

Research Data Alliance (RDA) Plenary 15, 18-20th March, Melbourne

Poster Extended Abstract

Title: Data, data everywhere...and yet nowhere. RDM for HDRs

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Abstract

University eResearch and Library teams deliver research data management (RDM) support for higher degree research (HDR) students throughout the research cycle. Researchers are expected to securely store and share their data to achieve their research goals within their project's ethics approval. The eResearch and Library teams raise awareness and train researchers on ownership, attribution and publication of research data sets. Secure research data storage is provided during the active phase of the conduct of research. Researchers are provided education and support on the benefits of making their research open and reproducible. A common challenge, however, is in what to do with the stored raw research data after the HDR successfully completes their degree and leaves the University? USQ has implemented a temporary mini-archive solution to enable responsible management of HDR research data beyond the end of a research project. As this is an issue for all universities, the ideal would be to develop a best practice model that would become the basis of a standard aligned with the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2018).

Drivers for addressing this challenge:

Under the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2018), both the researcher and the institution have RDM responsibilities. Institutions also have the responsibility to "maximise the potential for future research" and "minimise waste of resources of value to researchers and the wider community" consistent with the FAIR data principles (NHMRC 2019, p1.). Researchers and universities have access to local, state and national research infrastructure and services during the active phase of a research project but what happens post study when the research student graduates, leaves the university and their data storage access stops?

Published data shared via open repositories is not the focus of this discussion – the focus here is on the 'raw' data the research student has collected as part of their research project and that has a specified retention period. The amount of post HDR research data is considerable with over 10,000 higher degree research student completions each year (Dept of Education 2018). What happens to this 'raw' data once study and/or work at that particular university ceases?

An informal survey of Queensland universities highlighted a lack of post HDR research data storage service. Research support staff at UQ, QUT, Griffith University, Central Queensland University, James Cook University all advised that the universities did not have a system or solution for the storage of post HDR data. Some had RDM systems designed to cater for research publications and published data but not post HDR data.

Temporary archival solution @ USQ

Following effective resourcing and awareness raising on good RDM practices since 2014, there was an increase in requests for post HDR research data storage in 2018. This led to a cross divisional consultative process between eResearch, Graduate Research School, Library Research Support, Research Integrity and Ethics and ICT services teams. The outcome was the implementation of a post HDR mini-archival system as an interim solution to meet the demand. The solution is available via USQHub service catalogue and is administered by the Graduate Research School team who process and fulfill the logged service requests. The post HDR data storage is provided on USQ's recommended research data storage managed by eResearch Services, while advice and referral to post HDR research data storage is provided by the Library Research Support, Ethics, eResearch Services, and Graduate Research School teams. The post HDR mini-archival solution (see Figure 1) will facilitate future requests for information from stakeholders including sector auditors, regulators and researchers. This poster aims to raise awareness of this issue and prompt the development of a best practice model for universities.

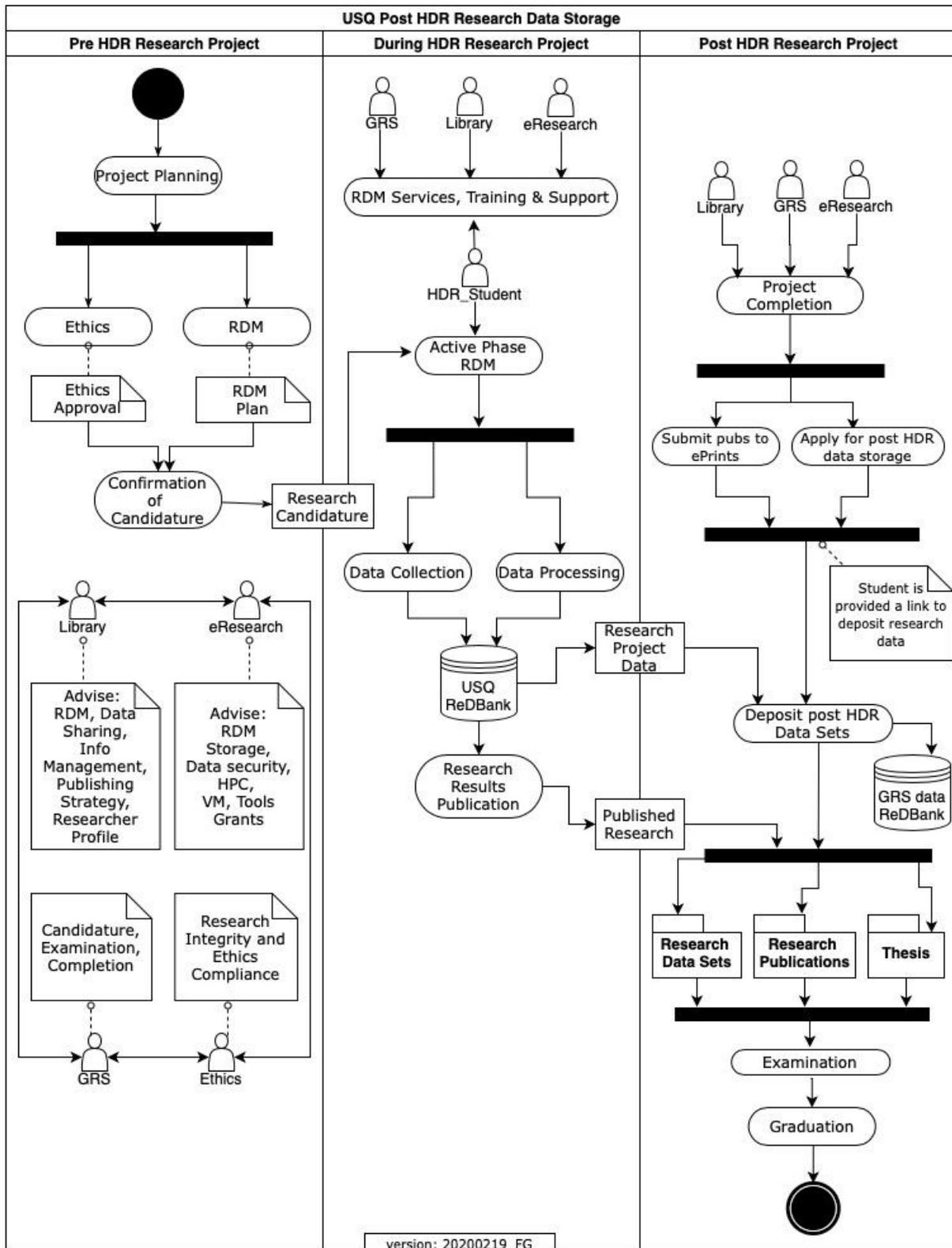
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Figure 1. USQ Post HDR Research Data Storage



Key:

