

Guidelines for Research Data Storage

Enforcement: August 18, 2015

1. Purpose

These guidelines have been created to promote proper research activities and to provide rules for the contents, storage periods, storage methods and disclosure methods of research data to be stored and disclosed in accordance with the determination of the President, who makes these determinations based on Paragraph 3 of Article 3 of the “Regulations for Appropriate Research Activities in National University Corporation Kyushu University (General Regulations for Employment of National University Corporation Kyushu University No.14 of 2009).”

2. Records and Storage of Research Activities

- (1) When conducting research activities, including experiments and observations, researchers must record their activities in a laboratory notebook or similar media.
- (2) The laboratory notebook must include sufficient information, including items such as a record of operations during experiments and the conditions of data acquisition, so that they will be useful for future use and verification. They must also be recorded in a form that will not allow future alteration.
- (3) The laboratory notebook must be properly stored as the primary information record of research activities.
- (4) The laboratory notebook, numerical data, images, specimens and devices that serve as evidence of papers, reports and research achievement presentations (hereafter referred to as “research data and other items”) must be stored properly so that they can be made available for future use and verification. When storing them, make them easy to search by providing items such as author name, date and attributions, and be sure to keep them available for future research.
- (5) Research data and other items must be stored and managed by the researcher who created them in a responsible manner. Even after the researcher’s transfer or retirement, they must be managed properly during the period specified in these guidelines.
- (6) Research Ethics Education Officer, along with a research representative, must make efforts to educate researchers regarding proper storage and management of research data and other items based on these guidelines as part of their research ethics education.

3. Storage Period

- (1) For the research data and other items, the storage period of “materials,” which include laboratory notebooks, numerical data and images, shall in principle be 10 years after the publication of the concerned paper. Electronic data must be stored in a reusable form, with the preparation of searchable details such as author name, date and attributions, and backup data must be prepared. Printed materials should be stored for at least 10 years. However, if an unavoidable reason such as limitation of storage space prohibits that, they may be disposed of within the extent covered by reasonable explanation.
- (2) For the research data and other items, the storage period of “articles,” which include specimens (experiment specimens, samples) and devices, shall in principle be 5 years after the publication of the concerned paper. However, this may not apply to items that cannot be stored or kept because of their nature (such as unstable materials, or specimens consumed during an experiment), or to those which would require significant expenses to store (such as living specimens).
- (3) These guidelines indicate only minimum storage periods. When a paper includes internationally outstanding research achievements, or when longer-term storage is possible, the storage period can be extended as needed regardless of the storage periods specified in these guidelines.
- (4) For data which was not used as evidence for the publication of research achievements, and is not scheduled to be used, a researcher, research representative and department director shall decide on its storage period as needed.
- (5) Intentionally disposing of data without reasonable cause before the termination of the storage period specified in these guidelines could be considered an illegal act.

4. Handling after Retirement or Transfer

A research representative must check with the concerned researcher to confirm the details of the data to be stored, such as the title of the concerned paper, the storage place for the research data and communication methods for future contact when the researcher is transferred or retired, and must store these details properly and ensure their traceability. In addition, the research representative must be sure that the research data has been backed up as needed. In case of the transfer or retirement of a research representative, a department director shall handle the matter in accordance with these guidelines.

5. Disclosure

Each researcher and research representative must, upon request, explain the appropriateness of the research activities for certain research achievements that are presented in the form of papers with scientific grounds, and must disclose research data and other items as needed. They shall bear this responsibility even after transfer or retirement.

6. Handling at Each Department

Handling shall be specified at each department in accordance with these guidelines. In doing so, due attention shall be paid to the characteristics of the relevant research field, opinions of the research community and the conditions of each department.

7. Other items

If specific regulations are indicated by laws covering the handling and storage periods of personal data, research data and other items, these regulations shall be observed. In addition, if there is a special agreement with a fund-allocating organization concerning the deliverables of a certain research project, this agreement shall be complied with.

However, if the storage period specified by laws or agreements is shorter than that specified in these guidelines, these guidelines shall take precedence and must be observed.

8. Enforcement

These guidelines shall come into force on August 18, 2015.