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Management of research material – *recommendations for researchers in brief*

What is research material?

Records created during different research projects and during the research activity continuously carried on, regardless of funding source.

What legal rules are there?

The activity of an authority is open for public control – the research activity makes no difference to this rule.
Records created in the research process are subject to implementation of the Principle of Public Access.

What types of research material are there?

Administrative records, e.g.

Funding applications, projects drafts and descriptions, contracts, commitments, correspondence with sponsors, etc.

Raw data (primary records), e.g.

Surveys, laboratory/field notebooks, laboratory measurement data, interviews, X-ray pictures, (-all basic data for scientific analysis)

Analyzed/processed research data, e.g.

(N.B! not official documents)

Statistic compilations, results of numeric computation, report drafts

Results, e.g.

All reports, publications, articles; financial reports

How long should research material be preserved?

This depends on the long- term value of the material.

In aiming to verify the research results, the research material should be preserved for at least 10 or up to 20 years depending on the research field. If the material will be reused, it must be retained permanently.

Can the research material be disposed of?

Yes, but only according to given rules.

Exceptions from disposal must be always considered for such material as:

* records with data about aim, method and result, *records with particular importance for the specific discipline or for other scientific fields, *records with value for history of science, culture or personal history

(For detailed directions see SLU Rector,´s decision: dnr SLU ua 22-1373/07,2007-04-23: "Retention schedule for scientific records and research data")

Who is the owner of the research material?

Research material belongs to the university and not to the researcher. Generally, the research material is accessible to the public, as scientific documents are official documents according to the Principle of Public Access.

Can public access to research material be restricted?

Yes, as scientific records can be public or secret. But, it is possible only if the restrictions are enforced by the Public Access and Secrecy Law (2009:400).

What about copyright and research ethics?

The copyright law protects research results of the researcher. However, raw data are not embraced by this law.

Good research ethics implies that research results are verifiable and that raw data are preserved, accessible and the integrity of data ensured. The time limit for raw data at the SLU in aiming to verify the results is 10 or 20 years depending on the research field.

How to archive research material?

Research material must be documented in the department´s archival inventory.

The researcher is responsible for clear and intelligible structure of the material including all metadata. A department´s "document coordinator" is responsible for proper archival handling and documenting.

For long-term preservation of digital research data, please contact the central archival function at the SLU.