

# "The road to data sharing is paved with good intentions": Looking at Institutional Research Data Policies

Laurence Horton, London School of Economics and Political  
Science

Astrid Recker, GESIS - Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences

Chloe Dumas, Enssib



"The road to data sharing is paved with good intentions": Looking at Institutional Research Data Policies by Laurence Horton, Astrid Recker, Chloe Dumas is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.



Library Services  
British Library of Political  
and Economic Science

# Contact

Laurence Horton

E: [L.Horton@lse.ac.uk](mailto:L.Horton@lse.ac.uk)

Tw: [@laurencedata](https://twitter.com/laurencedata)

Orcid: [orcid.org/0000-0003-2742-6434](https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2742-6434)

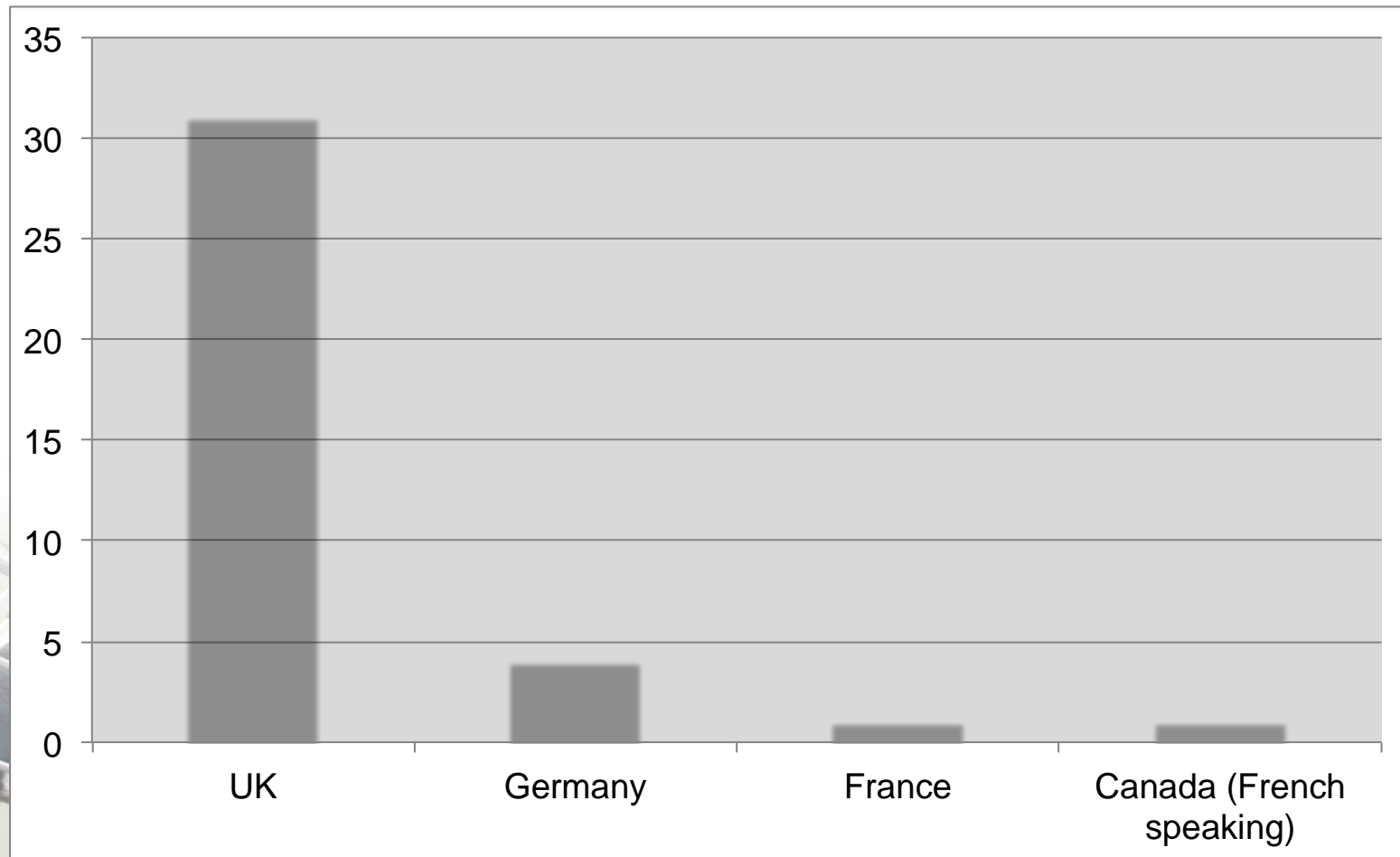


Library Services  
British Library of Political  
and Economic Science

# Prevalence of Institutional Research Data Policies



# Number of Research Data Policies by country





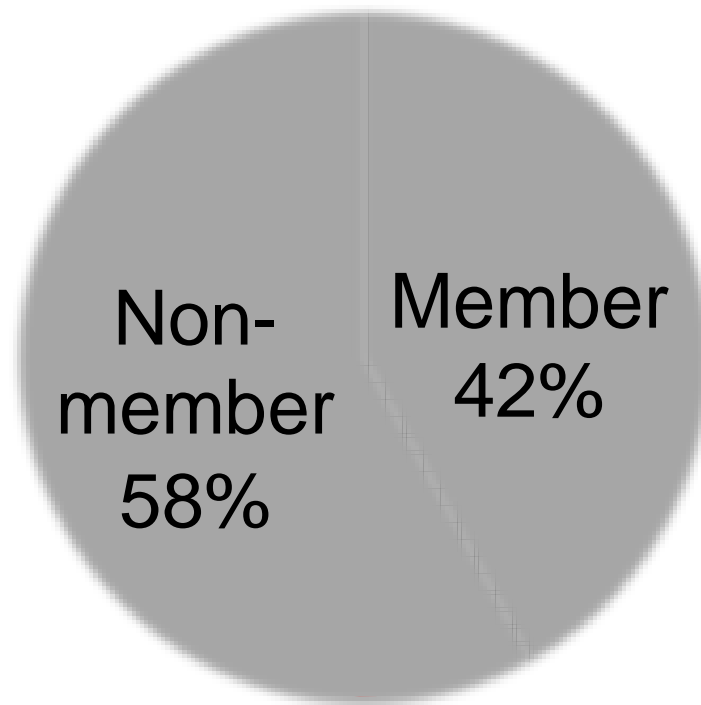
# Explaining differences between UK and Germany



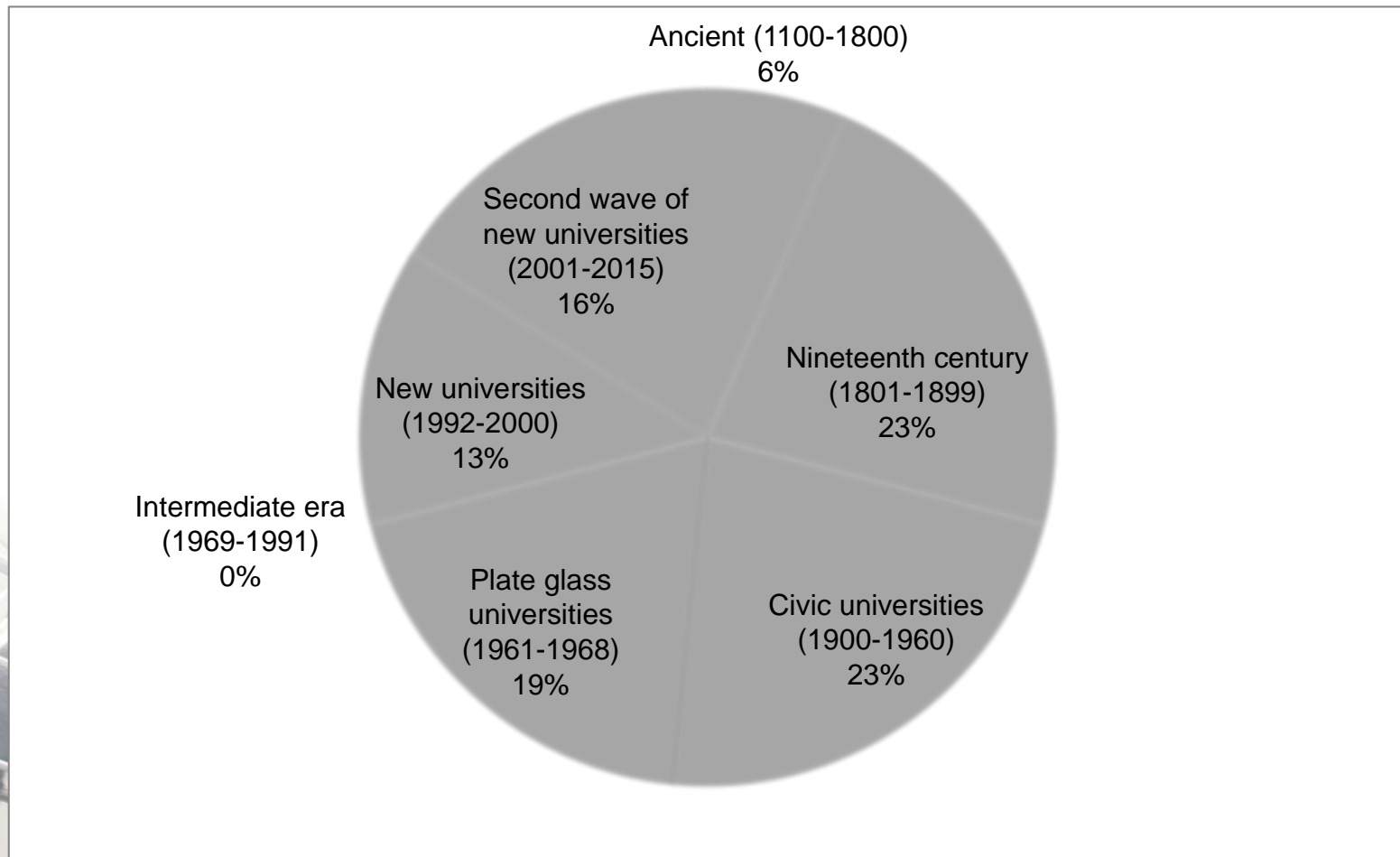
Strong centralised public funding regime for research and universities

