



Policy Title		RESEARCH DATA MANAGEMENT POLICY			
Scope of Application		All Internal and External Stakeholders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND COMMERCIALISATION 			
Parties Consulted (Development)		•			
Parties Consulted		• MANCOM, SENATE, IF and COUNCIL			
A Policy Owner		• RESEARCH DIRECTORATE			
Policy Implementer		• DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR: RESEARCH, INNOVATION, COMMERCIALISATION AND INTERNALISATION			
POLICY HISTORY					
Policy Number	Resolution Number	Status	Implementation Date	Approving Authority	Next Review Date
		New Policy		MANCOM/Council	

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	INTRODUCTION.....	3
2.	PURPOSE.....	3
3.	POLICY STATEMENT	4
4.	SCOPE	4
5.	LAWS AND REGULATIONS.....	5
6.	DEFINITIONS.....	5
7.	ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITY	7
8.	DEVIATION FROM THIS POLICY	7
9.	ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DATA MANAGEMENT GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE	7
10.	DEVIATION FROM THIS POLICY	6
11.	OBJECTIVES	Error! Bookmark not defined.
12.	PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES	Error! Bookmark not defined.
13.	POLICY	Error! Bookmark not defined.
14.	POLICY REVIEW.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.

1. INTRODUCTION

Research data is critical for all research projects and as such preservation, storage and sharing of this data within a rational and functional research data management strategy is essential to research and university integrity. The rapid developments in information technology and digital science have changed the wider research context and as a result the amount of data being generated has increased drastically. Due to this reason, there is a need to ensure that research data is managed properly in order to be accessible and secured for future use.

The Vaal University of Technology recognizes that research data is valuable and that good management of research data brings benefits to the students, staff, researchers and the university at large. It is therefore, the responsibility of the university to ensure that research data is appropriately managed so as to guarantee accessibility and security for future use. Access to research data at VUT will encourage collaboration and sharing of data amongst researchers, and thereby increasing the engagement of the community.

The research data should be kept in a secured environment (metadata). Metadata allows the easy sharing, access, interpretation and reuse of research data. In South Africa, since March 2015 the National Research Foundation (NRF) requires data supporting publications be deposited in an accredited open access (OA) data repository with a registered Digital Object Identifier (DOI) for citation and referencing purposes.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for research data generation, storage, dissemination and reuse. The policy seeks to provide a consistent research practices related to data management principles by ensuring that all research data produced at the university are managed and curated effectively and efficiently.

This policy should further assist the development of Data Management Plans at Departmental and Faculty level. Through the approval of this policy, VUT should endeavour to assist financially support the creation of Data Management plans and provide the necessary staff training.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

The Vaal University of Technology asserts ownership over all research data for projects conducted at the University under the auspices of the University or with the University resources.

The drivers and principles for managing research data at VUT are defined in response to the principles of Open Science as a practice and further use of digital infrastructure for storage and access. The benefits of Open Access to Science are recognized as wider dissemination of research results and outcomes, improved opportunities for collaborative research, improved responsiveness to societal challenges, the

leveraging and access to research data as an economic driver for change as well as greater need for research integrity.

At the core of Research Integrity is the reproducibility of Science. This refers to where an entire experiment or study can be duplicated by an independent researcher and thereby validate and even progress science. This assures public confidence and trust in science and the research enterprise.

Increasingly, policies published or linked to Research funding agencies require that research results are published as a means of validation of research results; requires that research data are discoverable and re-used by other researchers; and secondary data or metadata should be made openly available to enable other researchers to re-use the data for their own purpose and analysis.

Any use secondary data must in principle acknowledge the source of such data.

4. SCOPE

The scope of this policy is applicable to all University staff and students who are conducting research projects at VUT.

It also relates to research data, including associated metadata that support or substantiate published research findings. It further covers valuable data sets created during the research project but which may not underpin any research publications.

5. LAWS AND REGULATIONS

VUT Strategy: This policy is in line with the VUT Strategy 2025 and directly contributes to research development at VUT

IPR Act 2010 as amended: This policy is in line with the prescripts and regulations of the National Intellectual Protection law. In order to protect any research data for commercialization, data has to be stored and managed properly.

VUT IPR Policy: This policy is still in the development stage but this policy contributes to the operationalization of VUT IPR Policy. Any research that has value must be protected and developed for potential commercialization. Therefore, research data management is fundamental in realizing the objectives of the VUT IPR policy.

POPI Act: This provides conditions to be followed before any personal information can be distributed.

