

BIRMINGHAM CITY UNIVERSITY
RESEARCH DATA RETENTION SCHEDULE

Version 2.1

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Research Data Retention Schedule

Version Control

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Introduction

This Research Data Retention Schedule provides guidance for the retention of research data and the records of the research process held by Birmingham City University (BCU).

It applies to:

- Research carried out by staff at the University, whether externally or internally funded.
- Doctoral research carried out by postgraduate research students.
- Research carried out by postgraduate taught students and undergraduate research.

These retention periods do not apply to research data held in a repository for reuse. The decision to place it in an accessible repository, and for how long, must be made by the researcher. This may include Taught students whose research is published. All copies of the data and records held on BCU systems (except the version in the repository) are subject to the retention periods.

Retention periods apply to all formats including, but not limited to: paper records, removable media and digital records.

These retention periods **only** apply where there are not any legal or regulatory requirements, or requirements from funding bodies.

The hierarchy of requirements to determine the retention is:

1. Any legal, insurance or regulatory requirement applicable to the research type e.g. security sensitive research under the Terrorism Act (2006) or The Research Governance Framework for Health and Social Care;
2. Any contractual requirement under any grant and/or other funding agreement e.g. from a funding body;
3. BCU policy as set out in this schedule (based on institutional business requirements/best practice).

BCU has limitations around the medical research it is insured to conduct. For clinical trials, or any research which is covered by an exemption from the standard insurance restrictions, consult the Information Management team for advice on retention.

Data Protection Considerations

The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA) do not set out specific periods time for which personal data must be kept, but they do require compliance with key principles.

The data protection principles related to data retention are:

- The **Storage Limitation** principle: requires BCU to justify how long personal data is retained for in accordance with other legal requirements or in accordance with the purpose of the processing activity.

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- The **Data Minimisation** principle: requires that data retained is adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary, in this case for the purposes of the research and associated record keeping activity.

The UK GDPR requires BCU to comply with the above principles when determining retention periods for data. Considerations for the retention of research data include:

- What is the value of retaining the data?
- If the data was destroyed, what could the potential implications be to the research or the data subject?
- The cost and technical difficulty of maintaining the records;
- The security and data rights implications of retaining personal data;
- The value of archiving the data for additional research purposes;
- Partnership/funded research – is there a retention period stipulated in the agreement?
- Can the data be suitably anonymised or pseudonymised to mitigate risks of individuals being individually identifiable?

Contact information:

Records Management (part of Information Management) - Recordsmanagement@bcu.ac.uk

Information Management Team, including the Data Protection Officer –
informationmanagement@bcu.ac.uk

Insurance – Insurance@bcu.ac.uk

Research Integrity Officers – research_integrity@bcu.ac.uk

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These retention periods **only** apply where there are not any legal or regulatory requirements, or requirements from funding bodies. Follow the hierarchy of requirements for retention above.

BCU has limitations around the medical research it is insured to conduct. For clinical trials, or any research which is covered by an exemption from the standard insurance restrictions, consult the Information Governance team for advice on retention.

Activity	Record Group	Retention Period	Action at end of Retention Period	Citations and Notes
Research carried out by Taught Students				
Research data	Research data containing the personal data of participants 17 or younger	Date of youngest participants 18 th birthday + 6 years. * *This date must be recorded with the research data to support the retention review/timing.	Destroy	The University's insurer recommends that all research data be retained to ensure defensibility of any potential claim from the minor. A person is deemed to have legal capacity at 18 years, and a person aged 18 years has six years from the date of an incident/breach (or date of knowledge of the same) in which to commence litigation (see Limitation Act 1980 c. 58 s 14a).
Research data	Research data containing the personal data of participants 18 or older.	Completion of assignment + 1 year	Destroy	Institutional business requirement *If the research is the assessment, rather than just supporting the assessment, it should be kept in line with Student Submitted Assessments on the BCU Retention Schedule