Federal state with a strong tradition of independence for professors and universities

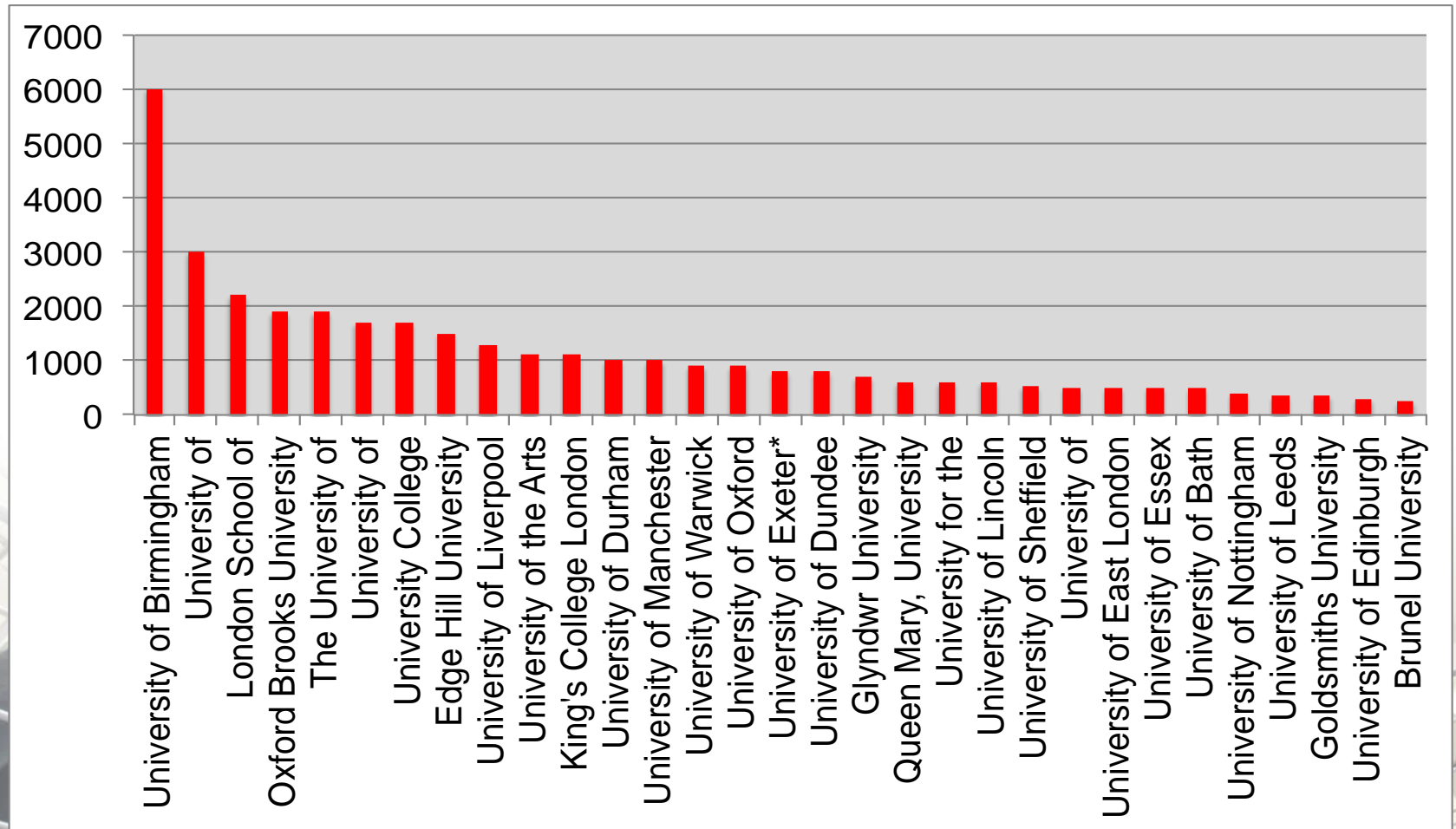
# Share of UK HEI's with a Data Policy by Russell Group membership



# Cohort group in which the UK HEI with Research Data Policy was established

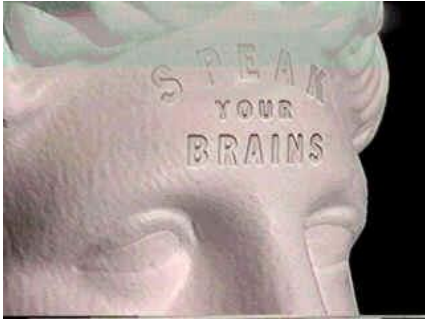


# UK HEI Research Data Policies word count





# Overview



- **Recommend:** The policy is a document to provide weight for RDM and data sharing. To that end, a policy should
  - Raise awareness in institutions of RDM and re-use
  - Raise awareness and clarify issues of data ownership
  - Outline broad institutional responsibilities for RDM.

