

Customising DMPonline for your institution: five steps to follow

1. Define your requirements

Before customising DMPonline for your institution, you need to determine what your requirements are. Here are three key questions to ask yourself:

1. Does your institution encourage/require that researchers write Data Management Plans, even if their funder does not require one? If so, what information are researchers asked to provide?
2. Do DMPs submitted to research funders supply the information your institution asks for (if any), or are there additional questions that you want to ask?
3. What guidance, examples and suggested answers can you provide to help researchers write DMPs?

If your institution encourages or requires that researchers write DMPs, you should provide a template to clarify what issues should be addressed in these plans. The template is likely to be a list of questions or topics with some guidance on how to respond. You are able to create a template within DMPonline - please just provide us with your questions and guidance.

It is likely that some researchers within your institution will be applying to research funders that require DMPs. Consider what happens in this case: are the responses that researchers give to funders' questions likely to also fulfil your institution's needs, or are there additional things that you want to know? For example you may want an estimate of data volumes to assist in capacity planning. If so, we can add your questions to the end of funder templates as required.

You may wish to split your questions up over a number of phases (e.g. application stage, in-project, post-award) to avoid asking too much at once and to encourage researchers to update the Data Management Plan throughout the course of their research. NERC for example asks 3 basic questions when researchers are applying for a grant, and expects a lot more detailed information once a project begins. You can see NERC requirements for outline and full plans at: <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/research/sites/data/dmp.asp>

The most useful thing institutions can do is provide rich guidance and support to help researchers write DMPs. Provide links to online guidance, relevant support services and contact details for key staff or helpdesks. If you have recommendations (e.g. to use centrally-provided storage) include this in the guidance text or provide suggested answers for researchers to copy, paste and adapt. Examples are a really useful way to show the kind of response and level of detail that is required. Provide as many examples as possible to help researchers interpret the questions and form a robust DMP.

If desired, you can apply different questions and guidance at a 'unit' level with your institution. Certain faculties, schools, departments or institutes may have local procedures that you want to represent. If so, please provide details for a template at this level too.

Once you've determined what you wish to provide, follow the guidelines in the sections below as appropriate.

2. Draft your institutional template (if you require DMPs)

Begin by reviewing any existing guidance you provide. Your Research Data Management policy or guidance webpages may give some indication of what should be included in a DMP, for example:

“All new research proposals must include research data management plans or protocols that explicitly address data capture, management, integrity, confidentiality, retention, sharing and publication.”

University of Edinburgh RDM policy

Next think about what your institution needs to know to support researchers with research data management. You may be concerned about what volume and type of data will be created, where it will be stored and backed up, what the requirements are for secure data access to facilitate remote working and collaboration, and how researchers plan to meet expectations for long-term preservation and data sharing.

Pull together a set of questions and guidance. There are a number of resources that may be helpful in drafting this:

- DCC Checklist for a Data Management Plan¹
A list of 13 key questions plus core administrative details, together with pointers of what to consider and guidance on how to respond. The Checklist is based on an analysis of the themes addressed in funder requirements, institutional templates and disciplinary guidelines.
- University of Bath Data Management Plan template²
A 4-page template with guidance, tick-box options and suggested answers.
- ICPSR Framework for a Data Management Plan³
A list of elements that are typically included in DMPs, together with explanations of why these aspects are important and suggested answers.

3. Review existing funder templates (if you require DMPs)

Compare your institutional template to each of the funder templates. Do researchers still need to fill in your template if they are applying for funding to one of these funders? Researchers are not likely to respond positively if they have to write a DMP for their funder **and** for their institution.

To avoid duplication, it may be best to select a handful of questions that you want to present to researchers from your institution in addition to what their funder asks. If you wish to ask additional questions you should add these, together with your guidance and suggested answers, in the section at the end of each funder template in the spreadsheet.

You may also wish to apply different phases to limit the number of questions asked at grant application stage.

¹ <http://www.dcc.ac.uk/resources/data-management-plans/checklist>

² <http://blogs.bath.ac.uk/research360/2013/07/university-of-bath-data-management-plan-template-and-guidance>

³ <http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/content/datamanagement/dmp/framework.html>

4. Draft your guidance

You may want to provide guidance at a number of different levels:

- Guidance that accompanies the specific questions you ask in your template
- Generic guidance on themes (e.g. data quality, ethical issues, data storage...) that should be displayed to researchers from your institution, whenever those themes come up in a template they are using
- Specific guidance that you want to provide to accompany questions asked by others e.g. the AHRC

If you login to DMPonline, you can browse the different templates to see what guidance is already provided by the research funders and DCC to consider what you should add. The main things researchers are looking for are practical examples and suggested answers.

