

Data Management Policy

Statement and Purpose

This policy asserts and protects the rights of Northern Illinois University (NIU) and its researchers, in regard to ownership and retention of research data and research records.

Scope

All University researchers, including but not limited to: faculty, students, graduate students, and supportive staff, are covered by this policy.

Contacts

NIU Office of Research Compliance and Integrity (ORCI) handles all issues of data management and ownership. ORCI will interpret and modify this policy pending review by the Vice President of Research and Innovation Partnerships (VPRIP).

Definitions

Data means recorded factual material commonly accepted as necessary to validate research findings. Research data covers a broad range of types of information. Digital data can be structured in a variety of formats. Data differs amongst disciplines and can include but is not limited to: documents, notebooks, laboratory notebooks, audiotapes, transcripts, photographs, test responses, slides, and algorithms.

Investigator means any person engaged in the conduct of research as either an employee or student of the University or any person using facilities owned or operated by, or resources administered by, the University.

Principal Investigator has primary stewardship of Research Data on behalf of the University. In this capacity the Principal Investigator (PI) is responsible for data collection, recording, storage, access, and retention in keeping with this policy and best practices in the PI's discipline.

Report means any summary, statement or description of Research activities published in the open literature or provided to the public, the University, a sponsor, or other researchers by a University member.

Research means a systematic investigation designed to develop or contribute to knowledge and may include the stages of development, testing, and evaluation.

Policy

Ownership of Data

In accordance with federal policy and the common practice of higher education institutions, data belongs to the Northern Illinois University.

Custody of data

All Data will be preserved in the custody of, or as arranged by, the Principal Investigator on behalf of the Northern Illinois University.

The Principal Investigator must maintain the integrity, security, and preservation of all Research data. NIU retains the right to request any and all data from Principal Investigators.

In an instance of misconduct, the threat of data custody or maintenance, or for any other justifiable cause, Northern Illinois University, acting through the Vice President for Research or designee, may take immediate custody of Research Data.

Retention of Research Data

The Principal Investigator must ensure the methods and accuracy of data collection and interpretation is retained.

Research Data disclosed or referenced in publication must be retained for a minimum of five years from the date of publication (unless otherwise stipulated by the IRB, IACUC, or other such institutional body). If the project involves funding from an outside organization, the grantee organization's regulations will prevail over the minimum standards set here.

In the event of misconduct, investigations, legal action, or inquiry regarding Research, all data must be retained until all issues are resolved.

Access to Research Data

Northern Illinois University has the right to access Research Data for all research that is either performed at the University, supported by University administered funds, or conducted using University facilities.

Reasonable notice to access the data must be given (except in suspected cases of misconduct). Data that would violate confidentiality of sources or subjects shall not be disclosed except in accordance with regulations. Northern Illinois University and appropriate officials shall have access to data concerning matters of compliance with human or animal research subject regulations.

University Researchers are expected to share all data regarding their published works when requested. This is a tenant of scientific research furthered by the federal agencies including the National Institute of Health, and the National Science Foundation. Northern Illinois University supports the sharing of data in these ways.

Transfer of Data

In the event an Investigator leaves Northern Illinois University, a written agreement of the disposition of data shall be negotiated between the Investigator and the University. This decision will be a case by case basis. If the data leaves the University with the Investigator it is only in a custodial manner. Northern Illinois University still retains the rights to the data. This is necessary in cases similar to, but not limited, patent application and tangible research property.

Review

In the event a dispute arises over Data Management or Ownership, the Vice President of Research and Innovation Partnerships will be the deciding official. The VPRIP may designate a committee to review the dispute.

