Data management plans

About data management plans (DMPs)

A data management plan (DMP) is a written document that describes the data you expect to acquire or generate during the course of a research project, how you will manage, describe, analyze, and store that data, and what mechanisms you will use at the end of your project to share and preserve your data. You may have already considered some or all of these issues with regard to your research project, but writing them down helps you formalize the process, identify weaknesses in your plan, and provide you with a record of what you intend to do. Data management is best addressed in the early stages of a research project, but it is never too late to develop a data management plan.

Requirements, examples, and review

Funding agency requirements

Many funding agencies require a DMP with every funding request. Each agency or directorate creates its own set of policies for data management. SPARC (**the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition**) has compiled an excellent resource with information about the data management and data sharing requirements from all the federal funding agencies.

[SPARC's Data Sharing Requirements by Federal Agency](http://datasharing.sparcopen.org/compare?ids=)

You can also consult the section below with sample agency-specific plans.

Sample agency-specific plans

* **NEH-ODH:** [Data Management Plans from Successful Grant Applications](http://www.neh.gov/divisions/odh/grant-news/data-management-plans-successful-grant-applications-2011-2014-now-available)
* **NIH:** [Examples of Data-Sharing Plans](http://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/data_sharing/data_sharing_guidance.htm#ex)
* [**NSF:** Biology Directorate, Plant Genome Research Program (PGRP): Examples of three data management plans (pdf) from funded grants by Stanford Professor Virginia Walbot, including additional information and guidance.](http://gero.nku.edu/content/dam/rgsrs/docs/rgc/NSF_Data_Management_Plans_Virginia_Walbot.pdf)
* [**NSF:** Example Data Management Plans for several different NSF Directorates by researchers from UC San Diego](http://libraries.ucsd.edu/services/data-curation/data-management/dmp-samples.html)

## Creating a data management plan

A DMP is a living document. Research is all about discovery, and the process of doing research sometimes requires you to shift gears and revise your intended path. Your DMP is a living document that you may need to alter as the course of your research changes. Remember that any time your research plans change, you should review your DMP to make sure that it still meets your needs.