

Positioning Data Ethics within the Wits Graduate Online Learning and Development (GOLD) RDM Strategy at the University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa

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DATA SOVEREIGNTY AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY PROTECTION

GLOBAL DATA ETHICS AND GOVERNANCE SYMPOSIUM

18-19 SEPTEMBER 2025

The Riverside Hotel, Durban, SOUTH AFRICA

Overview

- ☐ Introduction
- ☐ Importance of Research Ethics
- ☐ Research Data Management (RDM) Principles
- ☐ Role of Postgraduate Students
- ☐ Challenges and Opportunities
- ☐ Recommendations
- ☐ Q&A



Introduction

The research landscape is evolving with increasing emphasis on:

- ☐ Interdisciplinary or Transdisciplinary research
- ☐ Ethical integrity
- ☐ Responsible data handling
- ☐ Reproducibility and transparency (FAIR & CARE Principles)

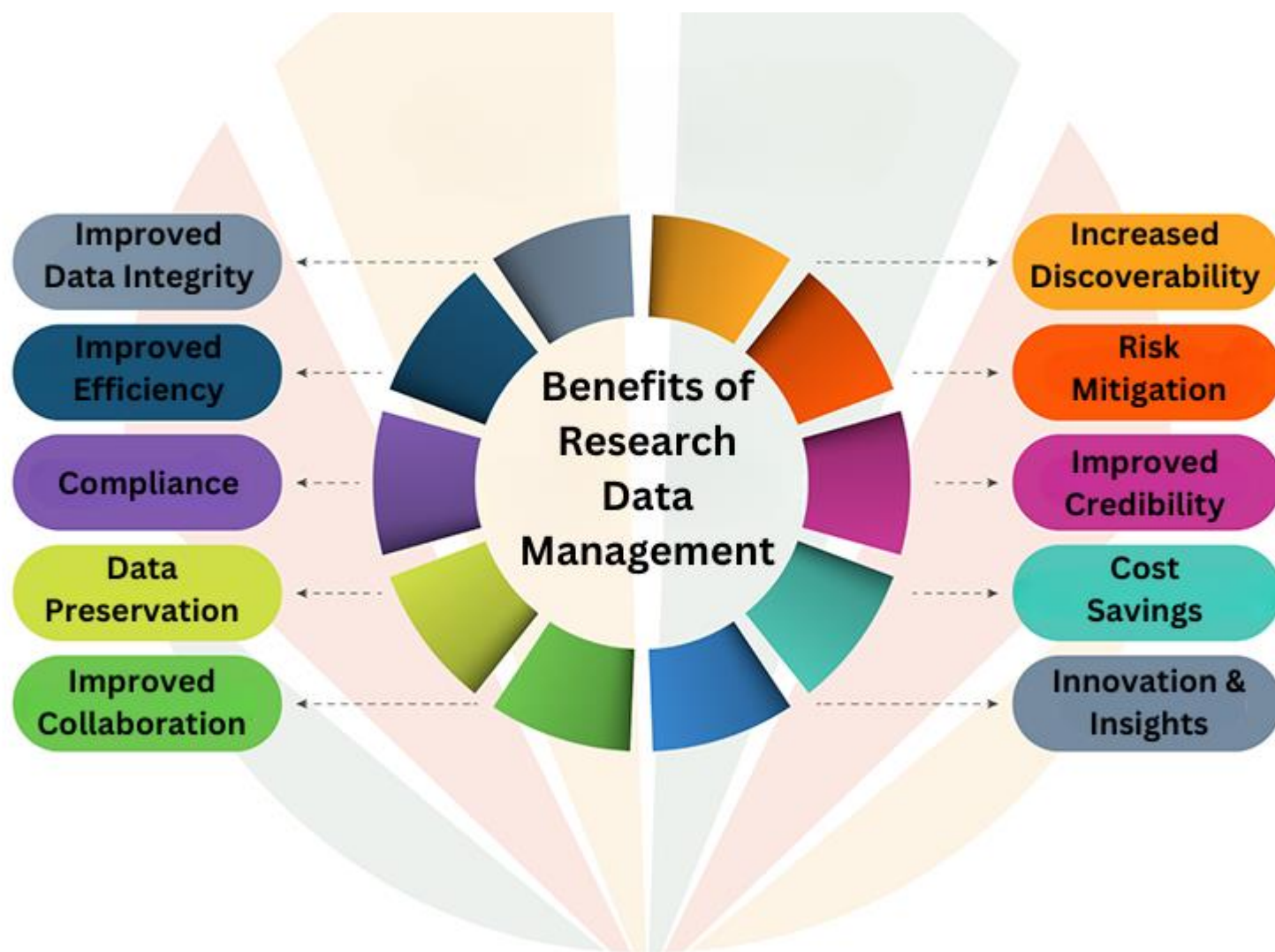
Postgraduate students are at the forefront of this transformation