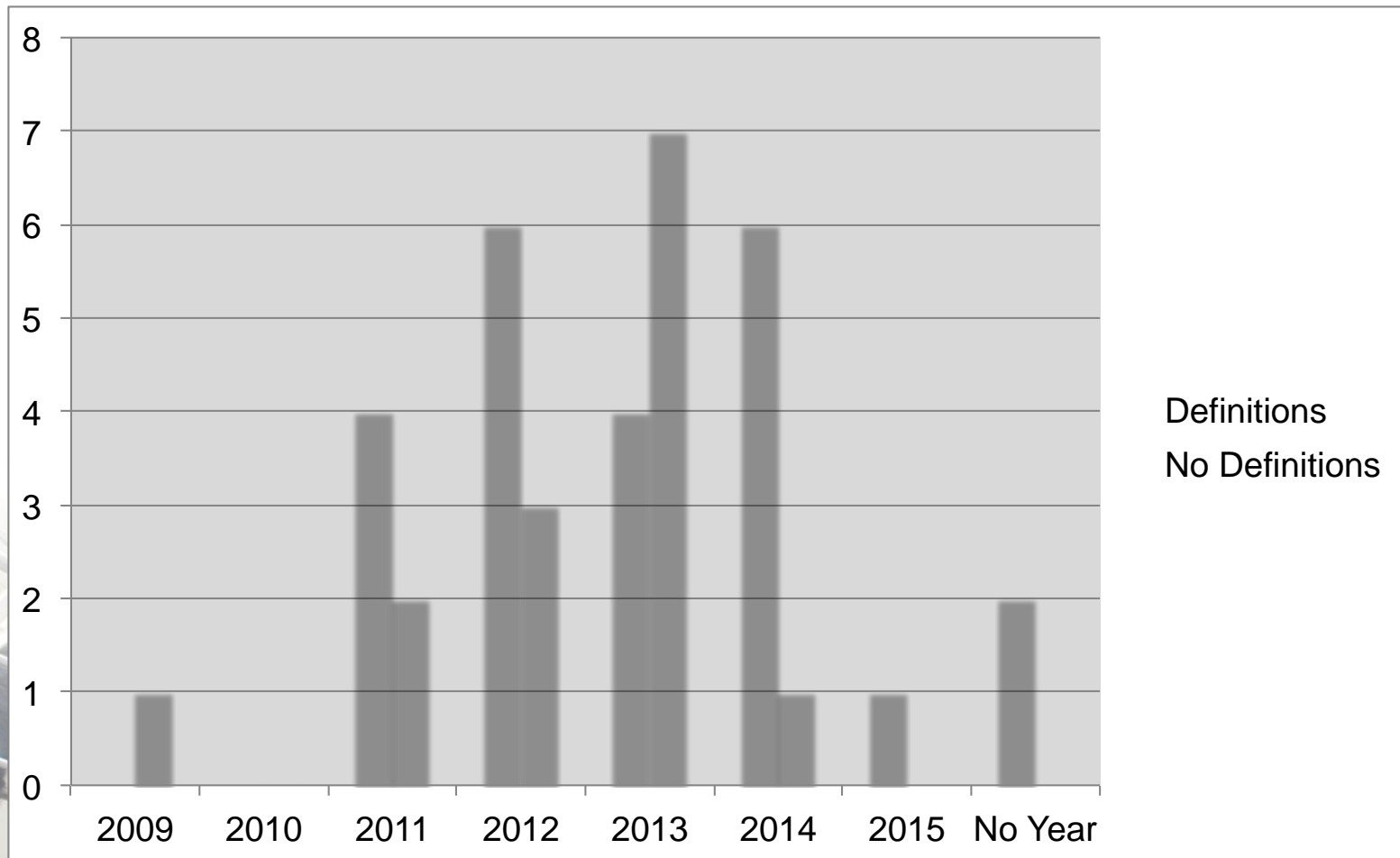


# Framework

- Digital Curation Centre. 2014. *Five Steps to Developing a Research Data Management Policy* [PDF]. Edinburgh: Digital Curation Centre.  
<http://www.dcc.ac.uk/sites/default/files/documents/publications/DCC-FiveStepsToDevelopingAnRDMPolicy.pdf>
- Erway, Ricky. 2013. *Starting the Conversation: University-wide Research Data Management Policy*. Dublin, Ohio: OCLC Research.  
<http://www.oclc.org/content/dam/research/publications/library/2013/2013-08.pdf>

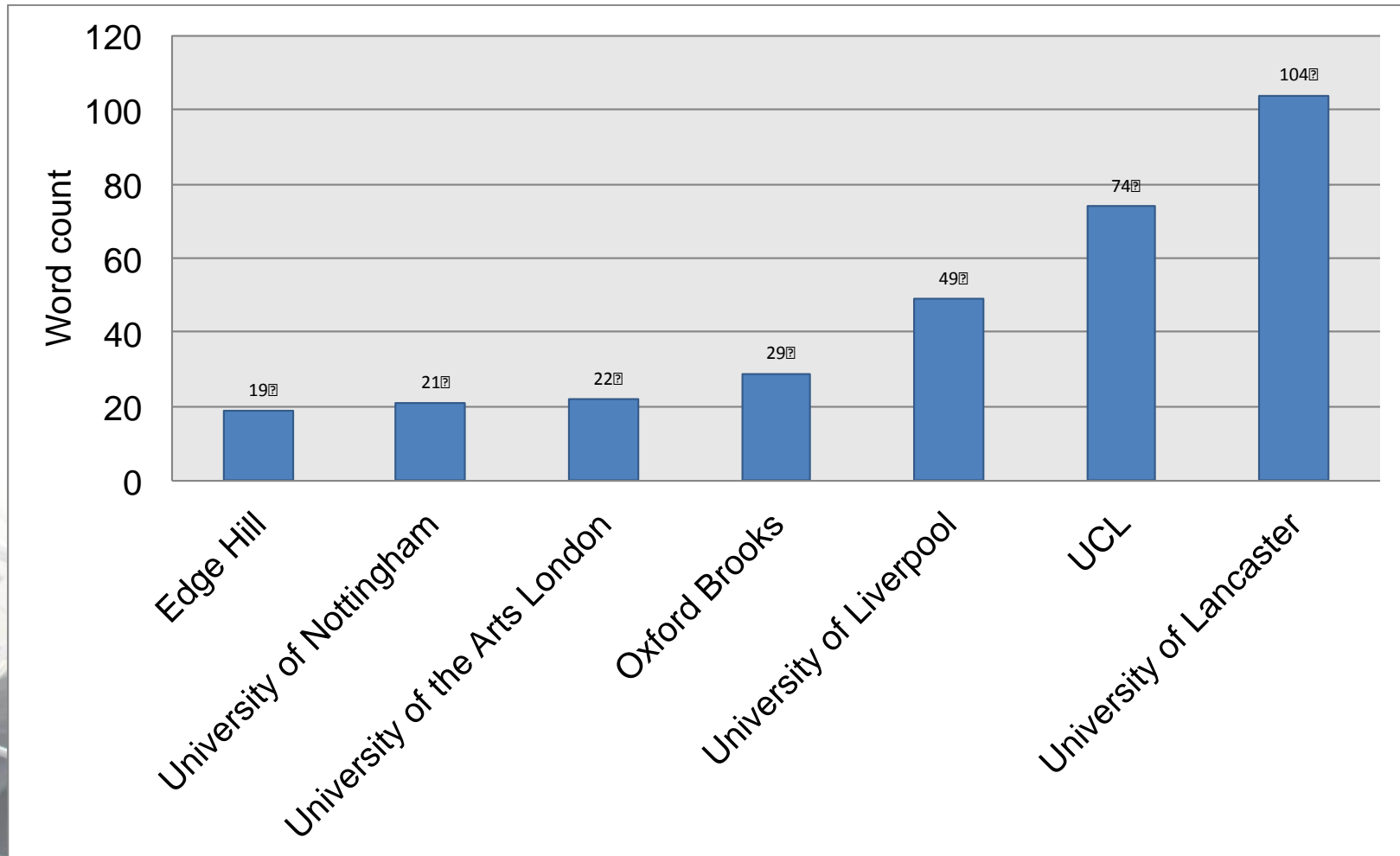


# Research Data Policy definitions of key RDM terms by year adopted



Definitions  
No Definitions

# Length of definition of "Data/Research Data" in selected Research UK HEI Research Data Policies

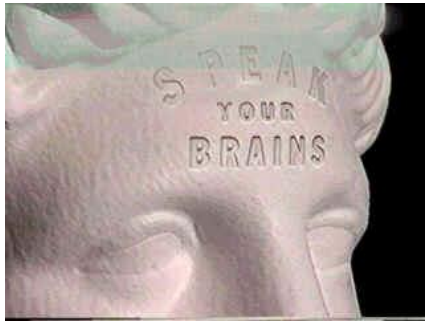




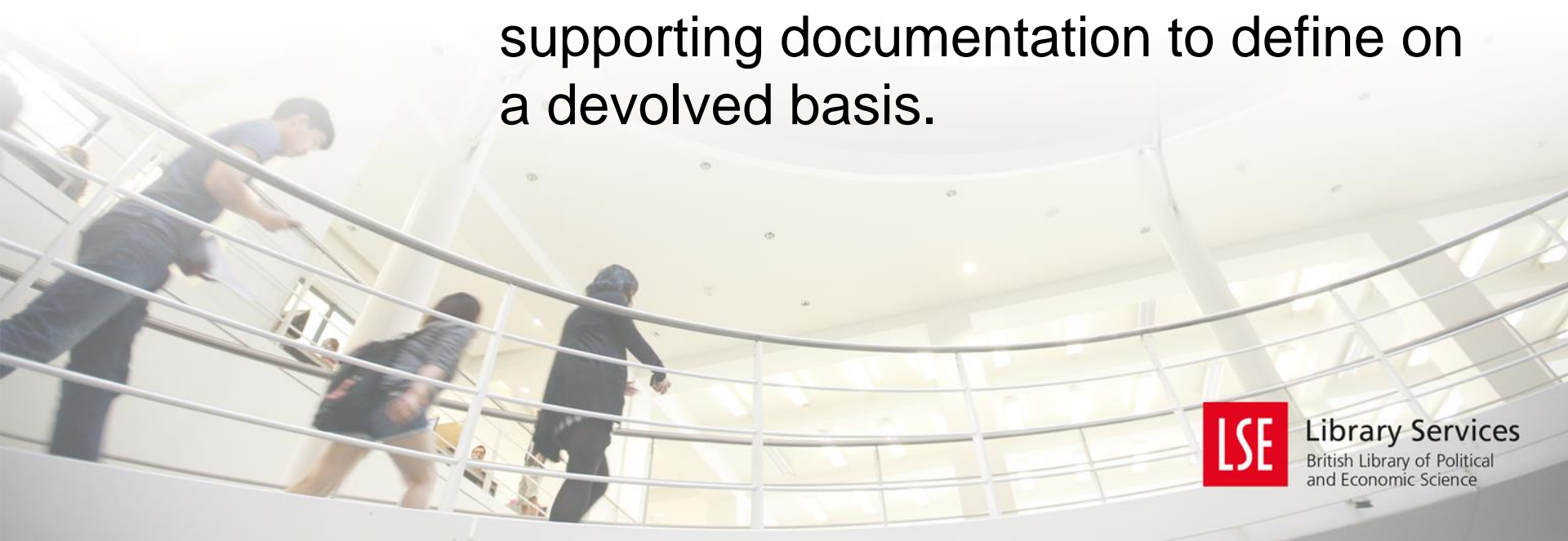
# UK HEI Research data policies definition of key RDM terms by Russell Group membership

