September 2022

Guide to research data management planning

An increasingly important part of international funding applications is the preparation of a research data management plan, which in many cases is an integral part of the application process. Due to the GDPR regulation, it is now mandatory to have a data management plan at the Centre for Social Sciences (CSS). With this tool we would like to contribute to the successful application of CSS researchers and the secure and efficient management of their research data.

# Research data management plan guidelines

Let us create, maintain and store our data so that it can be used not only by us, but also by other researchers! The data, metadata (time of data collection, method, instruments) and textual information (interview, analysis) generated during the research are all important and should be stored for future use. We store quantitative and qualitative data, research documentation, analyses, summaries generated during the research.

Consult your research funder or check your contract to see if it includes clauses on documenting or reusing research data.

Be especially careful with the handling of personal data! Inform research participants about the research and ask them to give their consent. Keep a log of who has access to participants' personal data![[1]](#footnote-1)

Important aspects:

* handle personal data lawfully and transparently
* they must be collected, processed and handled for original (research) purposes
* minimise the collection of personal data
* ensure that personal data is accurate and up-to-date
* remove personal data that are not necessary for the research
* the integrity and confidentiality of data must be protected against unauthorised access, data corruption, deletion

**WARNING!** Personal data may also be present in texts/databases without names or other unique identifiers. If, for example, a teacher from a small village is interviewed or is listed in a database with an occupation and a name of the municipality, this may be sufficient for identification.

#

# Data security tips

Of course, we can never keep all the important information, material and documents, but it makes our own work easier if we keep our data in an organised way.

* Save all files that are important for your work in a secure, password-protected place! Make backups! Use clear signs to indicate which is the latest version of a text!
* Do not store personal data on an external cloud or on your own computer! Always use secure servers (CSS researchers: the O-drive)!
* If possible, use free formats (rtf, csv, mp4, etc.)!
* Document how and why the resulting research materials were created and what they contain! Examples of document types to be archived include: research design, questionnaire, interview guide, data file, codes (e.g. SPSS syntax), audio recording of interview, typed interview, observation protocol, photograph, video recording, study, abstract.
* Give your texts a talking title, subtitle or document their content in another way, e.g. in MS Word by using the file, information, properties, show document panel button!
* Label the variables in your data files!
* If you change the original data, save both the original and the new data! Write down what you have changed or modified in the data.
* Clarify the extent to which data for secondary use meet the ethical and legal requirements. Always take the consent of the research subjects into account!

**The following aspects should be taken into account when writing the data management plan:**

# **Data management plan checklist / checklist**

* Set out the research funder's requirements for the data!
* Plan which subtasks each research participant will carry out.
* Record the following requirements from CSS and other regulators.
* Define the legal and ethical constraints on research!
* Attach a written consent form from the individuals or groups to be studied! Also plan what information will be provided to them about the research.
* Specify where and with what access the researcher, the research team will store and manage his/her documents, especially those containing personal data.
* Prepare and attach a data access log!
* Record where the data will be stored and possibly made available for secondary use after the research is completed!
* Estimate how much storage space you need during and after work!
* Plan whether data should be anonymised, and if so, at which points in the research.
* Define who the data manager is: who coordinates the secure backup, sharing, storage, documentation and archiving of data before and during research.

# Online data management plan tools

There are several websites where researchers can prepare an English-language data management plan online or download English-language samples, partly from research funders that require data management plans. These include DMP Online [(](https://dmponline.dcc.ac.uk/)https://dmponline.dcc.ac.uk/) or DMPTool [(](https://dmp.cdlib.org/)https://dmp.cdlib.org/).

# Some useful international data management sites

* <http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/gm/reporting/h2020-tpl-oa-data-mgt-plan_en.docx>
* <http://www.dcc.ac.uk/resources/data-management-plans>
* <https://www.ukdataservice.ac.uk/manage-data/plan/planning>
* <https://www.lib.ncsu.edu/data-management>
1. The templates can be downloaded here: https://kdk.tk.hu/adatmenedzsment [↑](#footnote-ref-1)