
Effective Date: **June 15, 2018**

POLICY

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT, RESEARCH AND SCHOLARLY ACTIVITIES

Scientific Research Data Policy

RESPONSIBLE OFFICE
Office of Research

Ownership of Scientific Research Data

Intellectual property arising from scientific research is subject to the University's [Intellectual Property Policy](#). Except where precluded by the specific terms of sponsorship or other agreements, tangible research property, including the scientific data and other records of research conducted under the auspices of Boston University, belongs to Boston University.

The University's ownership and stewardship of the scientific record for projects conducted at the University, under the auspices of the University, or with University resources are based on both Federal regulation and sound management principles. The University's responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- complying with the terms of sponsored project agreements;
- ensuring the appropriate use of animals, human subjects, recombinant DNA, etiological agents, radioactive materials, and the like;
- protecting the rights of students, postdoctoral scholars, and staff, including, but not limited to, their rights to access to data from research in which they participated;
- securing intellectual property rights; and

- facilitating the investigation of charges, such as scientific misconduct or conflict of interest.

Collection and Retention of Scientific Research Data

The PI is responsible for the collection, management and retention of scientific research data on behalf of the University, unless absolved of that responsibility by the University Provost. PIs should adopt an orderly system of data organization and should communicate the chosen system to all members of a research group and to the appropriate administrative personnel, where applicable. Particularly for long-term research projects, PIs should establish and maintain procedures for the protection of essential records in the event of a natural disaster or other emergency.

Scientific research data that includes Restricted Use, Confidential or other materials that require particular protections must be collected, shared, stored, and otherwise maintained as required by the University's [Data Protection Standards](#).

Scientific research data must be archived for a minimum of three years after the final project close-out, with original data retained wherever possible. In addition, any of the following circumstances may justify longer periods of retention:

- Data must be kept for as long as may be necessary to protect any intellectual property resulting from the work.
- If any charges regarding the research arise, such as allegations of scientific misconduct or conflict of interest, data must be retained until such charges are fully resolved.
- If a student is involved, data must be retained at least until the degree is awarded or it is clear that the student has abandoned the work.

Beyond the period of retention specified here or in the [University's Record Retention Policy](#), the destruction of the scientific research record is at the discretion of the PI and his or her department or laboratory. Physical records normally will be retained in the unit where they are produced. Electronic records should be maintained in University-supported storage or systems. Research records must be retained by the PI at the University, or in facilities under the auspices of the University, unless specific permission to do otherwise is granted by the Vice President and Associate Provost for Research.

Access to Research Data

Where necessary to assure needed and appropriate access, the University has the option to take custody of the data in a manner specified by the Vice President and Associate Provost for Research.

Transfer of Research Data

When individuals involved in research projects leave the University, they may, subject to PI's permission, take copies of scientific research data for projects on which they have worked. A PI's decision not to grant permission may be reviewed by the Vice President and Associate Provost for Research. Original data, however, must be retained at the University by the PI. If a PI leaves the University and a project is to be moved to another institution, ownership of the data may be transferred with the approval of the [Vice President and Associate Provost for Research](#), and with written agreement from the PI's new institution that guarantees: 1) its acceptance of custodial responsibilities for the data, and 2) University access to the data, should that become necessary.

END OF POLICY CONTENT

History:

The [Scientific Research Data Policy](#) was drafted by the University Council Committee on Research and Scholarly Activity. It was approved by the University Council on 6/12/18.

END OF POLICY TEXT

Categories: Boston Medical Center and Medical Campus Research, Information Management, Research and Scholarly Activities