Definition	Russell Group	Not Russell Group	Total
Yes (Row %)	7 (43%)	9 (56%)	16 (52%)
No (Row %)	6 (40%)	9 (60%)	15 (48%)
TOTAL (Column %)	13 (42%)	18 (58%)	31 (100%)

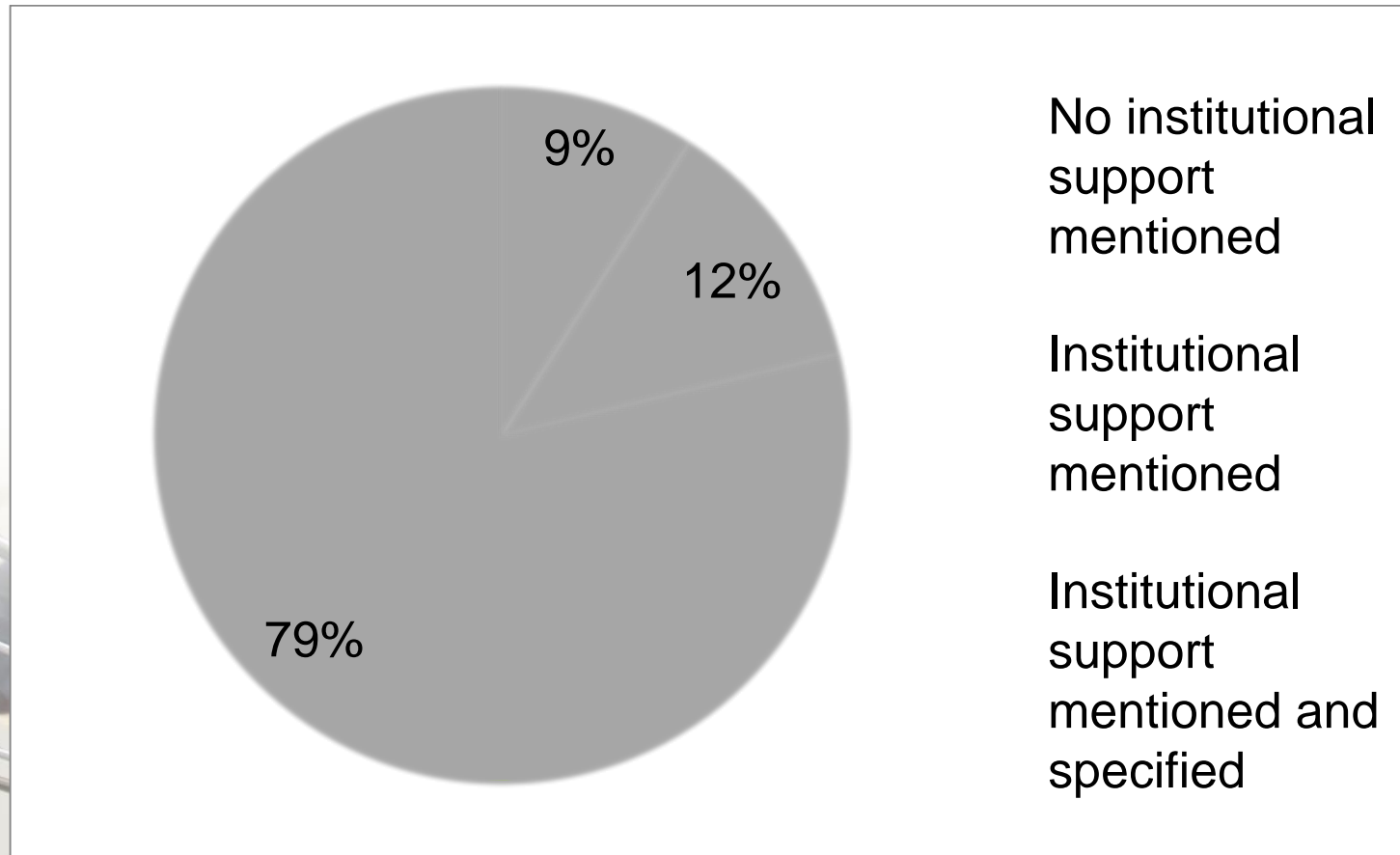
# Definitions



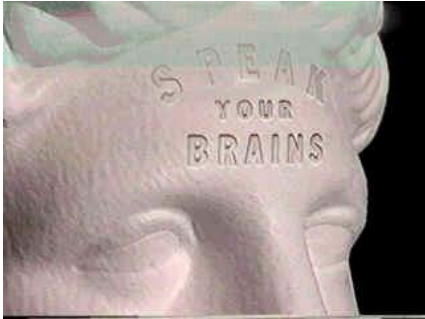
- **Recommend:** State that data is an asset in its own right and include a phrase about it being recognised as such.
- Definitions of what “data” best left to supporting documentation to define on a devolved basis.



# Policy broadly defines the role institution plays in supporting RDM and outlines RDM responsibility of researchers



# Support

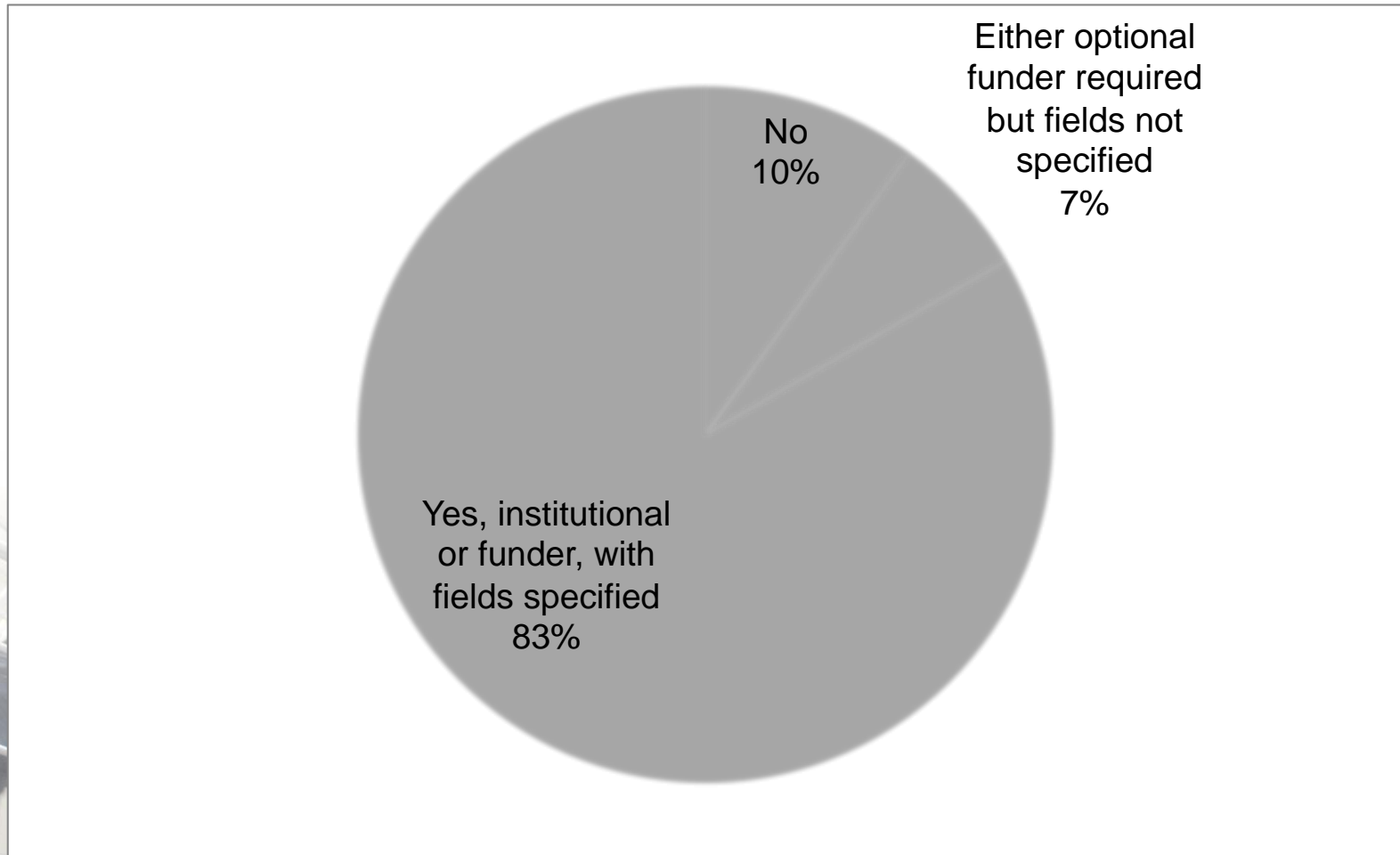


- **Recommend:** Policies should define a level of responsibility for the institution, not just the researchers.
- Exact responsibilities could be left to supporting documentation but state who is involved in RDM.

