



DIVISION OF RESEARCH POLICY

SUBJECT: Research Data Policy	Effective Date: June 7, 2023	Policy Number: 10.1.6	
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	Responsible Authorities: Vice President for Research		

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Advancement and generation of knowledge is integral to research. Florida Atlantic University (FAU) faculty, students, and staff engage in research activities employing a variety of methods and approaches appropriate to their respective disciplines. The commonality of these discipline focused research activities is the recording of the findings, commonly known as data or as defined in this Policy “Research Data.” The purpose of this Research Data Policy is to establish expectations and guidance on efficient and effective processes for the management of Research Data.

APPLICABILITY

This Policy is applicable to all FAU faculty, students, and staff engaged in the use of Research Data, and is designed to complement, not supersede, other FAU policies and procedures relating to the protection of human subjects, including, but not limited to, the Institutional Review Board, Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, intellectual property, and records managements. This policy does not apply to academic matters.

POLICY STATEMENT

The integrity of data is a hallmark of responsible conduct of research. Data integrity refers to the validity, reliability, and accuracy of data. Data integrity relies on a clear understanding of the administrative oversight processes underlying the data and the consistent definition of each data element. The intellectual value of data increases through its prevalent and appropriate use; its intellectual value diminishes through misuse, misinterpretation, and unnecessary restrictions placed against its access and dissemination. To protect the intellectual value of Research Data, FAU faculty, students, and staff must perform the University’s research activities in accordance

with all FAU policies, procedures, and guidance, including, but not limited to this Policy and its processes for effective and efficient management of Research Data. FAU faculty, students, and staff must also access, use, and maintain Research Data in accordance with the applicable security levels specific to the Research Data.

The FAU faculty member that is leading the research activities is responsible for the access, use, and maintenance of all Research Data generated under a University research project. Any other faculty, staff, student or person involved in the generation of Research Data may have the ability to review the portion of the Research Data in which they had a role.

When research is undertaken through a funding mechanism, data ownership provisions must be approved by FAU and researchers should not enter into agreements that affect the control and use of data without institutional review and approval.

DEFINITIONS

Research Data: Recorded factual information commonly accepted in the scientific community as necessary to reconstruct, evaluate, and validate research findings and results, regardless of the media on which it may be recorded. Examples of Research Data include, but are not limited to, laboratory notebooks, notes of any type including printouts, specimens of any type including organisms, photographs, reagents, digital images, protocols, numbers, graphs, charts, numerical raw experimental results, instrumental outputs from which Research Data can be derived and other deliverables under sponsored agreements.

PROCEDURES

Elements of Data Management

Principal Investigators (PI) and all research team members are responsible for data management for the lifecycle of the project. The PI maintains full responsibility for all elements of data both during and beyond the project lifecycle, as described below. Research team members should have knowledge of, and adhere to FAU data classifications (Policy 12.7)

Element	Descriptor
Research Data Collection	Collecting project data in a consistent and systematic manner. Requirements for the recording and storage of Research Data and material will vary by discipline. PIs should always adhere to requirements of funding agencies, standards of the applicable industry, professional guidance where available, any principles set out on the College level as well as FAU recommendation as outlined in compliance documents.
Research Data Storage	Research Data should be stored using a method that permits a complete retrospective audit if necessary. Unless ethical/professional/local or funding agency guidance requires otherwise, Research Data should be archived in a durable form and in a secure location that is immune to subsequent tampering and falsification for the duration of the project and maintained for a minimum of three (3) years after completion of the project. Research Data storage and retention must adhere to all federal, state, sponsor,

	and institutional record retention requirements, as applicable to the project
Research Data Security	Relates to protecting written and electronic data from damage and protection of data integrity. The PI will have access to the Research Data generated by the project. Any other faculty, staff, student or person involved in the creation of Research Data may have the ability to review that portion of the Research Data that they created. Appropriate FAU oversight offices will have access to the Research Data as necessary for technology transfer, compliance and other purposes. FAU also has the option to take custody of the Research Data as determined by the appropriate university official. Such option will not be invoked without cause, such as allegation of research misconduct, and subsequent notification of the PI. In some instances, a research sponsor has a legal right of access or access may be requested through the sponsoring agency under the federal Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Such requests will be coordinated through the Office of the General Counsel and/or the appropriate Research Administration Office.
Rights in Research Data	See Division of Research's Intellectual Property Policy 10.6
Research Data Retention	Related to the means and duration of maintaining the data. The PI is responsible for selection of an appropriate method of storing and archiving data, and for determining what needs to be retained in sufficient detail and for an adequate period of time to enable appropriate responses to questions about accuracy, authenticity, primacy, and compliance with laws and regulations governing the conduct of research. The PI is responsible for educating all participants in the research project of their obligations regarding Research Data, and for protection of the university's rights and ability to meet obligations related to the Research Data. The PI should also consult with their respective Office of Information Technology departments regarding the development of any contingency plans.
Research Data Sharing	Pertains to how project data and results are disseminated to others. Details on how, when, to and by whom data will be shared with other researchers and for generalizable knowledge should be detailed in research plans, including but not limited to protocols, data sharing plans, consent documents, and data use agreements.
Research Data Destruction	Relates to the timeline and means in which data will be destroyed. Research Data must be maintained for the periods required by law, university policy and the terms of any contractual obligations. Thereafter, Research Data must not be destroyed without prior review and adherence to FAU, funding agency, or contractual requirement.
Research Data Transfer	FAU recognizes the importance of Research Data to the future research and career of its faculty. Therefore, should removal of Research Data be approved, for example, because of the transfer of the investigator to another institution, the following requirements apply: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. PIs may receive approval to remove original Research Data. The university may retain copies.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii. Research Data generated during the researcher’s employment or enrollment at the university will be maintained in accordance with FAU policy. iii. Research Data that are integral to the ongoing research of another FAU employee or student will continue to be made available for that purpose. iv. The PI bears full responsibility for ensuring that original Research Data is available to FAU, as well as to federal and legal entities upon request. Others involved in the project may remove copies (but not originals) of the Research Data with permission of the PI.
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ACCOUNTABILITY

The PI is responsible for:

- Developing and maintaining effective data plans for each research project that include all elements of data, as listed above. These should be developed in conjunction with the Office of Information Technology points of contact within the PI's college as well as the central Office of Information Technology as appropriate.
- Ensuring all pertinent research personnel are provided initial and continuing education on the data management plan, as applicable to their role.
- Revise the data management plan as needed and communicate any changes to research personnel and funding agency as applicable.
- Report any Research Data integrity breaches to the appropriate FAU oversight entity. Work with the appropriate FAU oversight entity to develop a corrective action and preventive action plan to ensure further breaches are mitigated.
- Disseminate accurate, reliable, and truthful results in a timely fashion.
- If a PI separates from FAU and wishes to transfer data from FAU, they must seek approvals in writing from the appropriate FAU entities. This may include the Office of the Vice President for Research, the Office of Sponsored Programs, the Office of Technology Development, the Office of the General Counsel, as well as FAU’s Privacy Officer, and other relevant compliance entities.

POLICY RENEWAL: As needed.

REFERENCES

[Office of Research Integrity
NIH Data Management and Sharing Polices](#)

[FAU Policy 12.7, “System and Data Classifications”](#)

[FAU-Division of Research Policy 10.6 – Intellectual Property Policy](#)

[FAU Libraries Data Management Resources and Services](#)



POLICY APPROVAL

Policy Number: 10.1.6

Initiating Authority

Signature: Gregg B. Fields Date: 6-7-2023

Name: Gregg Fields, Ph.D., Interim Vice President for Research
