Introduction

This document outlines the minimum information security standards required when using tools to collect and analyse the research data. Automised data collection and analysis via software and applications is often an inseparable part of research activities, which can have implications for the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of LSE-owned research data, or data provided by third party data providers via a data sharing agreement. LSE-owned data includes datasets provided by the LSE, or primary data collected by/from end users, as part of research and course study.

Purpose

The primary purposes of this Minimum Standard are to:
1. Provide safeguards for using tools to facilitate research data collection and analysis.
2. Provide a basic understanding of the implication for data confidentiality, integrity, and availability when using these tools.
3. Protect the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of LSE-owned research data.
4. Protect the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of data provided by third party research data providers, and assist the fulfilment of data security requirements imposed by research funders and data providers.

NOTE: where data provider and/or research funder requirements exceed or conflict with the minimum standards outlined below, the data provider requirements take precedence.

Scope

This Minimum Standard is intended for:
1. All LSE members
2. Software and applications that are not centrally provided by the LSE but commissioned by research staff for specific purposes when collecting and analysing the research data.

Minimum Standards
Cloud Storage

Any LSE data should be stored in LSE-provided storage, including:
- Microsoft SharePoint
- Microsoft One Drive for Business
- Microsoft Teams
- H: space
- Departmental shared folder (for staff only)

Any data sharing with external collaborators should be via one of the following means, which allow the LSE user to add a guest account to the data that are shared:
- Microsoft SharePoint; or
- Microsoft One Drive for Business; or
- Microsoft Teams

Note that the LSE provides a secure file sharing service via filedrop.lse.ac.uk which is suitable for one-off data transfer.

Where data are internally or externally shared, access to the data must observe the following principles:
- ‘need to know’ - access is only given to those who have the legitimate business need for such access
- ‘least privilege’ - access permission level should be restricted to what are absolutely necessary (e.g. Read only vs. Edit)
- The access is ‘role based’ - access is assigned via user groups instead of being assigned to individuals
- Access permission should be regularly reviewed, to ensure only the right people have access to the right resources for right amount of time

Audio and video recording

This section should be read in combination with the School's Audio and Video Recording Guideline

The following should be followed as a minimum:

Recording device – dictation device
1. If dictation device is used, the recording device is kept in a safe place when unattended.
2. Models with real-time encryption capabilities include:
   - Olympus DS -7000
   - Olympus DS -3500
   - Phillips DPM 8000/00
3. For video recording, there’s no proven devices that support real-time video encryption capabilities. Video recording represents a higher risk around personally identifiable data; any video recording files should be imported to a computer with adequate protection as soon as possible

Third party recording apps
1. If recording apps are used, ensure the recording files are not automatically synchronised into a third-party cloud service, apart from the cloud service that the School centrally subscribes
to (e.g. Microsoft Teams, SharePoint, One Drive for Business).

2. Any locally stored recording files are in an encrypted folder or reside on an encrypted drive.

[Note] Files are not required to be encrypted if being stored in LSE-provided storage location such as H: space, departmental shared folder, Microsoft team, SharePoint, One Drive for Business, unless it is explicitly required so by the research data providers or funders, or is deemed as required out of a risk assessment around the impacts of exposure/breach of such files.

Third party transcription apps

1. Usage of cloud-based automatic transcription software should be avoided if the recorded contents are sensitive, or if the interviewee’s identity is sensitive.

2. If, following a risk assessment by the researcher, a cloud-based transcription software is deemed as acceptable to use as part of the research, the following must be observed:
   - Terms of service and privacy policy of the service provider are checked to ensure a reasonable level of assurance exists around the safeguards towards data confidentiality, integrity, and availability.
   - Be aware of what the service provider does with any voice data, understand what data they store, where the data are physically stored, how long the data are stored for, and what the data are used for by the provider. Any use of the personal data beyond the purpose of transcription, for example using the data for improving their voice recognition accuracy, must be informed to the research participant. The transcription of voice data has to be within the UK or the EEA or countries with equivalent level of protections (for an official list of such countries please refer to https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/law-topic/data-protection/data-transfers-outside-eeu/adequacy-protection-personal-data-non-eeu-countries_en)

Third party survey solutions

As mandated Mass Research Survey Policy, the following must be met:

1. Third party survey tools should be used in precedence over the emailing system while conducting mass research surveys.

2. While choose a survey tool, the service provider’s terms and usage policies must be checked to ensure that their processing of data meets Data Protection legislation (refers to General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and UK Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018)

3. LSE recommended survey tools include:
   - Mailchimp
   - Qualtrics
   - Survey monkey

Content scrapers

It is technically not illegal to use content scrapers. If a content scraper is used, the following must be met:
1. Terms of use of the content provider are checked, to ensure the usage of content scraper is permitted by the content provider, or the conditions for using a content scraper are met.
2. Be aware that the content provider might require the explicit consent of their users in order for the content scraper to be used.
3. If it is unclear from the terms of service whether the content scraper is permitted, or under which conditions the usage is permitted, communication with the content provider should be initiated with an explanation of the purpose of the usage of the content provider and obtain their permission as necessary.

Web applications and mobile apps

1. Any web applications and/or mobile apps to be developed for research purpose as a collaboration between the LSE and third parties must be properly assessed against the safeguards towards the data confidentiality, integrity, and availability.
2. The assessment should at a minimum cover the completion of the School’s standard Cloud Assurance Questionnaire.
3. The Questionnaire should be checked and assessed by the Cyber Security and Risk team upon its completion. If, following the assessment, the risks are not within the Cyber Security and Risk team’s acceptance level, and the project instigator still wishes to use the application, it will be escalated to either the School’s Data Protection Officer or the Chief Operating Officer, depending on the type of risk involved.

Messenger and social media apps

1. Usage of messenger and social media apps should be considered in context of the sensitivity of the research topic and identity of the research participant.
2. A Data Privacy Impact Assessment should be complete if the sensitivity of the research topic can implicate on the personal safety of the research participant.

Accompanying documents

This Minimum Standard is supported by the following documents:

The Information Security Policy and Information Classification Standard, which outlines how to classify data and how data of different categories must be secured.

Data Protection Policy, which provides an overview of data protection requirements under the Data Protection legislation.

The Audio and Video Recording Guideline which outlines the guidelines around audio and video recording while collection research data.

Mass Research Survey Policy, which sets out the minimum requirements that mass research surveys shall adhere to.

Policy on Online Survey Retention which outlines the requirements around retention of the survey
Responsibilities

All LSE members
All LSE members are responsible for meeting this Policy over the course of their studying, research, and employment.

Cyber Security and Risk
The Cyber Security and Risk team is responsible to update this Minimum Standard and advising on any data protection and information security queries or requirements.

The team shall be consulted when there are doubts on this Minimum Standard.

Data Protection Officer
The Data Protection Officer advises on any data protection queries or requirements from a legal point of view.

Information Governance Management Board
Responsible for approving information security minimum standards.

Review schedule

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External document references

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Contacts

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<tr>
<td>Information Security Manager</td>
<td>Jia Fu</td>
<td><a href="mailto:j.fu8@lse.ac.uk">j.fu8@lse.ac.uk</a></td>
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Communications and Training

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