

# Building Integrated Research Services using DMPonline

## Chris Gibson



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**Chris Gibson** is a Research Services Librarian at The University of Manchester.

He works in the Research Data Management (RDM) team supporting more than 6,000 researchers across three faculties: Biology, Medicine and Health; Science and Engineering; Humanities; each containing many schools. In addition, there are more than 20 interdisciplinary research institutes.

### Can you give us an overview of the project?

The University's RDM Policy mandates a Data Management Plan (DMP) for all research, regardless of whether it's funded or not.

In April 2018 the University decided to move from an in-house DMP tool to DMPonline provided by the Digital Curation Centre.

As part of this change, a partnership of Professional Services teams from across the University came together to review its research procedures. This resulted in the creation of the Manchester Data Management Outline (MDMO), which prefixes all DMPs to:

- reduce duplication between forms and input from researchers;
- gather information to inform delivery and development of researcher services;
- gather information to ensure GDPR compliance.

The ultimate goal of this policy is to foster better research practices.

### How does the Manchester Data Management Outline work?

The MDMO (also known as 'the Outline') is a simple survey that typically takes researchers just a few minutes to complete. It consists of 16 multiple choice questions with a handful of short text boxes.

Using DMPonline's API, an email is sent each day to the Library's RDM team with details of all DMPs created in the last 24 hours. DMP Outline responses are recorded and checked, and researchers are then contacted to offer some basic advice that is tailored in line with their responses.

This process also helps identify opportunities for follow-up advice and support. If potential issues are identified around data protection or IT support requirements, details of the DMPs are referred to Information Governance and Research IT, respectively.

Researchers can also request a full DMP review via DMPonline's 'request feedback' feature, and feedback is returned via its 'comments' function.

DMPs are also integrated with the University's ethics processes. DMPs, including the Outline and any feedback, must be attached to ethics applications, which enables consistent advice across Professional Services.

### How does it support good research and DMP practice?

The information gathered by the Outline:

- enables Professional Services teams to deliver more timely, tailored and co-ordinated support to researchers. This underpins the creation of better quality DMPs and more effective RDM practices, which in turn enable reproducibility and transparency to support Open Research;
- is used to ensure compliance with data protection legislation;
- gives key insights on researcher needs to inform service developments.

### What's next?

To optimise benefits, the design of the Outline and associated DMP processes are kept under review with continual feedback actively sought from research communities and support teams to ensure this is the case.

The collaborative approach adopted here by Professional Services has been incredibly successful, with more than 3,000 DMPs created each year. DMP compliance reporting reveals a steady increase in compliance suggesting that data management is increasingly front of mind for researchers and ever more embedded in the research culture.