



Introduction to Personal Data Protection for Research Students

DCU Risk & Compliance Office



Aims of this presentation

- 1) DP definitions
- 2) General principles
- 3) Researchers & Supervisors responsibilities





Why must we protect Personal Data?

- Legal requirement
- Promotes good information handling practices
- Protects your & DCU's reputation



Individuals own their own personal data, organisations such as DCU (& its students), must protect it.



Irish Data Protection Legislation

- 1) Data Protection Act 1988
- 2) Data Protection Amendment (Act) 2003
- 3) Other assorted EU & Irish Legislation / Regulations

(1) & (2) are of most relevance to research activities

Irish Freedom of Information Act

This also applies to DCU documentation & info.





What is Personal Data?

Personal data is data relating to a living individual who is or can be identified either from the data or from the data in conjunction with other information that is in, or is likely to come into, the possession of the data controller; e.g. contact details, audio & visual recordings.

- Definition is deliberately very broad.
- Data can be both automated and manual data (stored in a relevant “filing system”).





Sensitive Data

Additional category of data which requires extra protection from misuse or disclosure e.g. patients medical records, religion, political opinions, race, ethnic origin, trade union membership, sexual orientation, criminal records.

Data Subject

Individual who is the subject of the personal data.

Data Controller

Is a person or body who controls the contents & use of personal data e.g. DCU (but responsibility extends to students and supervisors also).



Personal Data must be:

- 1) Fairly obtained – identify yourself & who you may share the data with. Get informed explicit consent.
- 2) Specified & lawful purpose – state purpose the data is required for.
- 3) Not incompatible with that purpose or purposes – can only be used for the stated purpose in 2 above.
- 4) Kept safe and secure – restrict access (encryption of data or device, password protect, locked cabinets etc.)

Cont.....

5) Accurate & up to date – periodically review accuracy.

6) Adequate, relevant & not excessive – don't ask for data you do not need.

7) Not retained for longer than is necessary – retention policy / safe disposal / anonymize data.

8) Data Subject's Right to Access – provide copy of the data on request.



Data for research purposes – Specific exemptions from 8 general principles

The Act provides certain exemptions from the 8 principles for research data. They are:

- May be used for a purpose other than that for which it was collected provided it is a research purpose (# 3).
- May be held indefinitely (# 7).
- The data is exempt from a data subjects right to access (# 8).

Data Protection – Research Student's Responsibilities

- Be aware of any personal data you collect / process in course of your studies
- Ensure you apply 8 DP principles from the outset & throughout your project / studies (See DP Helpsheet)
- Plan for appropriate measures / disclosures prior to collecting & analysing personal data
- Avoid data breaches e.g. NO cc emails, poor disposal routine, files in skips!!!

Guidance

- DCU Data Protection Policy
- DCU Data Classification Policy
- DCU Data Handling Guidelines

- Helpful website



– Irish Data Protection Commissioners Office

<https://www.dataprotection.ie>

- DCU Data Protection Officer - Ext. 8706

Conclusion – What we have covered

- 1) Basic definitions
- 2) Obligations & 8 Principles
- 3) Exemptions for Research
- 4) Students responsibilities



Questions?

