

Checklist for Creating a Laboratory Policy on Data Management

Appalachian State University does not have a University policy regarding data management practices; however, several units on campus offer resources related to data security, data management plans, and data sharing/open science. The RCR Resources page provides links to these areas.

As Principal Investigator, you are responsible for the collection, management, storage, security, use and sharing of data collected for your research. One good practice is to establish a policy so those working in your lab, especially students, understand expectations and practices you require for data. Be as detailed as you need to be.

As you draft a policy for your laboratory, here are items to consider including or addressing:

Medium
What are the ways in which data will be recorded?
Are there any standard methods for recording (electronic notebook versus paper, a certain software, etc.)?
If handwritten, what are expectations of legibility?
If images, what are the expectations of resolution techniques and acceptable enhancements?
Format
How should data be organized?
What are the expected elements to record (time, date, description) and what order should they be listed?
What descriptions are required--purpose for the experiment, list of equipment and methods used, whether experiment is a repeat, observations, results, and other notes.
Individual's names should be recorded for credit and verification.
Corrections
How should errors be addressed?
What if the error is discovered at a later date, how should it be noted and addressed?
Storage & Security
What are the security practices in the lab?
Who will have authorization to access the data?
How will unauthorized individuals be prevented from accessing data?
How will data be backed up?
How long will data be stored?
If data is to be transmitted, what are the protocols for secure sharing?
If data involves human subjects, what are the privacy requirements for data storage and sharing?
What are the expectations for destruction of data?

	Professional Standards
	What are common standards by journals in your discipline for raw data, including images?
	Are there specific standards set by the professional association in your discipline?
	Has the IRB, IP Council, or other oversight committee required data storage and usage standards?