

Research Data Management:

An introduction

Research data management is an integral part of good research practice that protects the intellectual and financial investment made in its creation and ensures research findings can be validated and reproduced.

What resources should be managed?

All resources produced and used during research requires management, irrespective of who collected them, how they were obtained, and the form they take. These include:

- Qualitative material such as audio recordings and transcripts
- Quantitative data held in spreadsheets, databases and other structured forms
- Models for simulations and experiments
- Questionnaires, interview guides and other research tools
- Field notes produced during ethnographic research
- Code such as source code, processing scripts, executable tools and similar resources

Priority should be given to resources needed to validate and reproduce your research.

Why plan data management?

Data management planning benefits your research in several ways:

- **Ensure quality:** you can collect and process data suitable for your research needs.
- **Save time:** you will have a better understanding of the tasks that must be performed, requirements to be met, and how much time they will require.
- **Manage risk:** you can recognise potential problems and take steps to avoid or reduce the likelihood that they will occur.
- **Research can be verified:** Others will have greater confidence in your research if the data on which it is built can be checked and confirmed.
- **Ethical and legal compliance:** study participants, collaborators, sponsors, funders and other needs can be recognised in advance and addressed accordingly

Failure to consider data management issues may result in unexpected problems; you may be unable to fulfil your research objectives or may require more time, funds, or other resources than expected.

LSHTM support

- Guides are available on LSHTM's [Research Data Management](#) Sharepoint pages.
- Staff/student training are available via the LSHTM Doctoral Transferable Skills and Talent and Education Development (TED) programme.
- For one-to-one support, contact the LSHTM Research Data Manager via [Servicedesk](#) or researchdatamanagement@lshtm.ac.uk.