



the british  
psychological society  
research board

## POSITION STATEMENT

# Open data

The British Psychological Society is committed to supporting and facilitating open research and its underlying principles in the context of academia. Open data are an integral part of this and an important part of research. Open data refers to all data that can be freely used, re-used and redistributed by anyone.

Data sharing is beneficial in that it can facilitate the discovery of new knowledge, as the outputs of previous research can be utilised into new research. It also reduces the potential for bias and improves data management practices, enhancing the scientific evidence base<sup>1</sup>.

In accordance with the Concordat on Open Research Data (2016)<sup>2</sup>, research data are the evidence that underpins the answer to the research question. They can be used to validate findings regardless of their form (e.g. print, digital or physical) and whether they are quantitative or qualitative, raw or primary or derived from primary data for additional analysis. They may include, for example, statistics, collections of digital images, sound recordings, and transcripts of interviews, survey data, artwork, published texts or manuscripts.

We recognise the principle of 'as open as possible; as closed as necessary'; that not all data needs to be open and that there is a need to maintain confidentiality, protect individuals' privacy and the consent given, as well as manage security and risk. Nevertheless, restrictions to data must be justifiable and justified. We emphasise, however, that in those instances when data sharing is not possible, there must be no negative consequences for the researchers and participants concerned.

We also recognise that the type of data to be shared, in what format and with what metadata will vary depending on the methodology used and the data generated. One size does not fit all and any mandatory requirements for open data must reflect this.

We also recognise that the effective adoption of open data requires the appropriate infrastructure, resources (software, codes and models/frameworks), training and investment. Infrastructure is especially important to ensure the long-term sustainability and protection of data<sup>3</sup>. We support and will actively engage in the development of more accessible resources and appropriate guidance to enable researchers at all levels to adopt open data practices.

Data management is essential to enabling open data and avoiding data loss. This should occur early on in the conceptualisation of the research and be considered as an integral part of the research process.

Nevertheless, open data requirements should not be burdensome for researchers. We encourage the explicit and formal recognition of data sharing as a legitimate output of the research process and as evidence of the individual's professional contributions.

Mechanisms must be in place to ensure that researchers at all stages of their career are credited to their work and for sharing their data. Any uses of research data should be appropriately cited and acknowledged. The best practice set out in the BPS's *Statement on Authorship and Publication Credit* should be adopted. Moreover, researchers who are the original data creators must have the opportunity for first and exclusive use of the data for an appropriate and well-defined period.

#### REFERENCES

- <sup>1</sup> Hrynaszkiewicz, I., Busch, S. & Cockerill, M.J. (2013). Licensing the future: report on BioMed Central's public consultation on open data in peer-reviewed journals. *BMC Research Notes*, 6, 318. doi:10.1186/1756-0500-6-318
- <sup>2</sup> Higher Education Funding Council for England, Research Councils UK, Universities UK & Wellcome (2016). *Concordat on open research data*. Retrieved 19 February 2020 from [www.ukri.org/files/legacy/documents/concordatonopenresearchdata.pdf](http://www.ukri.org/files/legacy/documents/concordatonopenresearchdata.pdf)
- <sup>3</sup> Young Academies of Europe & Global Young Academy (2016). *Position statement on open data*. Retrieved 19 February 2020 from [www.globalyoungacademy.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Position-Statement-on-Open-Data-by-the-Young-Academies-of-Europe-and-the-Global-Young-Academy.pdf](http://www.globalyoungacademy.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Position-Statement-on-Open-Data-by-the-Young-Academies-of-Europe-and-the-Global-Young-Academy.pdf)