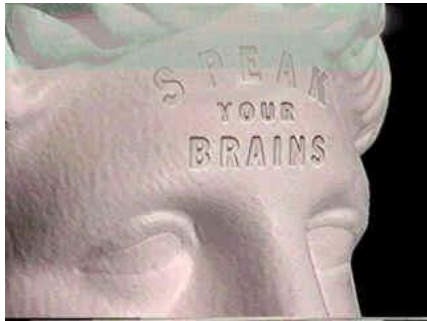




# Requirement to complete a DMP



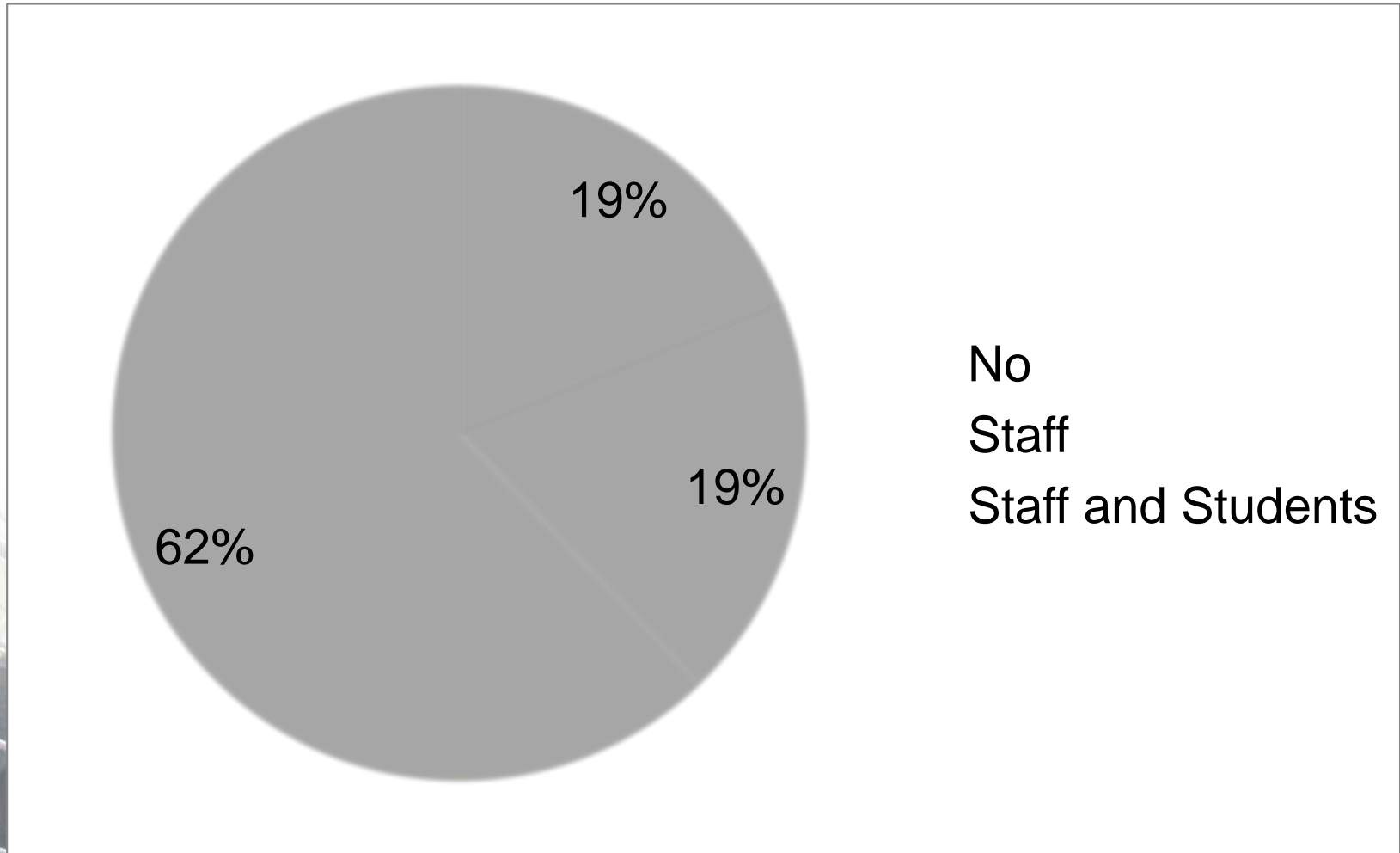
# Data Management Plans



- **Recommend:** suggest a DMP is recommended in a way that highlights how it underpins good RDM practice.
- A DMP requirement brings in resource questions so consider that.

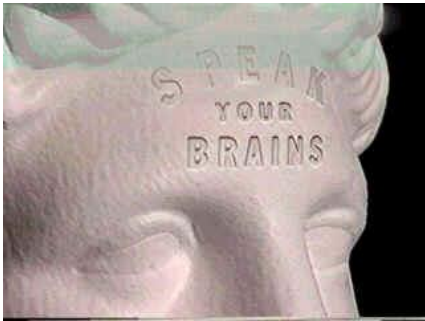


# Research Data Policy specifies who it covers



No  
Staff  
Staff and Students

# Scope

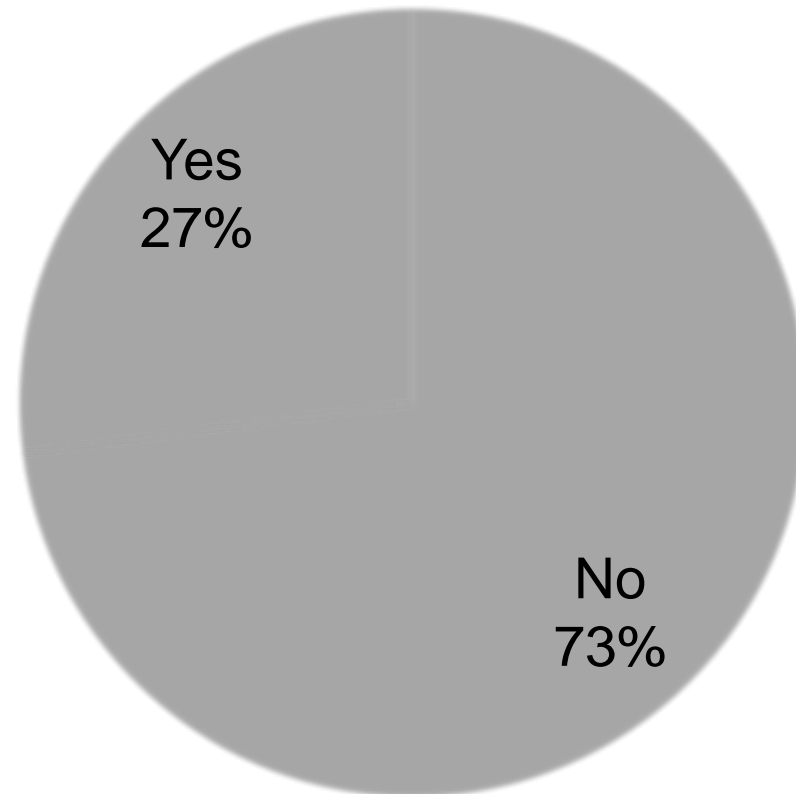


- **Recommend:** Communities of research activity need to know if this policy applies to them.
- To whom does the policy apply:
  - Staff (including or excluding visiting staff?)
  - PhD students?
  - all postgraduates
  - Undergraduates

