Guidelines on the management of research data at RWTH Aachen University

RWTH Aachen University aims to make an essential contribution to answering the important research questions of our time and making the new insights available and usable for science and society. Consequently, the management, backup, storage and sustainable availability of research data have to follow recognized standards and meet with high requirements. Legal and ethical responsibilities have to be respected and the particularities of the various subjects have to be considered.

1.   Research data are data that are gathered, observed, simulated, deduced or generated in the course of research.

2.   The RWTH supports free access to research data. Researchers are, however, not obliged to make data accessible to persons outside of the project team before processing, evaluating and publishing their research. Exceptions are disclosures to commissions. Contractual agreements also remain unaffected.

3.   The management of research data includes planning, gathering, processing and storing of the data. It guarantees the access, reuse, reproducibility and quality assurance of all research data that are forming the basis of scientific results.

4.   The project manager as well as researchers researching on their own responsibility are generally responsible for managing the research data of their research projects. In particular, they are obliged to guarantee the adherence to proven academic research practices as well as the standards of their subject area. All persons involved in a research project are responsible for the correctness of the data they gathered and the compliance to the regulations they agreed upon.

5.   Research projects with research data require a data management plan which states the research data's access rights and exceptions.

6.   The RWTH gives advice on research data management from planning to implementation and even after the completion of the project. Additionally, the RWTH offers appropriate training.

7.   The RWTH implements and maintains essential services for research data infrastructure and thereby guarantees appropriate storing and technical availability of digital research data. Specific requirements have to be agreed upon and, where necessary, financed.

8.   Digital research data is stored and archived in the IT and informational infrastructure of RWTH Aachen University or in recognized external or internal subject repositories. RWTH Aachen University and its academics observe in their research data management concerns of ethics, data protection, intellectual property, privacy and disclosure. This does not affect regulations relating to the assessment of research data according to the German employee invention act (Arbeitnehmererfindungsgesetz).

9.   If rights of reuse or publication are transferred, it should be agreed upon that data remain freely accessible for academic purposes.

Approved by the rectorate of RWTH Aachen University on March 8, 2016