Data Management

The National Science Foundation requires all proposals to include plans for data management and sharing of the products of research. A valid Data Management Plan may include only the statement that no detailed plan is needed, as long as the statement is accompanied by a clear justification. Please note that NSF’s FastLane on-line proposal submission site will not permit Office of Research to submit a proposal that is missing a Data Management Plan. The Data Management Plan will be reviewed as part of the intellectual merit or broader impacts of the proposal, or both, as appropriate. Please review the Data Management section of NSF’s Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide (PAPPG). Principal Investigators (PI) should check for data management requirements and plans specific to the Directorate, Office, Division, Program, or other NSF unit (<https://www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/dmp.jsp>). If guidance specific to the program is not available, then the PI should follow requirements described in the PAPPG. Collaborative proposals of a single unified project should include only one combined Data Management Plan, regardless of the number of non-lead collaborative proposals or subawards included.

The Data Management Plan is submitted as a supplementary document on the proposal. It must be no more than two pages and labeled “Data Management Plan”. It should describe how the proposal will conform to NSF policy on the dissemination and sharing of research results. The plan may include:

* name of the person(s) responsible for data management within your research project
* the types of data, samples, physical collections, software, curriculum materials, and other materials to be produced in the course of the project;
* the standards to be used for data and metadata format and content (where existing standards are absent or deemed inadequate, this should be documented along with any proposed solutions);
* policies for access and sharing including provisions for appropriate protection of privacy, confidentiality, security, intellectual property, or other rights or requirements;
* policies and provisions for re-use, re-distribution, and the production of derivatives;
* plans for archiving data, samples, and other research products, and for preservation of access to them;
* period of data retention.

Data are formally defined as “the recorded factual material commonly accepted in the scientific community as necessary to validate research findings” by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (1999). Digital data to be archived and made available includes analyzed data and the metadata that define how these data were generated. These are data that are or that should be published in print or electronic publication formats, including dissertations and theses. The Office of Management and Budget statement (1999) specifies that this definition does not include “preliminary analyses, drafts of scientific papers, plans for future research, peer reviews, or communications with colleagues.” Raw data fall into this category as “preliminary analyses.”

The following wording is suggested with respect to the institutional commitment to long-term data management, if required.

“Project-generated data will be archived with the scholarworks@UNO repository within one year of the conclusion of the project and will be in the standard formats for that repository.”

# Sample Data Management Plan

Provide project specific data for the items in bold below. Remember to change the formatting to regular (remove the bold and italics) after making the necessary additions.

The person(s) responsible for data management for this research project is (are) [***give name and title of responsible persons here***].

The data obtained during the proposed project will consist of [***describe type of data, such as optical measurements, questionnaires, tissue samples***], as described in the main body of the proposal. These records will consist chiefly of measurements of [***describe type of measurement, such as current as a function of voltage, human response to stimuli***] obtained via [***describe how obtained, such as custom software, personal interviews, field studies***].

These data will be recorded via [***describe how data is recorded, such as computerized data acquisition software, written into a notebook***] with essential metadata present [***describe how any metadata is recorded, such as a header in the relevant electronic files, or included along with the indexed laboratory notebook***]. The format for the data and metadata is [***give name of format, such as pdf or MATLAB, if an existing standard. If not an existing standard state such and provide a remedy for maintaining the ability to read such files in the future, such as a statement of the format is included in the archive***].

The electronic data will be preserved in the University of New Orleans data archive, scholarworks@UNO, which is the institution’s implementation of the Digital Commons. Scholarworks@UNO is responsible for archiving of all data and records and providing access. [***If using lab notebooks you need a statement indicating where they will be stored, such as “Original laboratory notebooks will be secured by the PI in his/her campus office or laboratory. Such laboratory notebooks are the property of the University and must be retained by the institution.”***] The data will be preserved for at least three years beyond the award period, as required by NSF guidelines and in accordance with the institution’s record retention policy.

This project will [***or will not***] involve the acquisition of either animal or human subject data. [***If animal data then a statement such as “The project will secure Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) approvals prior to project start and will meet all university IACUC requirements” should be included. If human subject data then a statement such as “The project will secure Institutional Review Board (IRB) approvals prior to subject start and will meet all university IRB requirements” should be included.***] We do [***or do not***] anticipate that there will be any significant intellectual property issues involved with the acquisition of the data. In the event that discoveries or inventions are made in direct connection with this data, access to the data will be granted upon request once appropriate invention disclosures and/or provisional patent filings are made.

The data acquired and preserved in the context of this proposal will be further governed by the University of New Orleans’ policies pertaining to intellectual property, record retention, and data management.