

# Data Reuse Checklist

## You can access the data.

- You can comply with the data license (if present).
- You can comply with the terms of use or data use agreement (if present).
- You (or someone on your team) have the tools and expertise to interact with the data in its provided format(s).
- You've downloaded the data, inspected the file(s), and it meets your expectations.
- You don't anticipate insurmountable obstacles in working with the data.
- If any of the above aren't present, list what's preventing you from accessing the data, such as storage, cost, licensing/terms, tools, and/or expertise. Feel free to reach out to the Cushing/Whitney Medical Library for help. If we can't assist, we may be able to connect you to a department that can.


## You believe the data is of high quality sufficient to enable reuse, based on the following factors:

- Documentation (e.g., data dictionary, metadata file(s), README file, codebook, associated publications, etc.) is present. It should explain why the data was created, and it should provide enough context to enable you to reuse the data as you've planned.
- You can explain how the data was created and (if applicable) processed.
- You can identify who created the data, and you know how to contact them.
- You can identify the sources (funders, institutions, etc.) that supported the data generation, and have reviewed them for potential conflicts of interest and/or bias.
- You know whether the data is static or regularly updated/maintained, and you have a plan in place to handle citation and version tracking.
- You believe the data will persist and be preserved in the future, or at least for the length of your project. (This can be affected by maintenance schedules, publisher and/or data repository policies and procedures, data owner updates and/or edits, and many other factors.)

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[Re\(Use\) Data Guide](#)

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# Data Reuse: General Guidance

- **Be curious.**
  - Curiosity drives information discovery and knowledge (re)production. Data is often vast — keep exploring until you understand whether it will be useful to you, and if it is, continue staying curious to uncover unexpected insights.
- **Be critical.**
  - Appraise data with a critical lens. Data is not objective or neutral by nature; it's still created and processed by humans with subjective processes. Use the quality assessment in the checklist above to aid you in determining whether the data is of sufficient quality for reuse. If it's not, look for other data to meet your use case.
- **Be compliant.**
  - Data reuse often involves complying with data governance. Remember to be ethical when reusing data, and comply with all terms and agreements.

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