

Guideline for Handling Research Data at the IEG

Preamble

The IEG and its employees commit themselves to a responsible, transparent and sustainable handling of all research data they create and process during their research. In the spirit of the »Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities«,¹ the IEG is committed to free access to reusable research data. In dealing with research data, the IEG follows in particular:

- the DFG Code of Conduct »Guidelines for Safeguarding Good Research Practice«,²
- the principles for handling research data of the Alliance of Science Organizations,³
- the guideline for handling research data in the Leibniz Association,⁴
- the applicable disciplinary or subject-specific standards and guidelines,
- legal provisions, in particular on data protection and copyright,
- ethical principles, and a responsible approach to academic freedom.

In designing and implementing this guideline, the IEG takes into account the different conditions resulting from the diversity and internationality of historical research as well as the individual requirements and circumstances of its employees.

This guideline documents the principles and processes of handling research data at the IEG and is intended to provide a reliable guidance for the IEG. Appropriate research data management cannot be not defined conclusively; rather, it thrives on continuous discussion and living practices by the employees of the IEG.

1) Definitions

Research data are all sources, materials, and results in digital form that are collected, generated, described, and/or analyzed in the context of a research question and that can be preserved for the purposes of archiving, citation, and further processing. In the historically oriented humanities, research data can take many forms and can be created throughout the research cycle. These include: Digitized copies of cultural objects, as well as their forms of representation, enriched or generated, through transcription, annotation, translation, markup, contextualization, or visualization; knowledge collections and databases, including directories and vocabularies; software applications, algorithms, and program codes.

Research data management is part of the research process and includes all processes concerning research data, from planning, generation, processing, analysis to publication and archiving, as well as ongoing backup and documentation. The goals of research data management are the documentation of the research process, the traceability and validation of research results, and their long-term accessibility and safeguarding.

A **data management plan** is a structured document that describes the datasets and data-related processes in a research project. This documentation includes a description of the type, scope, processing, provenance, and legal terms of the research data. The goals of a data management plan are to reflect and explicate how research data will be handled in the project. The form, scope, and level of detail of the data management plan will depend on the requirements and conditions of the project.

2) Responsibilities and tasks

The IEG creates the institutional and infrastructural prerequisites for the implementation of the principles and responsibilities in research data management defined in this guideline and offers information, training, advice and support on research data management for its employees. The position »Research Data Management« in the Digital Historical Research Unit | DH Lab supports the employees at the IEG in their research data management tasks.

The researchers responsible for a research project also carry the overall responsibility for research data management. Shared and distributed responsibilities as well as division of tasks are defined at the project level and documented in writing. For research projects carried out at the IEG, the creation and adaptation of a data management plan is mandatory. The position »Research Data Management« supports the employees in the creation and administration of the data management plans.

The IEG is involved in the development of research infrastructures and discipline-specific research data management for the historically oriented humanities and is actively shaping the cultural change in the disciplines concerned. As part of this engagement, the IEG participates in institutional bodies and collaborations at the regional, national, and international levels. The IEG provides data collections and information systems for research and the public on a long-term basis. This institutional service is continuously curated and developed.

3) Publication and use

The IEG and its employees make research data openly available whenever possible. Not all data generated in the research process are suitable for publication; therefore, researchers, as the data authors, autonomously select the data to be published. When publishing research data, the principles of quality assurance for scientific publications according to the DFG Code of Conduct apply. The IEG understands the publication of research data as an autonomous scientific achievement. It is committed to the acknowledgement of this achievement in the academic reputation system and in the disciplinary discourse.

Published research data are made accessible in a persistent and reusable form and appropriately documented in accordance with the FAIR principles (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable).⁵ In accordance with its Open Access Policy⁶, the IEG aims to publish research results in the spirit of the Open Access principles. Research data from projects at the IEG shall in principle be published with an open license according to the Open Definition.⁷ Legal conditions and ethical principles are to be taken into account when restrictions on publication are imposed and licenses are chosen. Data authors choose the publication medium (e.g., disciplinary or software repository) autonomously and according to the specific requirements. The IEG advises on all aspects mentioned above.

The IEG promotes the reuse of research data generated in publicly funded research at the IEG, preferably through a so-called non-exclusive right of use.⁸ The IEG recognizes the legitimate interest of data authors in a first use of research data, especially in the case of works qualifying for a degree.

The guideline comes into effect on 01.01.2022. It will be reviewed at the latest after four years by a working group appointed by the Executive Board.

References

- ¹ Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities, 22.10.2003, <https://openaccess.mpg.de/Berlin-Declaration>.
- ² Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft. 2019. »Guidelines for Safeguarding Good Research Practice. Code of Conduct.« Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3923601>.
- ³ Alliance of Science Organizations in Germany. 2010. »Principles for Handling Research Data.« <https://doi.org/10.2312/ALLIANZOA.035>.
- ⁴ Leibniz Association. 2018. »Guidelines on the Handling of Research Data within the Leibniz Association.« https://www.leibniz-gemeinschaft.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Bilder_und_Downloads/Forschung/Open_Science/Leitlinie_Forschungsdaten_2018_EN.pdf
- ⁵ Wilkinson, Mark D., Michel Dumontier, IJsbrand Jan Aalbersberg, Gabrielle Appleton, Myles Axton, Arie Baak, Niklas Blomberg, et al. 2016. »The FAIR Guiding Principles for Scientific Data Management and Stewardship.« Scientific Data 3 (1). <https://doi.org/10.1038/sdata.2016.18>.
- ⁶ Open-Access-Policy des Leibniz-Instituts für Europäische Geschichte, https://www.ieg-mainz.de/open_access_policy.
- ⁷ Open Knowledge Foundation, Open Definition, Version 2.1, <https://opendefinition.org/od/2.1/en/>.
- ⁸ See UrhG §31, https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/urhg/___31.html.