

DATA QUALITY POLICY

Introduction

1. Purpose: The Data Quality Policy sets the University's position with regards to data quality and enables the creation of standards for the management of university data.
2. Audience: This policy applies to all members of the University and its partner organisations that have responsibility for any aspect of university data collection, maintenance, or disposal.

Scope

3. Scope and Responsibilities: The policy relates to institutional or management data across the following domains:

Type	Department
Space & Asset Data	Estate & Facilities
Finance Data	Finance
Learning Sources Data	Faculty
Staff Data	HR
Student Data	Student Affairs and Registry
Leads and Enquiries Data	Marketing and Recruitment
Applicants Data	Marketing and Recruitment and Admissions

4. Data and Information: Data are facts and statistics collected together for reference or analysis. When data is processed, organised, structured, or presented in a way that gives it context and therefore makes it more useful, it is called 'information'. In the context of this document, the terms 'data' and 'information' can be used interchangeably.
5. Data Owner: Individuals or group of people who have been officially designated as accountable for specific data and for ensuring that procedures have been put in place to maintain and improve standards of data quality and to ensure that the data is managed securely and in compliance with university regulations and statutory obligations.
6. Data Quality: A perception or an assessment of data's fitness to serve its purpose in a given context. The characteristics of quality data can be defined as: accuracy, validity, reliability, timeliness, relevance, completeness, and compliance.

Data Quality Statement

7. High quality data enables accurate reporting and informed decision-making. The University recognizes this key role, as well as the risks associated with poor data quality. Hence, the University is committed to data quality.

Risks Associated with Poor Data Quality

8. Data owners and staff who have responsibility for data collection and maintenance should be aware of the risks associated with poor data quality. These include:
 - 8.1 Impaired decision-making.
 - 8.2 Reputational damage.
 - 8.3 Incorrect funding allocations.
 - 8.4 Inaccurate reporting to sponsors, resulting in financial penalties.
 - 8.5 Mandatory conditions of grant could be breached.
 - 8.6 Misleading external and internal impressions of institutional performance in teaching and operations.
 - 8.7 Inefficient use of resources.
 - 8.8 Good performance may go unrecognised and unrewarded.
 - 8.9 Poor services may not be improved.

Characteristics of Quality Data

The University defines the characteristics of quality data as follows:

9. Accuracy
 - 9.1 Data should be captured once only close to the point of activity.
 - 9.2 Data should provide a clear representation of the activity/interaction.
10. Validity
 - 10.1 Data should be recorded and used in accordance with agreed requirements, rules, and definitions to ensure integrity and consistency.
11. Reliability
 - 11.1 Data collection processes must be clearly defined and stable to ensure consistency over time, so that data accurately and reliably reflects any changes in performance.
12. Timeliness
 - 12.1 Data should be collected and reported while still current to inform real time management.
 - 12.2 Data should remain available for the intended use within a reasonable or agreed time period.

13. Relevance

- 13.1 Data should be fit for purpose.
- 13.2 Data requirements should be clearly specified and regularly reviewed to reflect any change in needs.
- 13.3 The amount of data collected should be proportionate to the value gained from it.
- 13.4 Data should be collected at a level of granularity that allows use for all intended and relevant purposes.

14. Completeness

- 14.1 Data should be complete.

15. Compliance

- 15.1 Data must comply with regulations on data protection and security.

Data Quality Objectives

The University aims to set the following objectives with regards to data quality:

16. Responsibility, accountability, and awareness

- 16.1 Data Owners are known and aware of their responsibilities.
- 16.2 All staff are made aware of this data quality policy, data quality impact and risks, and how they can contribute to better data quality.
- 16.3 Where appropriate, maintaining data quality standards is recognised in job descriptions.

17. Definitions, policies, and procedures

- 17.1 The University defines data requirements and assurance standards.
- 17.2 Local procedures exist for key activities and major data collection exercises for external returns.
- 17.3 Policies and procedures are reviewed regularly to consider their impact on data quality and to ensure they reflect any change in needs.
- 17.4 Policies and procedures are embedded within business processes.

18. Systems

- 18.1 Data is collected and recorded once only, and where necessary, shared across other systems.
- 18.2 Data collection systems contain internal validation to ensure accurate and complete data.

19. Security

- 19.1 Data is protected from unauthorised input, amendment, or destruction.

20. Staff Development

- 20.1 Appropriate staff development is provided at induction and periodically to enable staff to meet the objectives of this policy.
- 20.2 Changes to policies and procedures are communicated in a timely and effective manner.
- 20.3 Staff knowledge and capability is reviewed regularly via the mandatory training programme and reflect any change in development needs.

VERSION MANAGEMENT

Responsible Department: IT			
Approving Body: University Board (on recommendation of Operations Committee)			
Version no.	Key Changes	Date of Approval	Date of Effect
1.0	Initial Version	23/06/2021	23/06/2021
1.1	Minor Change: Initial Version formatted according to current policy template	01/10/2023	01/10/2023
1.2	Minor Change: Removed references to the University's Data Governance and added additional data types	30/11/2023	30/11/2023
1.2	Formatted and reapproved for 2025-26 AY	24 July 2025	September 2025
		Restricted Access? <i>Tick as appropriate:</i> Yes X No <input type="checkbox"/>	