

GSA briefing paper: Research Data Management – the basics

What is research data – and what does this mean for Art and Design?

Research data may be defined as evidence which is used or created to generate new knowledge and interpretations. "Evidence" may be intersubjective or subjective; physical or emotional; persistent or ephemeral; personal or public; explicit or tacit; and is consciously or unconsciously referenced by the researcher at some point during the course of their research. As part of the research process, research data may be collated in a structured way to create a dataset to substantiate a particular interpretation, analysis or argument. A dataset may or may not lead to a research output, which regardless of method of presentation, is a planned public statement of new knowledge or interpretation.

Within art and design research, data may include sketchbooks, log books, sets of images, video recordings, trials, prototypes, ceramic glaze recipes, found objects, and correspondence. Research data can be seen as your "stuff"!

Why is research data management important for me as a researcher?

Managing research data (or organising your "stuff") effectively can:

- ensure you meet research funder expectations
- make it easier to understand successive iterations of your research
- make it easier to re-visit your research if changes are required, for example by a journal editor or exhibition curator
- enable easier access to your research for re-use in other projects
- avoid the serious implications of having to re-do your research from scratch, for example due to data loss or inaccessible data

How can I manage my data?

GSA is currently considering the best approach for managing research data across the School. Data can be uploaded to RADAR, our research repository; other storage options include the GSA server, computers, USB and external drives, storage boxes and filing cabinets.

Some research funders (including the AHRC, for example) require a data management plan as part of a research proposal, which typically needs to include: introduction and context; data types, formats, standards and capture methods; ethics and Intellectual Property; access, data sharing and re-use; short-term storage and data management; deposit and long-term preservation; and resourcing, for instance.

What support is available for research data management at GSA?

GSA's Research Information Co-ordinator, [Dawn Pike](#), can be contacted for advice on research data management, as well as [Nicola Siminson](#) (Institutional Repository & Records Manager). Online training toolkits for research data management in the visual arts are available (www.vads4r.vads.ac.uk/p/online-learning.html), and further support is being developed.

Where can I find out more?

- Research Data Management section of the GSA VLE
<https://vle.gsa.ac.uk/> → Research & Knowledge Exchange → Research Data Management
- GSA Research Data Management Policy
<http://www.gsa.ac.uk/about-gsa/key-information/institutional-policies/>
- Checklist for a Data Management Plan
<http://www.dcc.ac.uk/resources/data-management-plans/checklist>
- Digital Curation Centre (DCC)
<http://www.dcc.ac.uk/resources>
- Funder requirements
<http://www.dcc.ac.uk/resources/data-management-plans/funders-requirements>
- RADAR research repository
<http://radar.gsa.ac.uk/>