support staff in universities will use a variety of methods such as interviews with EPSRC grant holders and surveys to understand to what extent their researchers are adhering to the EPSRC's expectations.