**Protection of personal data in research**

Research projects often use personal data. The protection of personal data is now regulated by the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which has come into effect on the 25th of May 2018.

The GDPR introduces the **Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)** as a mandated assessment for specific cases in which there is a high risk to the rights and freedoms of the research participants.

Moreover, the identification of the potential risks and, the appropriate safeguards need to be aligned with the **ethical principles** relevant in the specific fields of research.

**What is a DPIA?**

The DPIA is a process. The DPIA aims to ensure that the privacy and data protection risks are adequately addressed.

The DPIA process objectives are:
- map the data privacy risks in the project;
- assess these risks; and
- define protection measures to eliminate or mitigate the risks.

By providing a structured way of thinking the DPIA helps the researcher and the institution to comply with the requirement of **data protection by design**.

**Why a DPIA?**

- To contribute in creating a privacy culture in research;
- to standardise best-practices;
- to improve the Research Data Management Plan;
- to clarify responsibilities internal and external to the project.

**When is a DPIA requested?**

Not all the projects involving personal data need a DPIA. The UG is preparing a **protocol** for DPIA’s in research projects.

If you are thinking to apply for an **H2020** or **ERC** grant the ethical board may require to provide a DPIA or an opinion on the need for a DPIA.

If you are planning to reuse personal data collected by a third party, a DPIA may help to clarify the **responsibilities** of the parties involved in the project.

**What are personal data?**

Personal data means any information relating to an identified or identifiable individual (data subject). A data subject is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to an identification number (e.g. social security number) or one or more factors specific to his physical, physiological, mental, economic, cultural or social identity (e.g. name and first name, date of birth, biometrics data, fingerprints, DNA, etc.).
How do we carry out a DPIA?
Experts on data management, information technology specialists and legal advisors will be part of the DPIA team (multi-stakeholders approach).

The UG adopted a DPIA methodology based on protection goals. The method provides a structured way of thinking about risks and protection measures.

The UG is setting-up technical and organisational measures to achieve the protection goals in all the stages of the research project.

The privacy & security coordinators may help you to know the protection measures in place in your faculty.

How do we support a DPIA?
The Research Data Office provides the DPIA service. The service:
- provides information concerning the DPIA methodology adopted at UG;
- supports the organisation of the DPIA process;
- facilitates the connection between the expertise required;
- supports the preparation of the final report and the plan for the implementation of the protection measures.

The DPIA process aims to identify the proper balance between the protection goals and goals of the research project.

**Protection goals**
- **Availability** - data shall be available and properly used.
- **Integrity** - appropriate security shall be in place.
- **Confidentiality** - the data shall be protected against unauthorised and unlawful processing.
- **Unlinkability** - data shall be processed and analysed only for the purpose for which they were collected.
- **Transparency** - all the data processing operations must be clear to the parties involved.
- **Intervenability** - the rights of the participants shall be guaranteed.
- **Data minimization** - collect and process only the personal data needed to achieve the purpose of the processing.

Do you want know more?
Consult the guidance document *Starting with a DPIA methodology for human subject research.*

Do you need help?
- Ask support to the Privacy & Security coordinator in your faculty.
- For questions about the DPIA method or for support in the DPIA process contact the Research Data Office.
- Check-out the Privacy Portal on My University

For more information: researchdata@rug.nl