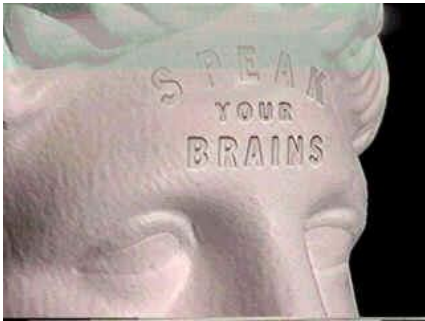




# Policy contains a statement on institutional ownership of research data



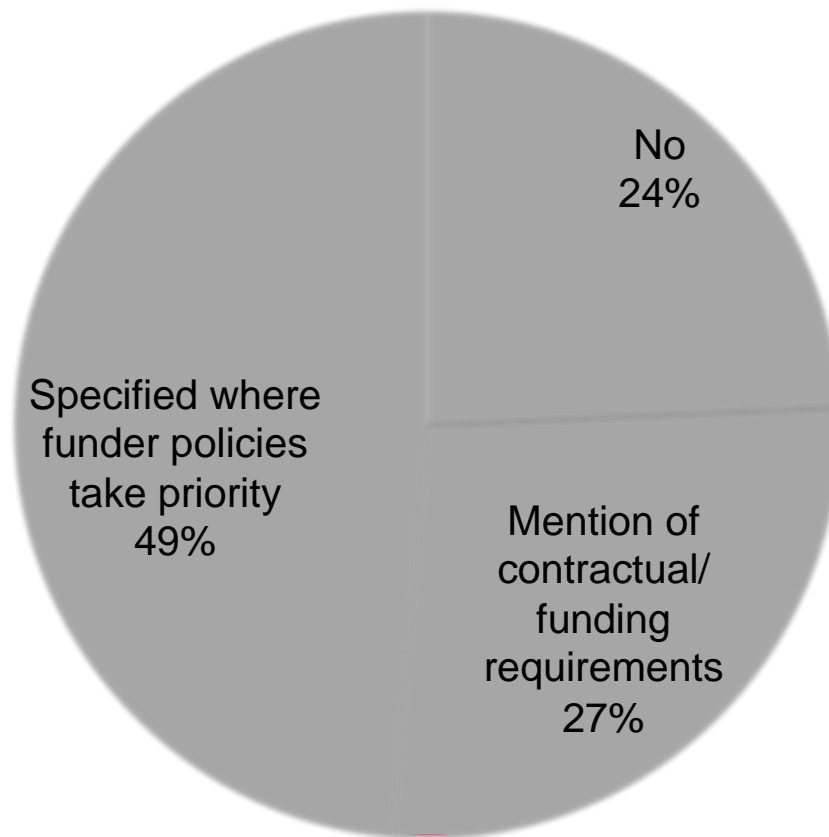
# Ownership



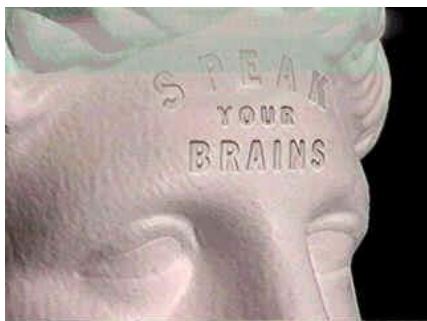
- **Recommend:** Ownership of intellectual property is usually covered by employment and funding contracts. Therefore, this point is more one of awareness, but it can provide cover when necessary.



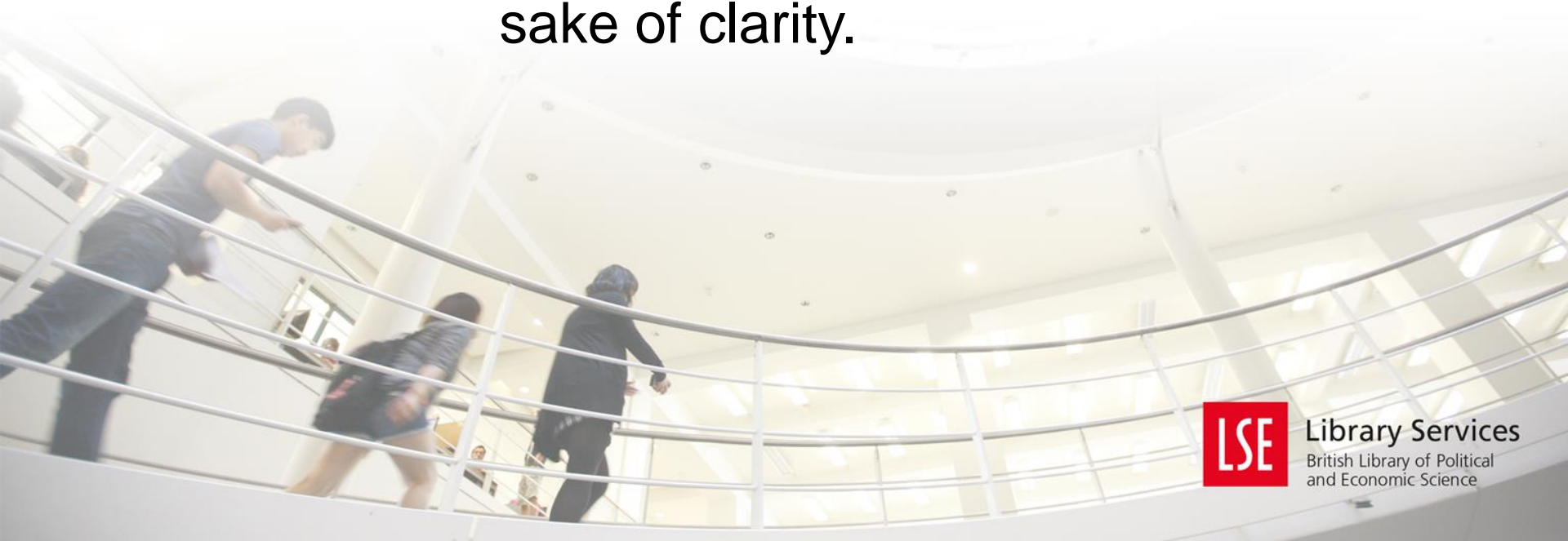
# Policy contains a statement on the primacy of external funding requirements



# External arrangement

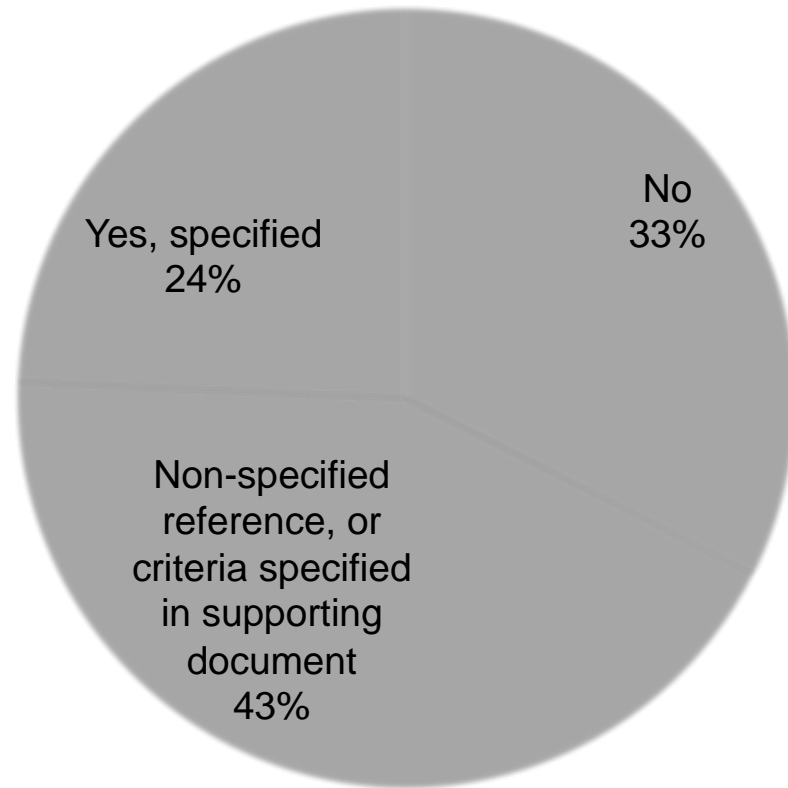


- **Recommend:** Agreements between researchers, institutions, and funders cover this area. However, it is useful to contain a policy statement on the primacy of these agreements for the sake of clarity.





