DATA MANAGEMENT PLAN

Burgas Free University

2026

1. Purpose, Scope and Responsibilities

The **Data Management Plan (DMP)** establishes the institutional framework for the responsible management of research and related academic data at Burgas Free University (BFU). It defines the main principles and arrangements concerning data collection, documentation, processing, storage, protection, access, preservation and, where appropriate, sharing and reuse.

The Plan supports the quality, integrity, traceability and sustainability of research-related information and contributes to the progressive development of **Open Science practices** at BFU.

Data management is considered an integral part of the University's research and academic environment and is implemented in accordance with applicable legal, ethical, contractual and institutional requirements.

The Plan applies, as relevant, to data generated or processed within research activities, research and innovation projects, doctoral training, academic staff development procedures, publication activities and related institutional digital systems.

Responsibility for appropriate data management is shared, according to their respective roles, by researchers, academic staff, doctoral candidates, project participants and relevant academic and administrative units. Where research is conducted within externally funded projects, project-specific data management requirements are applied alongside the institutional framework.

Data management practices take account of applicable requirements concerning personal data protection, research ethics, intellectual property, confidentiality and information security.

The Plan complements BFU's existing research, ethical and quality assurance framework. It also supports the University's implementation of the **European Charter for Researchers (2023)** and the **Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R)**, particularly in relation to research integrity, Open Science, responsible research practices and institutional quality.

2. Data Collection, Documentation and Quality

BFU research and academic activities may generate different categories of data depending on the nature, methodology and purpose of the respective activity.

Research data may include experimental and empirical results, numerical and statistical datasets, textual data and analyses, and graphical or visual materials. Research-related information may also concern publications, research projects, scholarly outputs and other documented research achievements.

Within the broader institutional environment, relevant academic data may include information associated with doctoral training and procedures, academic staff development, research projects and related institutional processes.

Data may be collected and processed through institutional digital systems, standardised electronic forms, research tools and software and, where applicable, project-specific information systems.

BFU promotes data management practices that support **accuracy, consistency, traceability and usability**. Depending on the type of data and the context in which they are generated, such practices may include standardised recording formats, appropriate validation procedures, consistent file naming, documentation of methodological information and periodic verification.

Research datasets should, where applicable, be accompanied by sufficient documentation and metadata to support their identification, interpretation, traceability and appropriate reuse.

Relevant metadata may include information such as the description and content of the data, responsible author or researcher, date of creation, methodological information and applicable access conditions. Recognised metadata approaches and standards may be applied where appropriate to the research context and institutional or project requirements.

Data quality remains the responsibility of the researchers and relevant units involved in the creation, processing or management of the respective data. Appropriate documentation throughout the research process contributes to research integrity, reproducibility where applicable, and the reliable preservation of research information.

3. Ethics, Legal Compliance and Data Security

Research data management at BFU is conducted in accordance with applicable ethical, legal and institutional requirements.

Where research involves personal data, appropriate measures are applied in accordance with the **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)**, applicable national legislation and institutional requirements. Depending on the nature of the research, these measures may include informed consent, anonymisation or pseudonymisation, controlled access and other safeguards appropriate to the level of sensitivity of the data.

Research involving ethical considerations is subject to the relevant institutional ethical standards and procedures.

Access to research and academic data is managed in accordance with the nature of the data, the responsibilities of the persons involved and applicable legal, ethical, contractual and institutional requirements. Where appropriate, role-based or otherwise controlled access mechanisms are used to prevent unauthorised access or use.

Data stored within institutional digital environments are protected through applicable technical and organisational measures. These may include controlled access, secure communication, backup arrangements and integrity checks appropriate to the relevant systems and data.

Data security is treated as part of responsible research management and institutional quality assurance. Researchers and relevant units are expected to apply appropriate safeguards throughout the data lifecycle and to follow applicable institutional procedures concerning information security and data protection.

Copyright, intellectual property rights and ownership of research data and outputs are determined in accordance with applicable legislation, BFU's institutional rules and, where relevant, contractual or project-specific arrangements.

Where appropriate and legally permissible, open licences, including suitable **Creative Commons licences**, may be used to facilitate access and reuse while ensuring appropriate attribution and protection of legitimate rights.

