Research data management policy
Monash University experiences 2006-2011

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Policy development with multiple purposes

- One piece of a research governance framework
- One piece of a larger research data management (RDM) strategy
- Encourage ownership of improved practices
- Awareness, education, communication
2006
- Information management strategy
- eResearch Committee RDM Subcommittee (v.1)
- Large Research Data Store (LaRDS)

2007
- *Code for Responsible Conduct of Research*
- Research Governance Implementation Committee

08-09
- RDM Advisory Group
- Policy & procedures – drafting, consultation, review by various stakeholder groups
- Website, including guidelines

09-10
- Iterative drafting, consultation, review
- Pharmacy implementation pilot
- RDMSC reporting line changed to Research Committee
- Dec 2010: Policy & staff procedures at Academic Board

2011
- HDR procedures at Graduate School Committee
- Communications and implementation planning
Policy development at Monash

• High level approach

• Three tiers

  • **Policies** – agreed by council, usually stable
  • **Procedures** – can be multiple for any policy, change process simpler than for policy
  • **Guidelines** – ongoing updating (e.g. via a website)
Research data management policy

• Led by the Library

• several approaches – final brief version
  • Responds to the Code in terms of language used and content covered
  • Applies to all campuses, including overseas
  • Links to, and where possible avoids replicating, related policies and legislation
  • Defines researchers, data management, research data
  • Identifies stakeholders and responsibilities
Associated procedures

• Much discussion with faculty stakeholders
• Again, a variety of approaches tried
• Target groups
  a. Staff, adjuncts and visiting researchers
  b. Higher degree by research students – separated out and finalised by the Research Graduate School
  c. Honours & undergrad project-based research projects – under discussion
Procedures – some of the challenges

• 12 definitions all requiring agreement
  • Research data, life cycle, metadata
  • External data storage and management
  • Clouds, commercial, non-digital
• Responsibilities – emphasis at Monash on institution as well as researchers
• Range and levels of legislation
• Implementation and resources
Lessons learned (1)

- Consult, consult, consult! Policy development is an effective outreach activity in its own right.
- Understand the researchers and the role they play.
- Partnerships between the policy office, risk and audit, solicitor’s office, research office, records and archives, commercialisation, copyright/IP, ethics and research training will make the policy better and help with harmonisation.
Lessons learned (2)

- RDM framed as risk/compliance is a turn-off
  - Communicate benefits – funding & publishing opportunities, research impact, saved time & effort
  - Build a shared vision – “imagine what it would be like if everyone managed their data really well!”
- Cost models can become a distraction
- Start building infrastructure and capability now – demonstrate the institution’s commitment to sharing the load while building policy framework
Guidelines provide advice on common concerns

Research data management

Monash University is committed to improving the way research data in all formats is created, stored, managed and disseminated. This website provides guidance on common research data management issues and highlights the portfolio of advisory and technical support services that are available to researchers.

Guidelines

- Data management planning
- Ownership, copyright and IP
- Ethical requirements
- Durable formats
- Storage and backup
- Sharing data and controlling access
- Documentation and metadata
- Retention and disposal
- Secure destruction
- Deposit in a repository or archive

Latest

- exPERT seminars for HDR students
  1. Introduction to Data Management
     Registrations opening soon for Clayton and Caulfield campus sessions in May-June 2010
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- Seeking a customised session or individual consultation? Contact the University's Data Management Coordinator
Usage of the guidelines

- Live for two years – 50% growth in traffic in Year 2 compared to Year 1
- 35% of overall site pageviews - guidelines for data planning, ownership/copyright/IP, ethics & storage
Implementation

- Combination of top-down and bottom-up
- Top-down – communications plan, senior managers workshop, faculty self-assessment?
- Bottom-up – hands-on
  - Faculties, e.g. **Pharmacy (current)**, Arts
  - School or centre, e.g. Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, Centre for Organisational and Social Informatics
  - Workgroup, e.g. **ANZAC Remembered (current)**
  - Early career researchers
Case study: Faculty of Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences

- Focus on achievable steps and simple solutions
  - Faculty Research Committee RDM working group
    - ADR (chair), researchers, faculty information technology, research manager,
    - Library and eResearch staff are there to remove barriers, encourage and share information
  - Two sub-groups for digital data storage and protocols for file structure and naming
  - Mapping procedures to local practices to identify good practices, areas for improvement and priorities
  - Induction/training of early career researchers
Forcing ourselves to get in early with addressing the challenges of RDM has been very valuable… ‘Wins’ – such as central storage that is easily accessible by all staff – are proving to be much more powerful than perhaps we first thought. Notably, these systems are starting to focus attention on behaviours, and in many respects are changing the way data is viewed, shared, accessed etc. So a physical solution is actually changing the way we work – which in the long run will be a more useful benefit than safe storage. We have a long way to go – but I think the Faculty is starting to see this as a benefit rather than a regulatory checkbox and ultimately this is where we will have the most impact.

- Chris Porter, Associate Dean of Research, Pharmacy