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Activity	Record Group	Retention Period	Action at end of Retention Period	Citations and Notes
Research data	Research data containing no personal data	Completion of assignment + 1 year	Destroy	Institutional business requirement *If the research is the assessment, rather than just supporting the assessment, it should be kept in line with Student Submitted Assessments on the BCU Retention Schedule
Research carried out by Research Students				
Research data	Research data containing the personal data of participants 17 or younger	In the absence of any regulatory and / or funder requirement: Date of youngest participants 18 th birthday + 6 years or date of graduation + 10 years. * The latest of these two dates must be used. ** **This date must be recorded with the research data to support the retention review/timing.	Destroy	The University's insurer recommends that all research data be retained to ensure defensibility of any potential claim from the minor. A person is deemed to have legal capacity at 18 years and a person aged 18 years has six years from the date of an incident/breach (or date of knowledge of the same) in which to commence litigation (see Limitation Act 1980 c. 58 s 14a). *This is in line with UKRI's expectation that data that underpins findings in publications should be accessible for at least ten years following publication (see " Guidance on best practice in the management of research data " Principle 2, p. 4). EXCEPTION Personal data may be kept for an extended period if it is to be processed for archiving purposes in the public interest, scientific or historical research purposes, or statistical purposes. See the ICO information about Article 89(1) of the UK GDPR .

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Activity	Record Group	Retention Period	Action at end of Retention Period	Citations and Notes
Research data	Research data containing the personal data of participants 18 or older	In the absence of any regulatory and / or funder requirement: Date of graduation + 10 years.	Destroy	Research data underpinning publications should be kept for 10 years (see UKRI's "Guidance on best practice in the management of research data" , Principle 2 p. 4). EXCEPTION Personal data may be kept for an extended period if it is to be processed for archiving purposes in the public interest, scientific or historical research purposes, or statistical purposes. See the ICO information about Article 89(1) of the UK GDPR .
Research data	Research data containing no personal data	In the absence of any regulatory and / or funder requirement: Date of graduation + 10 years.	Destroy	Research data underpinning publications should be kept for 10 years (see UKRI's "Guidance on best practice in the management of research data" , Principle 2 p. 4).
Research carried out by Staff				

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Activity	Record Group	Retention Period	Action at end of Retention Period	Citations and Notes
Research data	Research data containing the personal data of participants 17 or younger	<p>In the absence of any regulatory and / or funder requirement:</p> <p>Date of youngest participants 18th birthday + 6 years or date of completion of project/ discontinuation of research + 10 years. *</p> <p>The latest of these two dates must be used. **</p> <p>**This date must be recorded with the research data to support the retention review/timing.</p>	Destroy	<p>The University's insurer recommends that all research data be retained to ensure defensibility of any potential claim from the minor. A person is deemed to have legal capacity at 18 years and a person aged 18 years has six years from the date of an incident/breach (or date of knowledge of the same) in which to commence litigation (see Limitation Act 1980 c. 58 s 14a).</p> <p>*This is in line with UKRI's expectation that data that underpins findings in publications should be accessible for at least ten years following publication (see "Guidance on best practice in the management of research data" Principle 2, p. 4).</p> <p>EXCEPTION</p> <p>Personal data may be kept for an extended period if it is to be processed for archiving purposes in the public interest, scientific or historical research purposes, or statistical purposes. See the ICO information about Article 89(1) of the UK GDPR.</p>
Research data	Research data containing the personal data of participants 18 or older	<p>In the absence of any regulatory and / or funder requirement:</p> <p>Date of completion of project / discontinuation of research + 10 years.</p>	Destroy	<p>Research data underpinning publications should be kept for 10 years (see UKRI's "Guidance on best practice in the management of research data", Principle 2 p. 4).</p> <p>EXCEPTION</p> <p>Personal data may be kept for an extended period if it is to be processed for archiving purposes in the public interest, scientific or historical research purposes, or</p>

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Activity	Record Group	Retention Period	Action at end of Retention Period	Citations and Notes
				statistical purposes. See the ICO information about Article 89(1) of the UK GDPR .
Research data	Research data containing no personal data	In the absence of any regulatory and / or funder requirement: Date of completion of project / discontinuation of research + 10 years.	Destroy	Research data underpinning publications should be kept for 10 years (see UKRI's " Guidance on best practice in the management of research data ", Principle 2 p. 4).