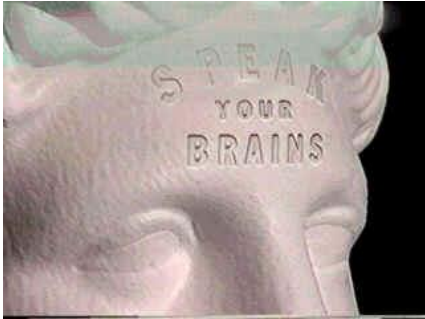
# Policy specifies criteria on what data and documentation is required to be retained



# UK HEI Policy specifies criteria on what data and documentation is required to be retained

	Russell Group	Not Russell Group	Total
No (Row %)	4 (44%)	5 (56%)	9 (29%)
Non-specified reference, or criteria specified in supporting document (Row %)	4 (29%)	10 (71%)	14 (45%)
Yes, specified (Row %)	5 (63%)	3 (38%)	8 (26%)
TOTAL (Column %)	13 (42%)	18 (58%)	31 (100%)

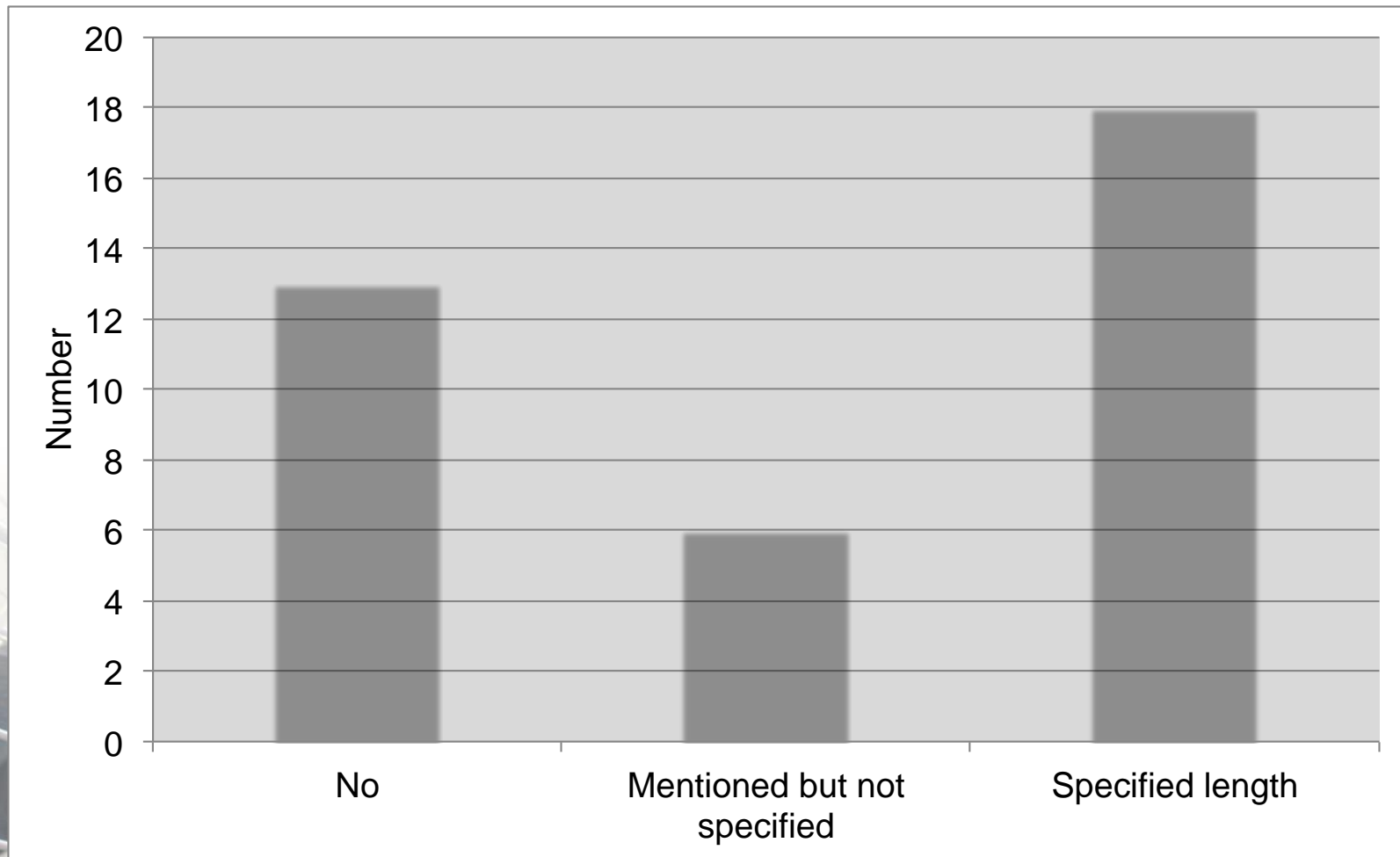
# Retention criteria



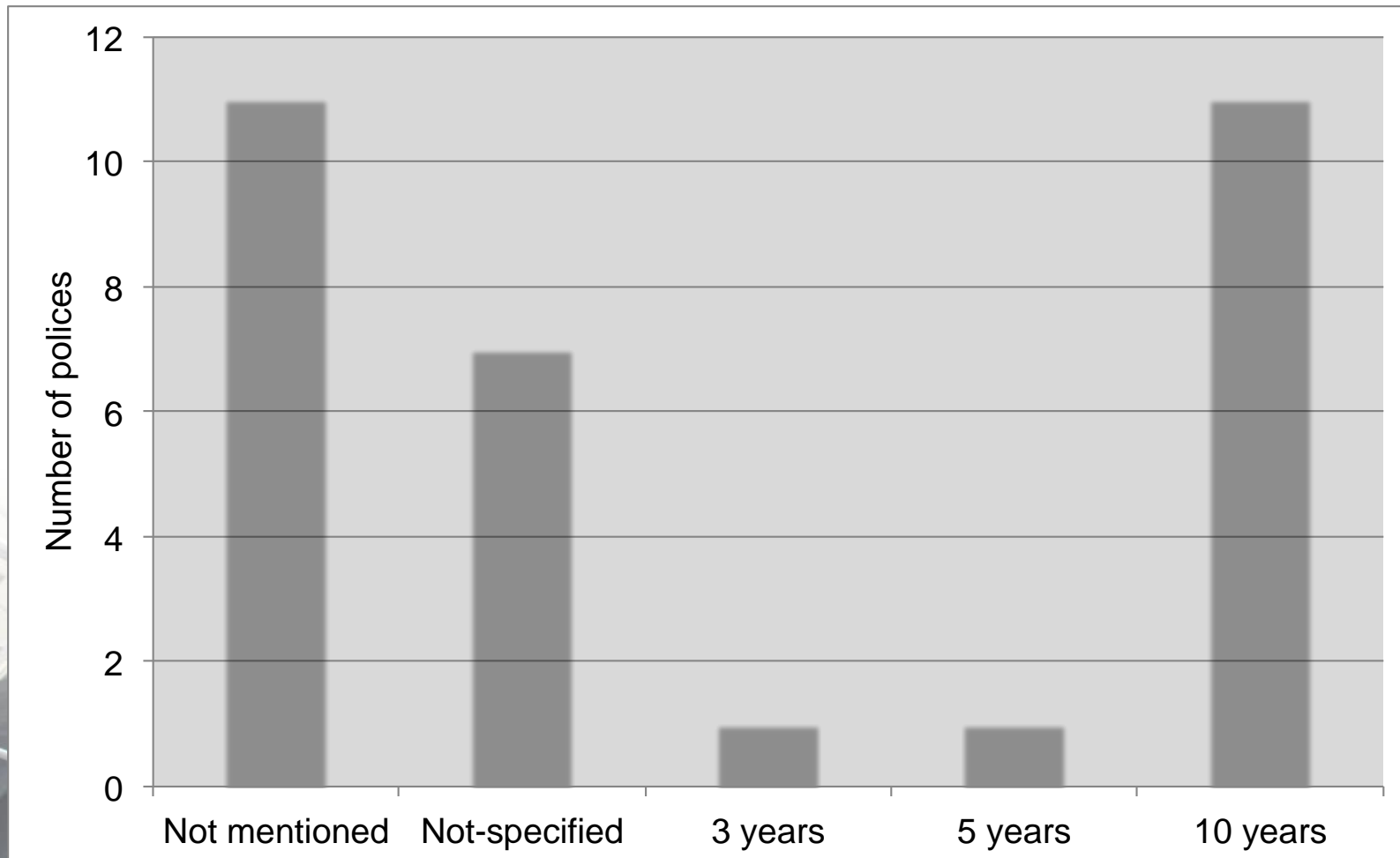
- **Recommendation:** The question of what to keep can be better addressed by a support service in conjunction with the researchers and archives/repositories.