Postgraduate Figures - 2025

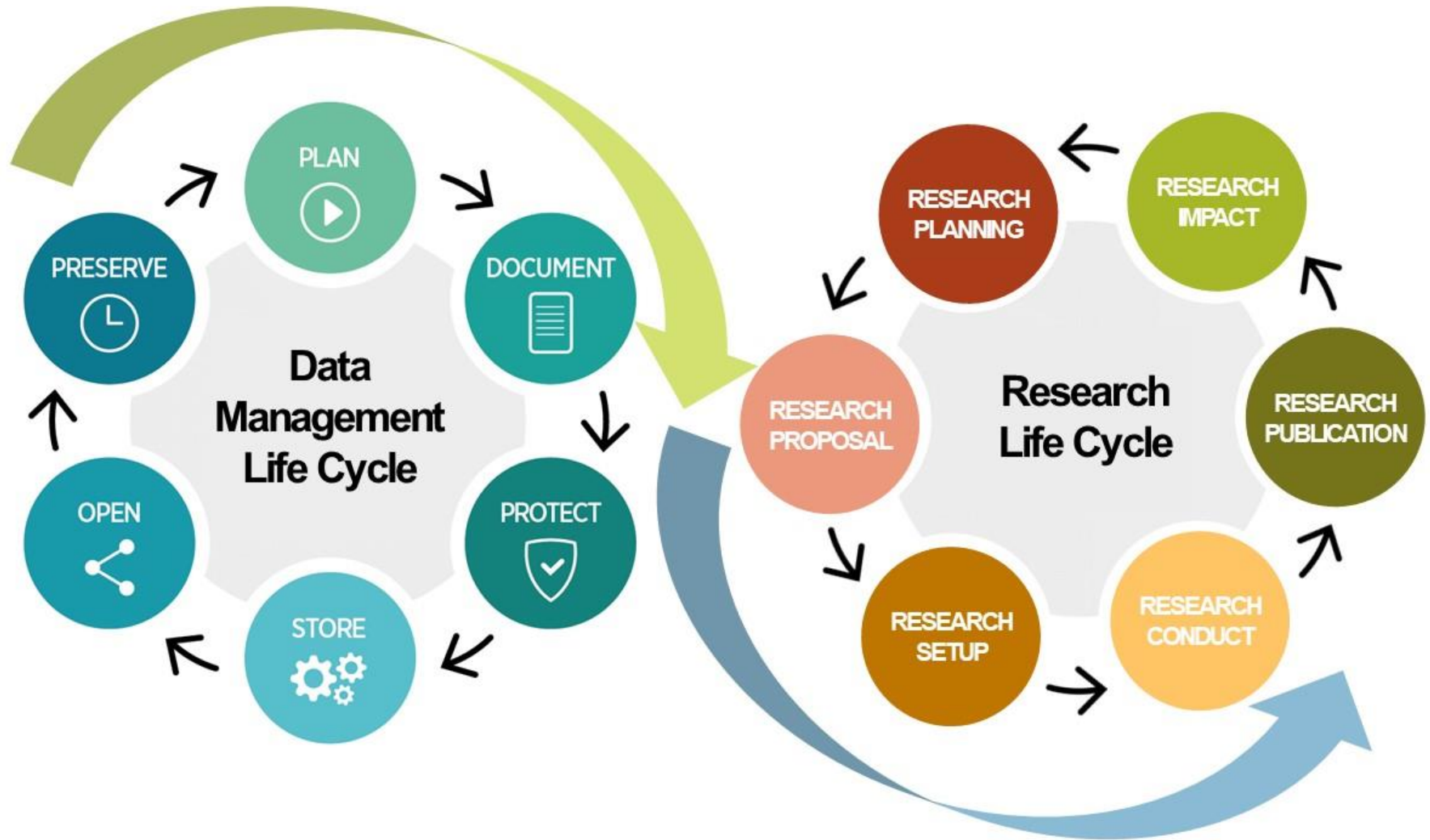
Faculty	No. of PGs
Humanities	3394
Science	2045
EBE	2522
Health Science	3116
Commerce, Law & Management	6326

4000 of 17000 postgraduate students are registered on the GOLD platform

Challenges in Research Data Management Services



RDM Services & Faculty Libraries Integrated Training



What is Research Ethics?