Personal Data Collection

Activity	Record Group	Retention Period	Action at end of Retention Period	Citations and Notes
Research project related personal data	Personal data collected for the purpose of facilitating the research project (e.g. participant contact details to organise research activities) NOT INCLUDING CONSENT FORM.	Completion of project purpose for which the personal data is necessary.	Destroy	UK GDPR (2018) Where personal data cannot be removed, it must be anonymised if possible. Pseudonymised data is a method of controlling and securing access to personal data but under the data protection laws is still considered personal data and should be treated as such.

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Activity	Record Group	Retention Period	Action at end of Retention Period	Citations and Notes
Research project related personal data	Participant consent form of participants 18 years or older.	Research Students and Staff: Date of completion of project + 10 years. Taught Students: Completion of assignment + 1 year	Destroy	Consent forms must be kept for as long as the personal data is held.
Research project related personal data	Participant consent form of participants 17 years or younger.	Date of youngest participants 18 th birthday + 6 years or date of completion of project/ Discontinuation of research + 10 years. *The latest of these two dates must be used.	Destroy	Consent forms must be kept for as long as the personal data is held. *The University's insurer recommends that all research data be retained to ensure defensibility of any potential claim from the minor. A person is deemed to have legal capacity at 18 years and a person aged 18 years has six years from the date of an incident/breach (or date of knowledge of the same) in which to commence litigation (see Limitation Act 1980 c. 58 s 14a).

Research Ethics

Activity	Record Group	Retention Period	Action at end of Retention Period	Citations and Notes
Ethical Review	Faculty Academic Ethics Committee and Subcommittee agendas, papers and minutes.	Current academic year + 10 years.	Destroy	Institutional business requirements.

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Activity	Record Group	Retention Period	Action at end of Retention Period	Citations and Notes
Ethical Review	Applications for ethical approval.	Successful: Duration of research project + 10 years. No response to committee feedback: Last response + 1 year. Unsuccessful: Decision + 1 year.	Destroy	Records to be held by BCU for institutional business requirements. For internally-funded projects , records to be held by the lead researcher(s) of the research project. For externally-funded projects , records to be held in the appropriate project folder in line with the Funded Projects Policy.
Ethics Committee and Subcommittee Membership	Faculty Academic Ethics Committee and Subcommittee membership documents including successful membership application forms, confirmation letters and contact details.	Duration of membership + 1 year.	Destroy	Institutional business requirements.
Ethics Committee and Subcommittee Membership	Faculty Academic Ethics Committee and Subcommittee membership documents including unsuccessful membership application forms, confirmation letters and contact details.	Decision + 6 months.	Destroy	Institutional business requirements.

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Policy and planning

Activity	Record Group	Retention Period	Action at end of Retention Period	Citations and Notes
Research Strategy and Policy Development	Records documenting the development and establishment of the institution's research strategy and policies	Superseded + 10 years.	Review for archive value.	Institutional business requirements.
Research Procedure Development	Master copies of procedures relating to research.	Superseded + 10 years.	Destroy	Institutional business requirements.
Research Programme Development	Records documenting the development of the institution's research programmes.	Life of programme + 10 years.	Destroy	Institutional business requirements.
Research Business Development	Liaison with research sponsors to monitor their research policies and to promote the institution's capabilities. Records documenting the identification and exploration of new research opportunities which lead to research projects, whether or not they lead to research projects.	Superseded	Destroy	Institutional business requirements. Destroy trivial records as soon as they are no longer needed e.g. correspondence to arrange meeting times. Keep only key records as evidence of discussions, proposals etc, to reduce burden of Freedom of Information (FOI) requests about this topic.

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Activity	Record Group	Retention Period	Action at end of Retention Period	Citations and Notes
Research Business Development	Records documenting the formation and management of partnerships and other collaborative arrangements to undertake research.	Life of partnership/arrangement + 6 years.	Destroy	Limitation Act 1980 c. 58 s 5
Research Design & Planning	Records documenting the design and planning of research projects which are not undertaken. (Where this is not part of a funding application)	Abandonment of plans + 1 year.	Destroy	Retention for a longer period may be advisable, depending on the reasons for abandoning the project.
Research Design & Planning	Records documenting the design and planning of research projects which are undertaken. (Where this is not part of a funding application)	Completion of project + 10 years.	Destroy	This is in line with retention period for records documenting the conduct of research.
Research Design & Planning	Records documenting the design and planning of European Union (EU) funded research projects which are undertaken	Date of last funding payment + 10 years.	Review for archive value.	See European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) website and individual project agreements with funding bodies. Interreg Europe Programme Manual, 19 December 2018 (version 6): Page 28 suggests 10 years to demonstrate state aid (or lack of), however this may vary according to the national archiving laws (see page 105).