Try to make your guidance as rich as possible by providing links, contact details, recommendations and example answers. The three resources noted earlier all include some form of guidance, examples or suggested answers so these should help you to get started. The University of Bristol also provides some excellent DMP guides for the main Research Councils⁴.

University of Bristol guidance on data storage

It is recommended that, as you create data, you should store it in the University's Research Data Storage Facility (RDSF), managed by the Advanced Computing Research Centre (ACRC). Each member of research staff is entitled to 5TB of storage, without charge. Contact ACRC directly to request your allocation.

University of Bristol example answer submitted to the AHRC

Bristol's Research Data Storage Facility (RDSF) will be used to store the data during the project. The facility represents 2 million pounds of digital resilient storage, with ongoing capital investment. The RDSF is overseen by a steering group of senior research and support staff, which includes the PVC Research. Backup procedures are robust (overnight backup, copies held remotely on tape) and secured access is in place.

Recordings made in the field will be copied to the RDSF via a secure web connection, by the PI, as soon as possible, but some delays are expected due to Sri Lankan facilities. Therefore an external, portable hard drive (and an identical copy, for redundancy purpose) will be used for backup in the field. These will remain the responsibility of the PI and filmmaker (each will be carried separately). Checking the quality of recordings made and photographs taken each day will be the responsibility of the PI.

Suggested answer text provided by the University of Illinois in the DMPTool

Suggested answer text

(copy and paste as needed)

box size: [small](#) | [medium](#) | [full](#)

The data generated under this project and information supporting preservation and reuse will be deposited in IDEALS (Illinois Digital Environment for Access to Learning and Scholarship), the campus digital repository at <http://www.ideals.illinois.edu/>.

IDEALS is designed to collect, disseminate, and provide persistent and reliable, long term open access to the research and scholarship of faculty, staff, and students at the University of Illinois. IDEALS is managed by the University Library in partnership with the Office of the CIO at UIUC.

⁴ <http://data.bris.ac.uk/research/planning>

5. Provide the DCC with the details we need to create your customised version of DMPonline

A spreadsheet accompanies these guidelines to help you provide the details we need to create your customisation. In future, you will be able to do this yourself via the admin interface of DMPonline.

We recommend that you focus on the first few tabs in the spreadsheet where you can insert your questions and guidance, and associate your guidance by theme. You only need to complete the individual funder tabs if you want to apply guidance to specific questions that they ask.

1. If you want to add a template to DMPonline, please complete the 'Blank' tab, renaming this with your institution. You may change the headings to suit and provide as much guidance and as many suggested answers as you desire.

The 'DMP themes' column allows us to characterise questions to draw in additional guidance. If you want generic guidance from the DCC to display on your template, please select any relevant themes to accompany your questions. You can select more than one and apply the same theme to more than one question. You can see the generic DCC guidance that will be displayed in the 'Themes' tab.

The 'DMP Checklist' tab displays the DCC Checklist in case you want to use this as a reference point when creating your template.

If you choose not to create your own template in the 'Blank' tab then a researcher who does not select a funder will see the 'DMP Checklist' template. You can add guidance, suggested answers, and additional questions to this in the same way as the funder templates.

2. Next provide us with the generic guidance you wish researchers from your institution to see whenever they are writing a DMP. You can do this in two ways, either:

- a. Enter any additional guidance you wish to provide in the 'Themes' tab.

We use these themes to layer relevant guidance onto templates, so by providing guidance on the 'Existing data' theme, this will automatically be displayed on question 3 in the BBSRC template, question 1 in the ESRC template and any others tagged with 'Existing data'

- b. Go through the DMP Checklist and individual funder tabs and add your guidance and suggested answers to each question as relevant

In the first instance, you're best to apply guidance to the themes. This is a more efficient process and will make it easier for you to maintain your institutional guidance in the future. However we realise that it may be hard to visualise how the guidance will combine in each template. You may also have guidance that suits one funder but not another. In this case, you should attach guidance to specific questions in individual funder templates. Please use whichever approach you prefer, or a combination of the two if desired.

Once we have added your content to DMPonline, we can preview your guidance on the different templates and adjust as needed.

Help and support

If you have any questions related to DMPonline please email dmponline@dcc.ac.uk or call 0131 651 1239 and we'll direct your enquiry to the most relevant person.