

Principles for the Handling of Research Data

These principles were adopted by the

Alliance of German Science Organisations on 24 June 2010

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German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)
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Leibniz Association
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This document can be accessed at:

http://www.allianzinitiative.de/en/core_activities/research_data/

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The "Principles for the Handling of Research Data" are a result of the Alliance Priority Initiative "Digital Information", Core Activity 4, "Research Data".

Preamble *Quality-assured research data are a cornerstone of scientific knowledge and, independent of the purpose for which they were originally obtained, can often serve as the basis for further research. This applies especially to the aggregation of data from various sources for combined utilization. Preserving research data over the long term and making them available therefore does not only serve the verification of prior results, but also, to a large extent, the obtaining of future ones. It is a strategic task to which science and the humanities, politics as well as other parts of society, must contribute. With the objective of supporting the quality, productivity and competitiveness of science and academia, the Alliance of German Science Organisations has adopted the following data policy for a coordinated further course of action.*

Preservation and accessibility In accordance with important international organisations involved in funding and performing research¹, the Alliance supports the long-term preservation of, and the principle of open access to, data from publicly funded research.

This principle shall be balanced against the scientific and legal interests of researchers. The protection of the personal data of participants, patients and others affected by the collected data, as well as obligations to third parties — e.g. cooperation partners — have to be taken into account. The principles of good scientific practice must also to be observed².

Differences between the scientific disciplines The ways of and conditions for access to research data must be developed separately for the individual scientific disciplines, taking into account the methods of data acquisition, the volume and potential for integration of the data, as well as its practical usability. At the same time, the respective life cycles and usage scenarios of the data in the specific research fields have to be considered.

Scientific recognition The provision of research data for further use is a service which benefits the sciences and humanities in their entirety. The Alliance encourages the recognition and support of this additional costly and time-consuming effort.

Teaching and qualification For those involved in research, an appropriate range of training and support services for professional data management must be made available, meeting the specific requirements of the different disciplines.

Use of standards Proper use of research data requires that the data are documented and provided with appropriate metadata in a standardised manner. Observing subject-specific requirements, standards, metadata catalogues and registries are to be developed in such a way that interdisciplinary use is also possible.

Development of infrastructures Sustainable research data management imposes a wide range of technical and organisational requirements. These requirements must be defined through the cooperation of researchers and information specialists. Infrastructures are to be developed according to these requirements and, if possible, interoperably integrated in international and interdisciplinary networks from the start.

¹ "The EUROHORCs and ESF Vision on a Globally Competitive ERA and their Road Map for Actions to Help Build It", ESF Science Policy Briefing 33, June 2008, <http://www.esf.org/publications/policy-briefings.html>; "OECD Principles and Guidelines for Access to Research Data from Public Funding", OECD 2007.

² DFG resolution: Proposals for Safeguarding Good Scientific Practice, DFG 1998; http://www.dfg.de/en/research_funding/legal_conditions/good_scientific_practice/index.html.