A set of principles guiding responsible conduct in research

Key principles:

- ☐ Integrity
- ☐ Respect for persons
- ☐ Beneficence
- ☐ Justice

Ethical clearance and informed consent are essential



Why Research Ethics Matters

- ❑ Protects participants and researchers
- ❑ Ensures credibility and trust in research
- ❑ Prevents misconduct (e.g., plagiarism, data fabrication)
- ❑ Aligns with institutional and national policies

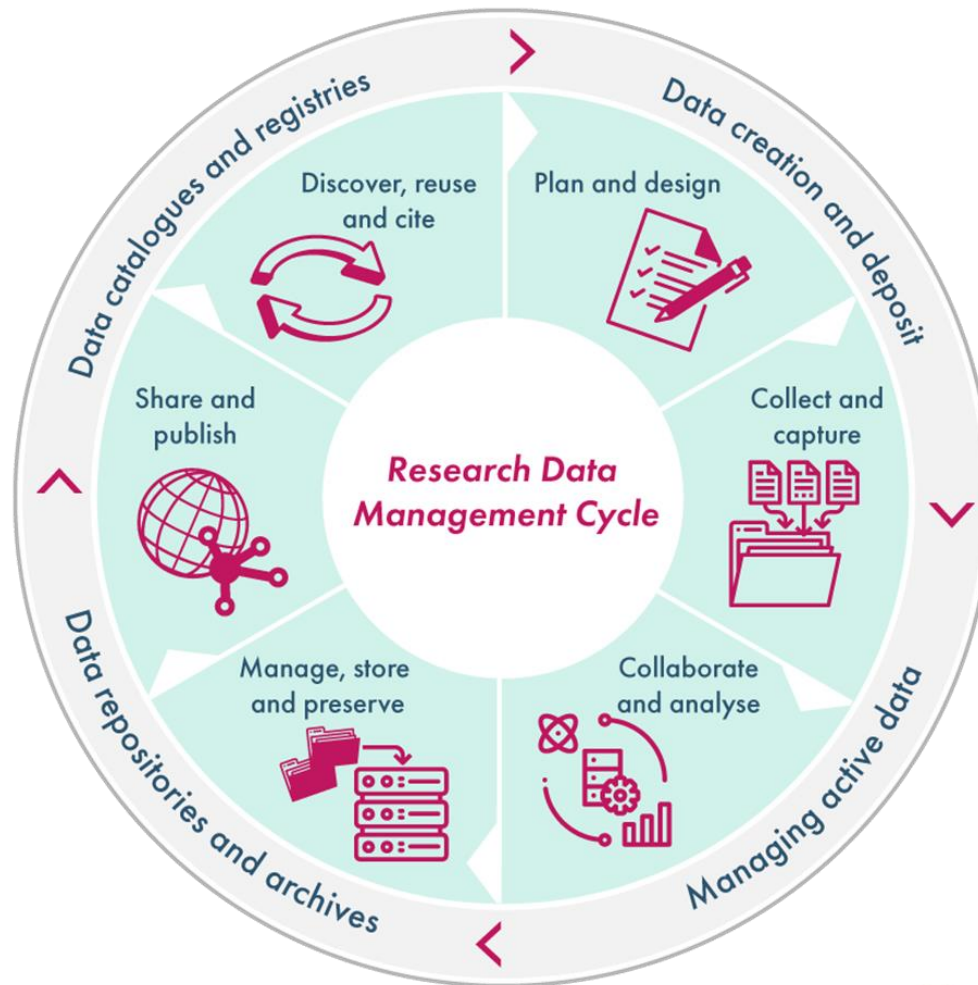
Ethical use of AI tools – Scopus AI, Science Direct AI, Trinkla/ Documark Research Assistant, Writeful



Introduction to Research Data Management (RDM)

RDM is the organization, storage, preservation, and sharing of data collected during the research Lifecycle approach:

1. Planning
2. Collecting
3. Processing
4. Analysing
5. Preserving
6. Sharing



How do we support Postgraduate Students in Building a Responsible Research Culture - Research Ethics & Research Data Management?