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Activity	Record Group	Retention Period	Action at end of Retention Period	Citations and Notes
Research Funding Administration	Preparation and submission of applications for funding, where the application is unsuccessful (i.e. does not result in the offer of a funding award).	Receipt of notification that application was unsuccessful + 5 years.	Destroy	Institutional business requirements including to support training of academics for future funding proposals. The minimum necessary information should be kept to fulfil the above purpose after the receipt of notification that application was unsuccessful.
Research Funding Administration	Preparation and submission of applications for funding, where the application is successful (i.e. results in the offer of a funding award).	Completion of project (i.e. termination of award) + 6 years or for the specific period stated by funder/s, whichever is longer.	Destroy	Limitation Act 1980 c. 58 s 5 Check the individual funder/s requirements as the retention period may differ.

Conduct and Monitoring

Activity	Record Group	Retention Period	Action at end of Retention Period	Citations and Notes
Research Quality & Standards Management	Records documenting the institution's internal quality assurance processes.	Superseded + 10 years.	Destroy	Institutional business requirements so that research records kept for 10 years have a reference point of the institution's internal quality assurance processes.

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Activity	Record Group	Retention Period	Action at end of Retention Period	Citations and Notes
Research Quality & Standards Management	Conduct and results of formal internal and external reviews of research quality, and responses to the results.	Current academic year + 5 years.	Destroy	Institutional business requirements.
Research Project Management	Records documenting the management of internally funded research projects.	Completion of project + 5 years.	Review whether to extend if relevant for continued Ref Impact Case studies. If not, destroy.	Internal audit requirement. Also, for longitudinal evidence to support Ref Impact case Studies.
Research Project Management	Records documenting the management of externally funded research projects.	To be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. The Compliance Team will assess the requirements of BCU's retention schedules and those of the funder as stipulated in the associated contract or agreement. Following this, the total period for which the records must be retained will be communicated during the project closure review.	Destroy	Limitation Act 1980 c. 58 s 5

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Reporting and Review

Activity	Record Group	Retention Period	Action at end of Retention Period	Citations and Notes
Research Programme Review	Data on, and analyses of, student numbers and other programme statistics.	Current academic year + 10 years.	Destroy	Institutional business requirements to evidence PGR population change, completion periods, etc.
Research Programme Review	Reports of routine internal and independent reviews of research programmes.	Current academic year + 5 years.	Destroy	Institutional business requirements.
Research Supervisor Appointment & Training	Records documenting the appointment of supervisors for research students.	Completion of student's programme + 6 years.	Destroy	Institutional business requirements.
Research Student Monitoring & Support	Academic advice and guidance to individual students on the selection of research subjects and on the progress and standard of their work.	Completion of student's programme + 6 years.	Destroy	Limitation Act 1980 c.58 s 5
Research Student Monitoring & Support	Recommendations of Examiners following a viva	Completion of student's programme + 10 years	Destroy	Institutional business requirement.

Glossary

Anonymisation – information where the personal data has been removed to the point that individuals are no longer identifiable. At this point it is no longer personal data. This is complex and challenging, as it may be impossible to remove any risk of re-identification.

Destruction – the act of fully removing/ deleting the record. This can vary depending on the format of the record e.g. confidential shredding for paper records, deletion and removal from deleted bin for digital records.

Institutional business requirement – decided by BCU to meet business needs in the absence of a legal or regulatory requirement.

Personal data – any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person.

Pseudonymisation – where personal data has been altered so it can no longer be linked to a specific individual without additional information e.g. replacing names etc with a number and keeping the identification list separately. This is still considered personal data and must be treated as such.