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Approved by	The Council on recommendation of AUT HREC
Responsible Body	Academic Board
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Superseded documents	None
Related documents	National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2023) Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, 2018 Management of Data and Information in Research, 2019 Keeping Research on Track II (2018) Intellectual Property Rights Policy
Related HE Standards	4.1.1, 5.2
Student Lifecycle Stage/s	All

1. PURPOSE

To provide a policy about research data management and to guide researchers on storage, access, and confidentiality of research data.

2. DEFINITIONS

Definitions for any words in **Bold** in this document can be found in the [Policy Glossary](#). The first instance of each defined term has been outlined in bold.

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to all students, faculty and associated researchers of the AUT and its affiliated colleges and also to other organisations that require AUT HREC approval for their research.

4. POLICY STATEMENT

The ACT seeks to ensure compliance with the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* 2007 (updated 2018) and the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research* (2018), particularly the supporting guide, *Management of Data and Information in Research* (2019), when dealing with research data gathered as part of human participant research.

5. PRINCIPLES

Data ownership

- 5.1 Please refer to the AUT's Intellectual Property Rights policy.

Data storage

- 5.2 Research data is to be stored safely and securely.
- 5.3 Digital data is to be password protected, whether on computer hard drives, external flash or hard drives or in Cloud storage so that it is only accessible by the researcher and others included in the approved Ethics Protocol.



- 5.4 Audio and/or video files are to be transferred from collection devices and transferred to computer files. Once this is done, the files on the collection device are to be deleted.
- 5.5 All practical means should be made to secure hard copies of any data collected so that only the researcher and others included in the approved Ethics Protocol have access.
- 5.6 Hard copies and external drives are to be kept in a locked storage cabinet and all reasonable precautions taken so that only the researcher and any others included in the approved Ethics Protocol have the key.

Data retention

- 5.7 Where data is collected for an assessment set as part of a coursework unit in an AUT award and is not published, data is to be retained for at least 12 months after submission.
- 5.8 Where the research is published or data is collected as part of a research project or thesis in an AUT coursework or HDR award, or as part of an AUT HREC approved research project, in general, data is to be retained for a minimum of 5 years after the completion of the project. The length of the retention period in each case is to be included in the Ethics Protocol and PIS and consent forms. Factors to be taken into consideration include, but are not limited to, the sensitivity of the data, its community, cultural or historical value, and whether or not the data has been de-identified. Researchers should consult the Management of Data Guide and, if relevant, Keeping Research on Track II (2018).

Access

- 5.9 During the data gathering and coding phase only the researcher and other persons included in the approved Ethics Protocol should have access.
- 5.10 Normally, research assistants are only to have access to de-identified data, for example, when transcribing voice interviews or coding transcripts.
- 5.11 Where research assistants may or will be able to identify a research participant, the research assistant is to sign a deed guaranteeing non-disclosure of the identity of any research participant to any party other than as may be required by law.
- 5.12 Interested parties may be allowed to access the data after the completion of the research project where possible and appropriate.

Confidentiality

- 5.13 Issues of confidentiality are to be made clear in Participant Information Sheets.
- 5.14 De-identification of participants should be the default, and participants need to have clear guarantees in the Participant Information Sheet that their data will be treated confidentially by the researcher.

6. RELATED LEGISLATION



[Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2021](#)

7. REFERENCES

[National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research \(2023\)](#)

[Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, 2018](#)

[Management of Data and Information in Research. A guide supporting the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2019](#)

[Keeping Research on Track II \(2018\)](#)

8. VERSION HISTORY

Version	Approved by	Approval Date	Effective Date	Changes made
1.0	The Council	19 August 2023	19 August 2023	New
2	Vice-Chancellor	June 2025	June 2025	New policy format, minor editorial updates to implement university status.

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