4. Storage, Preservation, Access and Open Science

Research data should be stored in environments appropriate to their nature, sensitivity and intended use. Institutional or project-based systems may be used in accordance with applicable requirements concerning access, security, backup and preservation.

During active research, researchers and relevant units are responsible for ensuring that data are stored and managed in a manner that supports appropriate access, protection and traceability.

Following completion of research or project activities, data of continuing scientific, institutional or evidential value should be preserved where appropriate. Retention periods are determined in accordance with applicable legislation, institutional requirements, project conditions, contractual obligations and the nature of the data concerned.

Where suitable, sustainable and widely accessible file formats may be used to facilitate long-term preservation and future usability.

Open Science and responsible data sharing

BFU supports the progressive implementation of **Open Science** through responsible research data management and dissemination practices.

Within the applicable legal, ethical and institutional framework, the University promotes:

- ✓ open access to research outputs where appropriate;
- ✓ structured documentation and metadata;
- ✓ the use of open, sustainable and interoperable formats where suitable;
- ✓ responsible sharing of research data;
- ✓ conditions supporting data discoverability and appropriate reuse;
- ✓ appropriate acknowledgement of authorship and intellectual property rights.

The principle of openness is applied in accordance with the approach **“as open as possible, as closed as necessary.”**

Accordingly, decisions concerning access and sharing take into account personal data protection, confidentiality, intellectual property rights, ethical requirements, contractual obligations, legitimate research interests and other justified restrictions.

Not all research data can or should be made openly available. Where access restrictions are necessary, appropriate documentation of the applicable conditions should be maintained where feasible.

Through these practices, research data management contributes to transparency, responsible research conduct, knowledge dissemination and the sustainable use of research outputs.

5. Monitoring and Quality Assurance

Implementation of the Data Management Plan is monitored through BFU's existing research management and quality assurance mechanisms.

Monitoring is intended to support continuous improvement and to provide proportionate evidence concerning the development of research data management and Open Science practices.

Indicative areas of monitoring may include:

Monitoring area	Indicative evidence	Review
Data documentation and traceability	Availability of appropriate documentation and metadata; use of institutional or project-based data management practices	Periodic
Open Science and dissemination	Open access practices and other documented dissemination activities, where applicable	Annual / periodic
Data management in research projects	Project-specific DMPs or related data management arrangements, where required	Project-based
Data security and preservation	Evidence of applicable backup, access control, preservation or integrity arrangements	Periodic
Institutional development	Integration of relevant data management and Open Science principles into institutional policies and procedures	Periodic

Monitoring should rely on available and reliable institutional evidence and should remain proportionate to the nature and scale of BFU's research activities.

Data management is integrated, where appropriate, into BFU's **Quality Management System (ISO 9001:2015)** and related institutional quality assurance processes. This supports clear responsibilities, documentation and traceability, internal review and continuous improvement.

Feedback from researchers, doctoral candidates and relevant academic and administrative units may also inform the periodic development of data management practices.

Within the HRS4R process, the Data Management Plan provides supporting institutional evidence for the implementation of **Action 2 – Open Science**. In particular, it contributes to the systematisation of existing practices and the integration of Open Science-related principles into BFU's institutional framework.

The DMP does not replace the broader implementation and monitoring of Action 2 under the HRS4R Action Plan.

6. Final Provisions

The Data Management Plan provides Burgas Free University with an institutional framework for the responsible, secure, transparent and sustainable management of research and related academic data.

Its implementation supports research integrity, appropriate documentation and traceability, data protection and security, responsible preservation and the progressive development of Open Science practices.

The Plan operates through BFU's existing research, academic, administrative and quality assurance structures and does not establish parallel organisational mechanisms.

It should be applied in conjunction with applicable legislation, ethical requirements, BFU's internal regulations, project-specific requirements and other relevant institutional policies.

The Plan may be periodically reviewed in response to developments in legislation, research practices, digital infrastructure, Open Science requirements and institutional priorities.

Through its implementation, BFU strengthens the institutional environment for responsible research and contributes to the objectives of the **European Charter for Researchers (2023)** and the **Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R)**.