



RESEARCH DATA MANAGEMENT POLICY

Responsible officer	Director of Research
Contact	research@actheology.edu.au
Approved by	Board of Directors on recommendation of ACT HREC
Responsible Body	Academic Board
Initial Approval date	19 August 2023
Initial Effective date	19 August 2023
Review date	19 August 2025
Superseded documents	None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

The following definitions apply for the purpose of this Policy:

ACT is the *Australian College of Theology Limited*.

HREC is the *Human Research Ethics Committee* of the **ACT** – the committee with responsibility for ethics review of human participant research.

Human participant research is research that involves humans through such means as surveys, interviews, personal documents and information, observation and psychological testing.

Management of Data Guide refers to *Management of Data and Information in Research. A guide supporting the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2019*.

Research data refers to information collected (in a variety of forms including written, image, audio or video) and stored (whether digitally or in hard copy).



3. SCOPE

This policy applies to all students, faculty and associated researchers of the ACT and its affiliated colleges and also to other organisations that require ACT 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 ACT'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 ACT 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 ACT coursework or HDR award, or as part of an ACT 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	Board of Directors	19 August 2023	19 August 2023	New

Any hard copy of this electronic document may not be current as the ACT regularly reviews its policies. The latest version can be found online at actheology.edu.au.