

80.8 Research Data: Ownership, Collection, Retention, Access and Transfer

Policy Name:	Research Data: Ownership, Collection, Retention, Access and Transfer
Approval Authority:	Provost and University Vice President
Responsible Officials:	Executive Director of the Office of Sponsored Research
Responsible Office:	Office of Sponsored Research
Effective Date:	1 March 2010

1. Policy Statement

Data has intrinsic value as well as having added value as a byproduct of information processing. “At the core, the degree of ownership (and by corollary, the degree of responsibility) is driven by the value that each interested party derives from the use of that information.”¹ (Loshin, 2002) Accurate and appropriate research records are an essential component of any research project. Both the University and the Principal Investigator (PI) have responsibilities and rights concerning access to, use of, and maintenance of original research data.

2. Reason/Purpose for Policy

Establishes University policy to assure that research data are appropriately recorded, archived for a reasonable period of time, and available for review under the appropriate circumstances.

3. Policy Scope

This policy applies to all faculty, staff, students and any other persons at Stevens involved in the design, conduct or reporting of research at or under the auspices of Stevens, and it shall apply to all research projects on which those individuals work, regardless of the source of funding for the project.

4. Related Documents

- [OMB Circular A-110](#)
- Laboratory Notebooks and Other Research Records (80.9)

5. Contacts

- Provost and University Vice President
- Associate Provost for Academic Entrepreneurship
- Vice President for Research Enterprise
- Executive Director of the Office of Sponsored Research

6. The Policy

Definitions: Research data include laboratory notebooks², as well as any other records that are necessary for the reconstruction and evaluation of reported results of research and the events and processes leading to those results, regardless of the form or the media on which they may be recorded. Stevens must retain research data in sufficient detail and for an adequate period of time to enable appropriate responses to questions about accuracy, authenticity, primacy and compliance with laws and regulations governing the conduct of the research. It is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator to determine what needs to be retained under this policy.

Where research is funded by a contract with Stevens that includes specific provision(s) regarding ownership, retention of and access to technical data, the provision(s) of that agreement will supersede this policy.

¹ Loshin, D. (2002). Knowledge Integrity: Data Ownership www.datawarehouse.com/article/?articleid=3052

² A primary record of research used to document hypotheses, experiments and initial analysis or interpretations of experiments. The notebook serves as an organizational tool, a memory aid, and can also have a role in protecting any intellectual property that comes from the research.

Ownership: Stevens' ownership and stewardship of the scientific records for projects conducted at the University, under the auspices of the University, or with University resources are based on both regulation ([OMB Circular A-110, Sec. 53](#)) and sound management principles. Stevens responsibilities in this regard include, but are not limited to:

- a. Complying with the terms of sponsored project agreements;
- b. Ensuring the appropriate use of animals, human subjects, recombinant DNA, etiological agents, radioactive materials, and the like;
- c. 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;
- d. Securing intellectual property rights;
- e. Facilitating the investigation of charges, such as scientific misconduct or conflict of interest.

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 Stevens Institute of Technology, belongs to Stevens. The PI is responsible for the maintenance and retention of research data in accord with this policy.

Collection and Retention: The PI is responsible for the collection, management and retention of research data. 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.

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:

- a. Data must be kept for as long as may be necessary to protect any intellectual property resulting from the work;
- b. 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, and;
- c. 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, the destruction of the research record is at the discretion of the PI and his or her department or laboratory.

Records will normally be retained in the unit where they are produced. Research records must be retained on the Stevens campus, or in facilities under the auspices of Stevens University, unless specific permission to do otherwise is granted by the Provost/Academic Vice President and/or Dean of the PI's college.

Access: 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 Provost and Academic Vice President and/or the Dean of the PI's college.

Transfer in the Event a Researcher Leaves Stevens: When individuals involved in research projects at Stevens leave the University, they may take **copies** of research data for projects on which they have worked. Original data, however, must be retained at Stevens by the Principal Investigator.

If a Principal Investigator leaves Stevens, and a project is to be moved to another institution, ownership of the data may be transferred with the approval of the Provost/Academic Vice President and Dean of the PI's college, and with written agreement from the PI's new institution that guarantees: 1) its acceptance of custodial responsibilities for the data, and 2) Stevens access to the data, should that become necessary.

All research documentation is subject to the restrictions imposed by the sponsor. If the research is classified it may not be possible for the information to be moved.