First-Year Review Data Management Plans: General Guidance

What is a data management plan (DMP)?

A data management plan is a document which sets intentions for how you will collect, keep track of, protect, and share any kind of data (evidence, material) produced or gathered during your project. It outlines topics such as

* Types of data, formats, and expected volume
* How collection and transfer will work
* How you will store, backup, and access your data
* What documentation will be generated about the data
* What the main security risks are and how they will be mitigated
* Long-term retention, preservation strategy, and destruction
* Sharing and publication strategy (including restrictions, embargo, delays).

# The requirement

The requirement reflects the University’s policy on [Progress reviews and termination of studies for postgraduate research students](https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/policy/academic-policies-student-progression-progress-reviews-and-termination-of-studies-for-pgr-students/pgr-progress-review-termination.pdf). The First-Year Review DMP must be submitted alongside other materials during the first-year review. Once in place, you can adapt the DMP to reflect your research developments throughout the course of the project. The Research Data Management (RDM) team provide a one-page template that prompts you to include the necessary DMP information.

# Things you need to know

The big question behind data management planning is whether you have thought about how you will:

* + Organise your data
  + Secure/back it up across your project
  + Share it more widely with the community in future.

It may seem daunting, but developing a data management plan is a crucial part of the research process. DMPs exist to help you make your research better. Having a DMP helps ensure your data are complete, accurate, reliable, and secure both during and after your project.

It’s also a good skill to learn as a researcher: funders increasingly require a DMP to be submitted alongside grant applications.

**For your first-year review DMP, we provide a template on the** [**DMP webpage**](https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/research/support/open-research/research-data-management/requirements-for-postgraduate-students/data-management-plans/)**.**

Just remember that each project is unique, so each DMP will be unique. If you feel that any questions on the template don’t apply to your research, simply explain in your plan why that question isn’t applicable. Making that decision is part of thinking through your data management.

Data management plans are live documents that will adapt as your research develops across the course of the project. If your storage methods need to change, you can update your DMP to reflect this. If you find you need to change your file naming conventions, you can update your DMP to make sure everything remains consistent and is easy to find later.

# What counts as data?

‘Data’ are not just numbers or scientific data; rather, they are any ‘input’ that you will analyse for your thesis. Just a few examples of data:

Recorded **observations** (e.g. fieldwork notes), **images**, **videos**, **surveys**, **transcripts**, theoretical **models**, **parameters**, **code**, **notes**\* (both paper-based and digital), **critical apparatus**, **stemma**, **focus group** notes, **finding aids** for archives/fonds, meeting **minutes**, **text corpus**/corpora, text with **markup** (e.g. OBML, SMIL, BulletML), **digitised collections** of books/paintings/other works, **thematic research collections**, **interview coding**, **interviews** and **transcriptions**

…or anything else generated or collected for analysis during a project. It’s helpful to bear this in mind as you work your way through the template below.

\* ‘Notes’ does not include chapter drafts, since those are part of the *output* (your thesis).

# Tools and templates

### [Template](https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/assets/university/research/documents/support/research-data-management/data-management-plan-template-pgr.docx)

This is the template that meets the requirements for the First-Year Review DMP. It’s only 7 questions, so the longest part of preparing your DMP should be the thought that goes into it!

### [Checklist](https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/assets/university/research/documents/support/research-data-management/dmp-assessment-checklist-pgr.pdf)

This is the rubric assigned for assessing the First-Year Review DMP requirement, in case you want to see what your supervisor will be looking for.

# Support

The Research Data Management Team offer the following support that is available to you throughout your project. We offer

* Training through CEED (Centre for Educational Enhancement and Development)
* One-on-one consultations
* A 48-hour response guaranteed email service
* Writing workshops
* Training through Schools (contact your school’s secretary or admin for more information)
* Support for Pure repository submission

**Contact us** by email at [research-data@st-andrews.ac.uk](mailto:research-data@st-andrews.ac.uk) or by phone at either +44 (0) 1334 46 4115 or +44 (0) 1334 46 2343.

# Useful links

* [DMP requirements page](https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/research/support/open-research/research-data-management/requirements-for-postgraduate-students/data-management-plans/)
* [Benefits of good data management](https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/research/support/open-research/research-data-management/working-with-data/benefits-of-good-data-management/)
* [Research data lifecycle video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-wjFMMQD3UA) from UK Data Service