Why RDM is Important

- ❑ Enhances research integrity and reproducibility
- ❑ Facilitates data sharing and collaboration
- ❑ Meets funder and institutional requirements
- ❑ Protects sensitive and personal data



Research data management services provided for CRC/TR32 members, modified from Curdt & Hoffmeister (2015).



Ethical data handling includes:

- ☐ Anonymization
- ☐ Secure storage
- ☐ Consent for data reuse

Data management plans (DMPs) as ethical tools



The figure provides an overview of the structure of a DMP and which elements it typically contains

Often, first-time researchers need structured training in:

- ☐ Research ethics
- ☐ Data management
- ☐ Responsible authorship

Supervision and mentorship are critical – RDM Research Cycle and development of Data Management Plans (DMPs) are ethical tools required to enhance productivity!

Challenges Faced by Postgraduates

- ❑ Limited awareness of ethical and RDM requirements
- ❑ Pressure to publish
- ❑ Inadequate institutional support
- ❑ Navigating complex data policies

1. Data Collection and Documentation



- ❑ What kind of data are generated
- ❑ How will data be generated
- ❑ What metadata are needed

2. Ethics, legal and security Issues



- ❑ How will ethical issues be handled
- ❑ How are the data accessed
- ❑ Are there copyright issues
- ❑ Are there sensitive data
- ❑ What about intellectual property rights

3. Data Storage and Preservation



- ❑ How are the data stored?
- ❑ Are there back up systems
- ❑ How are data safely preserved

4. Data Sharing and reuse



- ❑ How and where will the data be shared?
- ❑ How are sensitive data protected
- ❑ How can data be accessed



Opportunities for Growth

- ❑ Integrating ethics and RDM into postgraduate curricula
- ❑ Institutional support through libraries and research offices
- ❑ Use of open science platforms and tools
- ❑ Peer learning and communities of practice



<https://www.uni-wuerzburg.de/en/rdm/>

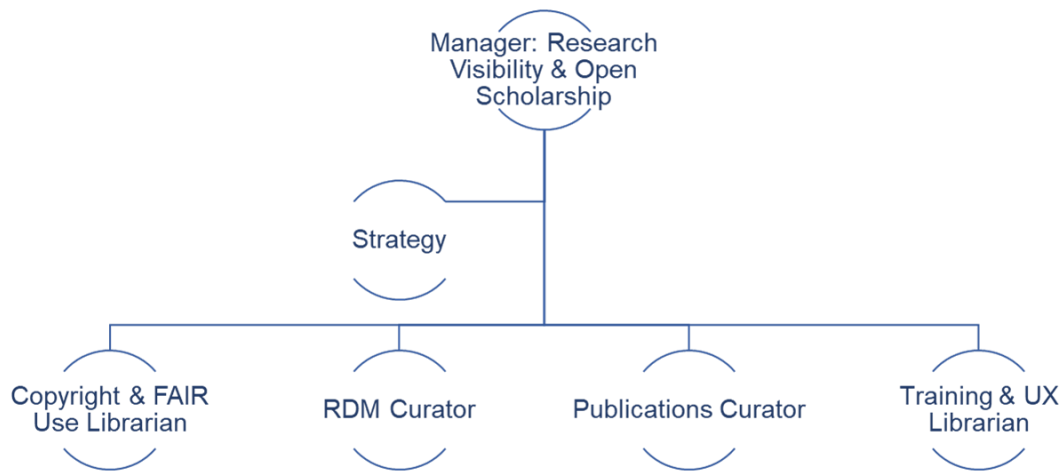
Recommendations

- ❑ Develop clear institutional policies and training programs
- ❑ Encourage early development of DMPs
- ❑ Foster a culture of ethical awareness and data stewardship
- ❑ Provide mentorship and support networks



Conclusion

- ❑ Ethics and RDM are foundational to responsible research
- ❑ Postgraduate students must be empowered with knowledge and tools
- ❑ Institutions play a key role in shaping ethical research cultures



