



Retention of Research Data once Staff have left

Guidance for staff

This guidance covers what to do with research data left on School systems by staff who have left the School.

1. Who is covered by 'staff'

Staff includes:

- any directly employed staff of the LSE creating and using research data, and;
- any research assistants employed by the LSE or as contractors/consultants employed to help those staff.
- visiting appointees.

Research assistants must be employed on contracts which outline their responsibilities to the data, including data management, data protection and data retention. If you need a template agreement for a research assistant, please contact the Legal team via Secdiv.Contracts@lse.ac.uk.

Former staff who are helping finishing a research project after they have left may also be given access to data if needed.

2. The Orphaned Research Data folder

It is recommended that departments/centres/institutes maintain an 'Orphaned Research Data' folder on a shared drive or that acts as a holding area for research data waiting to be reviewed.

3. Staff have not yet left

Where staff have not yet left, there is a chance to check with them what data they hold. This can be done by the Primary Investigator (PI) or their manager if the PI is the one leaving:

- via interview, or;
- filling out an information asset register form, or;

- checking that an information asset register form is still current.

Appendix A has a template interview form and Appendix B a copy of the information asset register form template.

In any case, departments/centres/institutes should determine:

- what data is being left behind;
- where it is stored
H space and OneDrive data will need to be moved as these will be destroyed 6 months after the staff member leaves;
- what can be destroyed before the staff member leaves;
- who ownership passes to;
- if there are any agreements attached to the data.

The new owner should be updated on the information asset register form and will then be responsible for ensuring data is destroyed when required. See here for [guidance](#) on how to decide how long to keep research data.

4. Staff have left without clearing out their data

Where staff have left without clearing their data, the following procedure should be used.

1. As H Space and OneDrive will be deleted within 6 months of the staff member leaving, if the manager of the staff member leaving knows there is data kept there, DTS can be asked to hold deletion until the data is transferred.
 - a. Where possible inform the staff member that the H Space/OneDrive will be checked for research data.
 - b. The staff member accessing H Space/OneDrive must sign a confidentiality agreement and focus on the research data only. Contact the Legal team for the template.
2. Shared drive, Teams and SharePoint data will not be deleted automatically. As such there is more time to review. There are two main issues relating to this data, i) who does the review and ii) who now owns the data and will be responsible for its management.
 - a. Where a manager or another staff member working on the project is known, the research data can stay where it is.
 - b. If the owner of the research data is not known, the data should be moved to the Orphaned Research Data folder.
3. Who reviews? Who owns the data?
 - a. Where another staff member was involved in the research project, they should review the data and ownership should transfer to them.
 - b. If the project was with external research partners and:
 - i. The LSE wants to keep the data, the reviewer should be the staff member's manager as for 3.c.
 - ii. The LSE does not want to keep the data, the data should be transferred to the external research partners.
However, if LSE signed an agreement with a funder or data provider, they must be informed of the intended transfer and give permission for it to occur before the transfer can take place. If the funder or data provider requires the LSE to delete, we should delete the data.
 - c. Where a manager of the staff member who left can be identified, they should review the data and transfer ownership where required.

- d. Where original ownership cannot be identified, a pool of research staff should be given responsibility to review the data to identify if it can be deleted or is still useful and should be kept. The owner will be the researcher who decided to keep the data.
4. If long term preservation of the research data is needed, data repositories are available (see below).

5. Data repositories

In line with the [Research Data Management Policy](#) LSE is committed to the principles of open access and recognises that sharing research data is an integral part of making research more open and discoverable. Where research data is not subject to commercial, ethical or legal restrictions it should be made available in a recognised data repository. A recognised data repository represents sustainable long-term storage for research data and will provide a DOI and a citation for linking and discoverability.

There is a register of data repositories available at re3data.org. There are more specific recommendations at the Library Research Support [webpages](#) where you can also find information on control mechanisms to manage access to data.

Appendix A Interview questions

Name of staff member leaving:

Name of manager/interviewer:

Project 1

Name of Project:

What data has been collected for it?

Where is this data stored?

Are there any research partners also using the data?

Are there any agreements relating to the data?

Project 2

Name of Project:

What data has been collected for it?

Where is this data stored?

Are there any research partners also using the data?

Are there any agreements relating to the data?

Project 3, etc

Name of Project:

What data has been collected for it?

Where is this data stored?

Are there any research partners also using the data?

Are there any agreements relating to the data?

Appendix B Information Asset Register form

[Insert when ready]

Review schedule

Review interval	Next review due by	Next review start
3 years	31/03/2024	01/03/2024

Version history

Version	Date	Approved by	Notes
1	11/03/2021		

Links

Reference	Link

Contacts

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