

## IT Services policy:

### Research Data Storage on local devices and platforms

The University *very strongly discourages* the use of local storage devices such as USB flash drives, and in-house data storage platforms, such as local Network Attached Storage (NAS) servers. We call these ‘point storage solutions’.

#### Our Policy

- We offer centrally-administered storage solutions and can provide you with space on one or more of these for your data. These solutions are fully-supported by IT Services (and listed below).
- We will be happy to hold an in-depth discussion with you to help us to understand your research data storage requirements. This is especially so in non-standard cases, for example, if you have sensitive data to store and process.
- We will make all practicable efforts to help you to use our data storage services, for example, by considering cases for network upgrades and/or changes to our services.
- We will not help set up, support or maintain point storage solutions except where existing solutions cannot meet your requirements and cannot be adapted to meet them.
- If centrally-administered storage solutions cannot be adapted to your needs, we may be able to host a point storage solution in our Data Centres through the Research IT Hosting Service — you will be responsible for all system administration and Research IT will in no way be responsible for any data lost.

#### Why is the use of point storage solutions discouraged?

- There is an unacceptably high risk of unrecoverable data loss. This can be through hardware failure, or as a result of simple user error.
- USB flash drives and other portable devices are easily lost or stolen, putting data they contain at significant risk of accidental or deliberate exposure.
- It is very inefficient for IT Services to support point storage solutions. Indeed, it is often not possible; when technical assistance is required, we may be unable to help (because there is no resource available on the required timescale and because we have no familiarity or expertise with your chosen platform).
- Storing data on point storage solutions is rarely compliant with [University policy](#) or with the regulations published by research funding bodies, including [Research Councils UK \(RCUK\)](#). Failure to satisfy these regulations puts the award of future funding at risk — funding councils mandate that data be managed and stored appropriately.

## The Data Lifecycle — Research Data Storage Options

We recognise that there are many different use-cases for research data storage, including those in the research data lifecycle: creation, processing (perhaps with multiple steps), e-publishing and archiving. IT Services offer storage platforms which address all of these.

- The [Research Data Storage](#) service, which can be used to store data in all parts of the lifecycle prior to publishing and archiving.
- [Dropbox Business](#), which makes it easy to share files securely with people external to The University and to drop off files internally (similar to the regular Dropbox service).
- [Mendeley Data](#), which should be used for making publishable data accessible, such as peer-reviewed papers and supporting files.
- [DataVault](#), an interim service which will support research data archiving — long-term retention of data in accordance with funding body policy, addition of metadata, discoverability.

### Contact Us

If you have any questions about this policy, or would like to discuss your requirements with Research IT, please contact us via [its-ri-team@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:its-ri-team@manchester.ac.uk).

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