Patent Act

Copyright Act 98 of 178 as amended. This law seeks to protect the rights of individuals or institution that produces materials as defined in act. Key to any proof of ownership of any copyright material is the data

management and archiving. This is to ensure that the original producer of such material can be properly acknowledged through the keeping of records.

6. DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition
Principal Investigator or Researcher	A researcher means a person who has entered into an employment relationship with the Vaal University of Technology in an academic position, full time or part time and whether full appointment or join appointment including adjunct, honorary affiliate and assistantships. Principal Investigators (PI) and other researchers are generally regarded as stewards and custodians of research data. However, if PI choose to delegate responsibility within their research groups, the PIs remain accountable to the University for the stewardship of research data.
Research Data	For the purpose of this policy, research data are defined as tangible and intangible factual records (numerical, textual records, images and sounds) regardless of the form or the media on which it may be recorded, that is used as primary sources for research and that are commonly accepted in the research community as necessary to validate research findings. Research data include but is not limited to computer software, materials, specimens, chemical entities, laboratory notebooks, notes of any type, survey or routine questionnaire, photographs, films, audio recordings, digital images, biological samples, algorithms, reagents, charts, graphs, statistics and conclusions.
Research data set	This is defined as a systematic, partial representation of the subject being investigated. Excluded in this definition are laboratory note books, preliminary analysis, drafts of scientific papers, plans for future research, peer review report or personal communication.
Research Administrative and Financial Records	These are records and documents, materials and information that relate to administrative, financial and human resources management of research. These include but not limited to financial information, administrative information, cost or pricing of materials, travel expenses and any other information which may be required for reporting by the research funding agencies.
Data management Plan	This refers to the administrative process by which data is acquired, validated, stored, protected and processed throughout its lifecycle. It includes accessibility by other users
Metadata	The structured information that describes, explains, locates or otherwise make it easier to retrieve, use, or manage data resource or information resource.
Open Access	Means the immediate, online, free availability of research outputs that can be accessed by anyone and is free from most copyright and licensing restrictions.
Open Data	Data that can be freely used, reused and distributed to anyone subject to attribution of authorship of such data.

Embargoed data	this refers to data to which access is restricted for legal, privacy and confidentiality and or commercial purposes.
Public Funded Research	Public funded research refers to all the research supported financially by public or tax payers funding. It can be provided through an agency or it can be undertaken in government institutions or laboratories. In the context of this policy, the government refers to South African government. International agencies can also provide to South African researcher funding from their own public funded agencies.
Misconduct	When it is necessary to secure such data during research misconduct proceedings, the University through the office of Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research, Innovation, Commercialisation and Internationalisation (DCV RIC) may take custody of such research data.

7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Department/Designation	Role/Responsibilities

8. DEVIATION FROM THIS POLICY

Any deviation from this policy should be approved by the Senate.

9. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DATA MANAGEMENT GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE:

9.1 **Terms of Reference:** The role of the Data Management Governance Committee is to provide oversight of the research data management activities and ensure compliance with this policy requirement by VUT researchers.

9.2 **Purpose:** The VUT Research Data Management Committee is established to protect the interest of Vaal University of Technology, VUT researchers, Funding agencies and the broader community.

To ensure consistent research data management principles and processes that support effective data sharing, reuse and accessibility.

Provide oversight functions of mandates of funding agencies to preserve and openly disseminate data that supports published research findings.

To provide overall mechanisms for data sharing and data reuse.

To undertake review and monitoring of grant-funded research projects where researchers may be entitled to a limited period of privileged use of the data for publication purposes.

To approve exceptions to the public availability of research data for contractual, legal, ethical and commercial reasons.

Establish, monitor and evaluate regularly VUT data management systems provided for VUT researchers.

Promote and communicate data management principles and practices that promotes data use, reuse and data open access across VUT.

To review and revise the Data management policy as required.

- 9.3 **Composition:** A designated representative of each faculty who are regular publishers and with experience and expertise in data use and management.
- Two representatives of the Library.
- A rated principal grant-holder.
- An expert in the field of Research ethics.
- A representative of the Research Directorate who will be designated an institutional official responsible for research data management.
- 9.4 **Chair:** The Committee will be chaired by the DVC RICI or his nominee
- 9.5 **Deputy Chair:** The committee will elect a Deputy Chair from its members
- 9.6 **Quorum:** A quorum of 50% plus one must be present for the meetings to proceed
- 9.7 **Meetings:** The committee will meet at as many times as necessary with a minimum of two meetings per year. All other meeting protocol as by VUT Institutional Rules will apply.
- 9.9 **Term of Office:** Members are appointed for a period of five years with possible appointment for one consecutive term.
- 9.10 **Administrative support:** The Research Directorate will provide administrative and secretarial support.