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JOHANNESBURG

POLICY DOCUMENT

**Research Data
Management Policy**



Linking research publications and curated research datasets in the two Wits Research Repositories



[Communities & Collections](#) [All of WIReDSpace ▾](#) [Statistics](#)

[Q](#) [Globe](#) [Log In ▾](#)

WIReDSpace

Welcome WIReDSpace(to Wits Institutional Repository on DSpace)

For queries relating to content and technical issues, please contact IR specialists via this email address : openscholarship.library@wits.ac.za, Tel: 011 717 4652 or 011 717 1954

[Q](#) Search



Datasets are citable and are the New GOLD



Wits Data Vault Repository – to be launched during the IDW 2025

Wits Libraries' RDM Services & Platforms



DSPACE

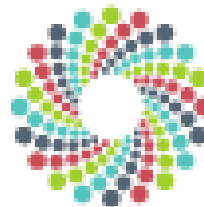


Altmetric
EXPLORER



Dimensions

A **Digital Science** Solution



figshare



Retrospective Research Outputs to be curated

PUBLICATIONS	DATASETS	GRANTS	PATENTS	CLINICAL TRIALS	P
75,319	57,120	20,749	734	362	0



University of the Witwatersrand

Johannesburg, South Africa

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Publications	Datasets	Grants	Patents	Clinical Trials
75,319	57,120	20,749	734	362
		Funding amount USD 1.16 B		



Digitally curated datasets in the Wits Open Data Repository - +10,000 (57,000 discovered in Dimensions only)



Discover research data from the **University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg**

10,848 posts | 1,180 views | 433 downloads | [more stats...](#)

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sort by: Posted date   



DATASET

Dataset--metadata-extraction-tables-of-femicide-reported-in-News-Media
Dataset posted on 2025-06-24
Nechama Rachel Brodie



DATASET

[Kidney transplantation ineligibility at a tertiary level public hospital in Johannesburg...](#)
Dataset posted on 2025-06-24
[Malcolm Davies](#)

... of South African artist Stephen Kilian and artistically interpreted portraits, his work engages cultural and technical opportunities, exploring the historical and ongoing processes of racial and cultural representation.

The project interrogates the laboratory as a racialized cultural space where authority and scientific distributions can be contested. Through the interplay of light patterns, surface reflections, and virtual images, Kilian's work explores the boundaries between the physical and the digital, questioning the power dynamics associated with scientific discovery and research. This approach aligns with Wits Open Data's goal of making, enhancing the ethical and cultural value of knowledge. By curating Wits's rich collections, the work foregrounds the importance of technology, memory, and knowledge, inviting reflection on the complexities of representation and power.

Keywords: Art and science, visualization, postcolonialism, design.

Conceptual Framework: Simulation as Paradigm

Digitalized images in the network, hence which understand the relation between the self and other bodies, are the material form, the experience of a virtual and networked culture.

... intelligent, self-organizing, and distributed through the generation of 3D printed images based on African technological systems. Exploring the hybridized space, the artwork generates "transcultural artifacts" that reflect and investigate historical practices and representations from a Global South perspective. Through frameworks from Wits Open Data's systems process and spatial analysis, Kilian's research's philosophy of cultural institutions, and the critique of scientific rationality to include images and ideas. Later where the artist. Additionally, the work engages Wits Open Data's concept of decolonial computing and digital literacy, those of university of power to embrace the material and immaterial logic embedded in technological infrastructures. Through these lenses, the project is interpreted as both a technological experience but also a material and political gesture of resistance, decolonization, reimagining, openness, inspiration, as a form of cultural resistance and generative worldmaking.

Keywords: Digital Arts, artificial intelligence, decolonial computing, communication.

1. Introduction

It is, therefore, the act, result of an interconnectedness, cultural, economic, cultural, political.



Globally viewed datasets and downloads



Wits Open
Data Vault



[Back to homepage](#)

 Hide filters

Group

reset filter

University of the Witwatersrand

Item type

reset filter

 Dataset

Timeframe

reset filter

Select dates

Between 2025-01-01 - 2025-06-30 University of the Witwatersrand had:

 **1,025 views**

 **359 downloads**

see by: Monthly view

☒ Views

☒ Downloads

☒ Total



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