

FORS 

explore.understand.share.

# Acquisition Policy

## FORS Data Archive

Creator: FORS Data Archive  
Approved by: FORS Executive Board  
Date: December 2021

Versioning: 5.0

# 1. Introduction

Data selection and appraisal play an important role in the acquisition of data in any archival setting. The acquisition policy indicates the principles and criteria by which the archive develops its data collection in order to serve the designated community. The acquisition policy is flexible and responds to future developments that will influence the archive's data collections (technology, scientific standards etc.).

FORS is mandated by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) to solicit research data in the field of the social sciences, to preserve it, and make it accessible and usable for the long term. To do so FORS uses the online platform SWISSUbase. It is a non-commercial, national, public, disciplinary repository service solution and offers controlled access to research data; ranging from open to restricted. FORS is one of the main partners, alongside the Universities of Lausanne and Zurich. Within SWISSUbase, data service units are independently responsible for specific disciplines or partner universities. FORS Data Archive is the data service unit responsible for all social sciences. This policy is aimed specifically for FORS Data Archive.

## 2. Our archival collection - Purpose and function of the institutional setting

**WHY** – FORS Data Archive acquires data for the following purposes:

- for secondary use and analysis by researchers;
- for replication and validation;
- to appeal to new constituencies;
- to support new research techniques;
- to serve teaching and learning;
- to preserve data that are in danger of being lost;
- to fill thematic or disciplinary gaps in our holdings.

**WHAT** – the scope of our collection

We solicit quantitative and qualitative data that:

- represent works of general interest for social science research;
- give evidence for greater understanding of Swiss society or parts of it;
- are produced by researchers in Switzerland or that have a link to Switzerland;
- is sufficiently documented so that the context of the data can be understood and reuse is encouraged;
- have been collected in accordance with prevailing data protection laws and permit reuse by way of sufficient anonymisation and/or explicit consent for sharing.

Depending on the type of data, the following formats are accepted in SWISSUbase:

- Tabular data: SPSS data file & portable data file (.sav; .por), MS Excel (.xls; .xlsx, Comma-separated value (.csv). Files such as Stata data file (.dta), Statistical Analysis System (.sas), R Data Format (.RData; .rds), OpenDocument spreadsheet (.ods) are accepted as well, but should be converted in SPSS, Excel or csv by the data producer so that we can conduct quality control checks.
- Textual data: Portable Document Format (.pdf), Rich Text Format (.rtf), ASCII (.txt), MS Word (.doc; docx), OpenDocument text (.odt)
- Image data: JPEG (.jpeg; .jpg; .jp2), TIFF (.tif; .tiff), RAW image format (.raw), Bitmap Image File (.bmp), Portable Network Graphics (.png), Portable Document Format (.pdf)
- Audio data: MP Format (.mp3), FLAC (.flac), Waveform Audio Format (.wav), Advanced Audio Coding (.aac)
- Video data: MP Format (.mp4), QuickTime video (.mov), Fichier AVI (.avi), Motion JPEG 2000 (.mj2)

The folders and files in the accepted formats can be deposited in zip (.zip, .rar, .7z).

**WHO** – eligible depositors:

- Researchers affiliated with a Swiss research institution;
- International research teams with a Swiss component;
- Government departments;
- Offices of national and cantonal statistics;
- Public and private institutions.

**HOW** – acquisition strategies:

The acquisition of our data happens through different means:

- Longstanding agreements with researchers and institutes;
- Solicitation of data by searching our research inventory and other sources, and contacting those researchers;
- Unsolicited donations from researchers.

The FORS Data Archive reserves the right to refuse material under the following conditions:

- Data that do not match the criteria of our acquisition policy;

- Data that would be better fit with at another institution (e.g. more suitable designated community, better access probabilities on a national or international level);
- Insufficient or poor-quality documentation, metadata, or data files;
- Depositor and FORS Data Archive do not agree on data protection, access, or dissemination conditions;
- If data and materials are of a nature or volume that make it difficult or impossible to process given the resources and capacities of the FORS Data Archive.

### 3. Monitoring and review

FORS regularly evaluates its acquisition policy in order to ensure its continued relevance and to detect any weaknesses or required changes. The policy undergoes a review at least every three years. That means that changes in the designated community or relevant technologies, as well as changes in high-level policies and legal obligations, are taken into account.

### 4. Other related documents and policies

- FORS mission statement:  
<https://forscenter.ch/about-fors/mission/>
- FORS Governance:  
<https://forscenter.ch/about-fors/governance/>
- Preservation policy  
<https://forscenter.ch/about-fors/policies/>
- Preparing your data for deposit in SWISSUbase  
<https://forscenter.ch/data-services/help-resources/>
- SWISSUbase User Guide  
<https://resources.swissubase.ch/help/user-guide/>