Open Access and Research Data Guidelines for Postgraduate Research (PGR) Students

The University of Plymouth wants to support researchers in embracing the principles of open research and good research data management (RDM). The University’s Research Publications and OA Policy¹ and Research Data Policy² define roles and responsibilities, set standards of practice, and signpost support infrastructure including advocacy and training.

This guidance aims to clarify the University’s expectations of PGR students in regards to open access research outputs and RDM. All PGRs should familiarize themselves with the original documents: the Research Publications and OA Policy and the Research Data Policy.

The Research Publications and Open Access Policy

By practicing open research, PGR students can demonstrate the value, rigour and integrity of their work. This has benefits for researchers and their institutions, increasing visibility, recognition, and potentially, collaboration and funding opportunities. Expectations set by the OA policy include:

1. **Guidance:** PGR students should follow the OA Research online guide³ to ensure that they comply with the University OA policy and, where appropriate, funder and publisher policies.

2. **ORCiD identifiers:** PGR students should create and maintain an ORCiD⁴ profile, to improve attribution for their work and to make it easier to claim publications via Symplectic Elements⁵.

3. **Researcher profiles:** PGR students should keep their Elements profile up to date with all their research outputs affiliated to the University of Plymouth.

4. **Research outputs (excluding theses):**
   a. **Journals and conference proceedings:** PGR students should deposit (into PEARL⁶ via Elements) all journal articles and conference papers within 90 days of the publication date. The deposit must include an appropriate version of the paper or a link from the record to the openly accessible published version.
   b. **Other outputs:** Where possible, PGR students should deposit the full-text or digital manifestation of their research outputs (into PEARL via Elements).

5. **Research theses:** PGR candidates must deposit the final version of their thesis into PEARL (direct PEARL deposit). The deposit of theses from research degrees is also covered under the regulations specified in the Research Degrees Handbook⁷ and guidance is available in the Guide to depositing e-theses to PEARL⁸.

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³ [https://plymouth.libguides.com/open](https://plymouth.libguides.com/open)
⁴ [http://orcid.org/](http://orcid.org/)
⁵ [https://elements.plymouth.ac.uk](https://elements.plymouth.ac.uk)
⁶ [https://pearl.plymouth.ac.uk/](https://pearl.plymouth.ac.uk/)
⁷ [https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/student-life/your-studies/research-degrees/director-college/research-degrees-handbook](https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/student-life/your-studies/research-degrees/director-college/research-degrees-handbook)
The Research Data Policy

The University recognises that **good practice in research data management and open access to research data are integral to high-quality research**. They protect investment in research, support reliable verification of results, and enable additional innovation. Expectations set by the RD policy include:

1. **Guidance:** PGR students are expected to follow guidance available in the RDM online guide⁹ to exercise good practice in RDM; and to ensure that their research data is made openly available for use by others wherever possible, in line with legal, ethical, disciplinary and regulatory frameworks.

2. **Responsibilities:** Under the guidance of their supervisor, PGR students are responsible for all aspects of the management of the data associated with their research degree project¹⁰.

3. **Data management planning:** With guidance from their supervisor, PGR students should develop a data management plan (DMP) for their research degree project.
   a. The plan should outline how data will be collected, stored securely, processed, organised, documented and curated for preservation and sharing. Where relevant, the plan should explain how issues such as costs, rights, commercialisation and confidentiality will be addressed to ensure that selected data can be made openly available for reuse.
   b. The DMP should be a point of reference throughout the project and reviewed at least annually by student and supervisor to capture new requirements and decisions.
   c. The plan should be a deliverable to be submitted for review at project milestones (RDC1, RDC2) and its final version should be deposited in PEARL as an additional research output.

4. **Research data retention:**
   a. PGR students should select for retention research data that supports their research findings.
   b. Datasets that have been selected for retention should be deposited in PEARL, ensuring that:
      i) the data is complete and relevant; ii) consent to archive, share or publish the data has been obtained from rights holders and participants; and iii) the data has been suitably documented and prepared for publication, e.g., by anonymising personal information.
   c. It is acceptable to set up an embargo to allow for reasonable first use of the data. However, any embargo must be for an appropriate and well-defined period.
   d. In some circumstances, e.g., due to contractual obligations set by a sponsor, it may be necessary to withhold the dataset. Students should discuss the case with their supervisor to ensure that it constitutes a valid exemption. A record of the dataset should still be created in PEARL to identify the dataset and justify the decision to refuse access.
   e. Publications should include a data access statement linking to the data record to enable readers to discover the dataset and find out how it can be accessed.

Support and Guidance

Additional information can be found via the University’s Research Support website¹¹ the Library’s Research Support Services page¹² or by contacting the Open Research Team: openresearch@plymouth.ac.uk.

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⁹ [http://plymouth.libguides.com/rdm](http://plymouth.libguides.com/rdm)
¹⁰ If the PGR is part of a wider project, overall responsibility for the project data lies with the Principle Investigator (PI). In this case, the PGR is still responsible to adhering to relevant legislation, funder and policy expectations, under the guidance of the PI.
¹¹ [https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/research/support](https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/research/support)
¹² [https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/library-research](https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/library-research)