

Guidelines on Research Data at the GFZ German Research Centre for Geosciences

- We acknowledge the principles of open access to knowledge, results and technology.
- We uphold the guidelines and rules of good scientific practice.
- We provide our infrastructure to the geoscientific community and contribute to national and international services.
- We initiate and coordinate national and international geoscientific networks.

(Extract, Mission Statements – Strategy Paper GFZ 2014)

Quality-assured research data form a basic pillar of scientific knowledge and - regardless of the actual original purpose of the research - the data obtained can often provide the basis for the initiation of further research. The sustainable protection of and access to research data, thus, not only serves the assessment of previous research results but, to a large extent, also the achievement of future results, with the objective of enhancing the quality, productivity and competitiveness and, in this way, forms an elementary basis for knowledge transfer.

Scientific Recognition: The provision of research data for further use is a service that not only benefits science but also society as a whole. The GFZ accepts this additional effort as part of the scientific performance and sees it as its duty to further promote such an approach both nationally and internationally.

Archiving and Access: The GFZ supports the long-term archiving of, and the fundamentally open access to the research data from publicly-funded research. This is implemented in conformity with international organisations active in developing the data curation landscape and is supported by the GFZ with appropriate measures.

In doing so, the scientific and legal interests of the researchers are to be considered. Obligations to third parties such as contractual agreements with cooperation partners are to be taken into account.

In principle, all standardized real-time data within the framework of international networks should be accessible immediately. Access to data and data products (processed data) can, however, through a reasonable embargo period, be temporarily restricted for a maximum of three years after completion of a project so as to allow for appropriate scientific evaluation, publications and preparation of dissertation work. A Data Advisory Council is formed for the clarification of embargo questions.

Monitoring of the use of data can be facilitated.

Citability and Publication: As a rule, open access to research data is guaranteed at the GFZ by means of citeable publication of data.

Licenses: When transferring rights for re-use or exploitation care should be taken that the research results remain freely accessible for scientific purposes. The choice of an open license (for research data: Creative Commons) for the simple re-use of research data is, thus, recommended.

Research Data Infrastructure: The GFZ provides a research data infrastructure that supports data archiving, exchange with cooperation partners, data publication and the long-term preservation of data. Special solutions in the national and international context can be integrated here.

An appropriate use of research data assumes that they are made available in standardised form, documented and supported by adequate metadata. On the basis of international standards metadata catalogues reflecting discipline-specific requirements are to be developed. Focus of this process is interoperability and (interdisciplinary) re-use of research data. At the same time the particular life cycles and application scenarios for the research data in the concrete research field are to be taken into account.

Qualification: Researchers at the GFZ including the Ph.D. students are provided with training and support opportunities for professional research data management aligned to the specific requirements of the different subject areas.

Responsibility: Responsibility for the appropriate handling of research data lies with the heads of the organisational units (Sections).

Implementation: These general principles are the basis for all activities relevant to research data at the GFZ.

Framework Conditions: The GFZ supports and promotes national and international declarations on the handling of research data.

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The GFZ supports and promotes national and international declarations on the handling of research data, e.g.

Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities <http://openaccess.mpg.de/Berliner-Erklaerung>

Allianz der Wissenschaftsorganisationen: Grundsätze zum Umgang mit Forschungsdaten der Wissenschaftsorganisationen
<http://www.allianzinitiative.de/de/handlungsfelder/forschungsdaten/grundsätze.html>

Allianz der Wissenschaftsorganisationen: Appell zur Nutzung offener Lizenzen in der Wissenschaft
http://dfg.de/foerderung/info_wissenschaft/2014/info_wissenschaft_14_6_8/index.html

Joint Declaration of Data Citation Principles
<https://www.force11.org/group/joint-declaration-data-citation-principles-final>

COPDESS Statement of Commitment from Earth and Space Science Publishers and Data Facilities
<http://www.copdess.org/statement-of-commitment/>

The GFZ internal regulations “Guidelines for Scientific Publications” and “Rules on Good Scientific Practice” document this effort.