# Policy contains a statement on length of time data should be kept

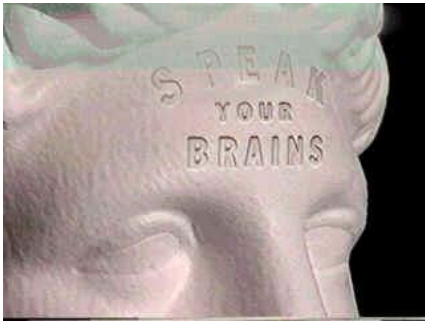


# UK HEI Policy contains a statement on length of time data should be kept





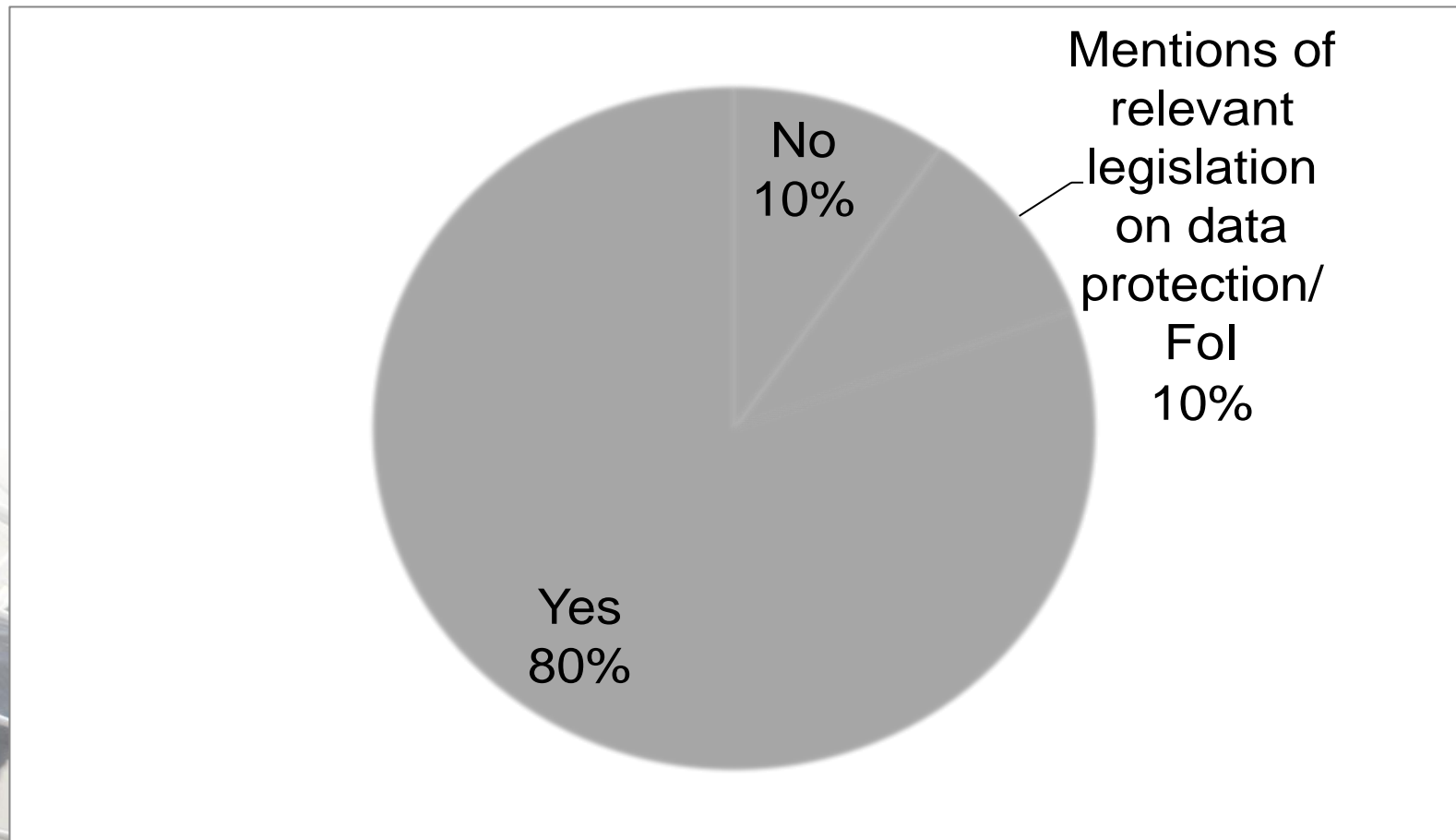
# Length of retention



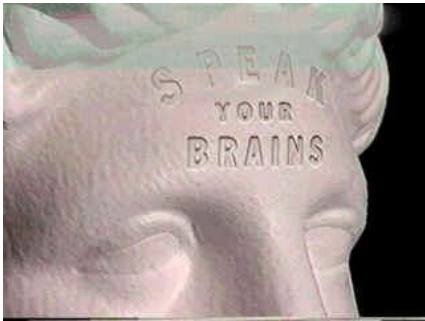
- **Recommendation:** Funder policies will vary, may change, and will take precedence. It is arguably better to define retention as “long-term” with specific details addressed by the institutional repository using guidance from funder policies and disciplinary norms.



Policy contains a statement on the ethical use/reuse of data, particularly how it affects potential reuse



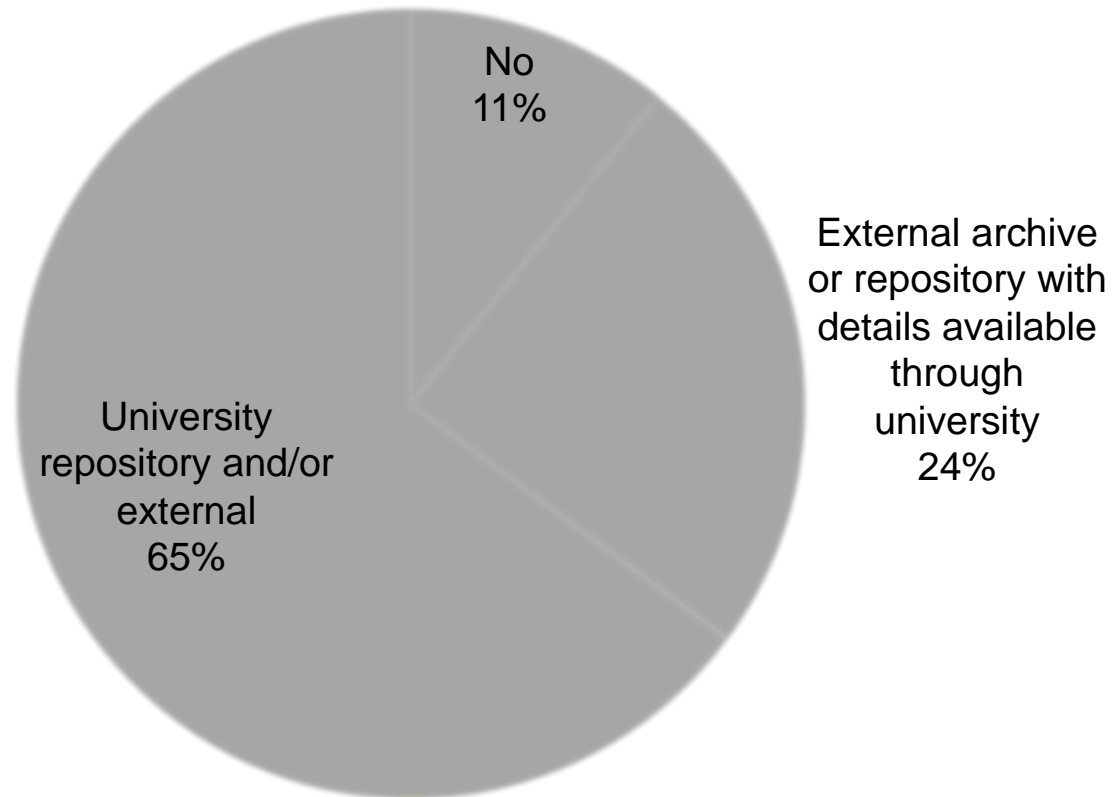
# Ethics



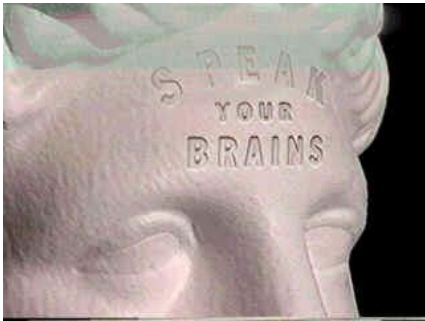
- **Recommendation:** Include a statement about requiring data be “shared to the fullest extent possible”. The policy should recognise commercial, contractual, legal, and ethical restrictions that prevent open data being possible, but still allow for data sharing.



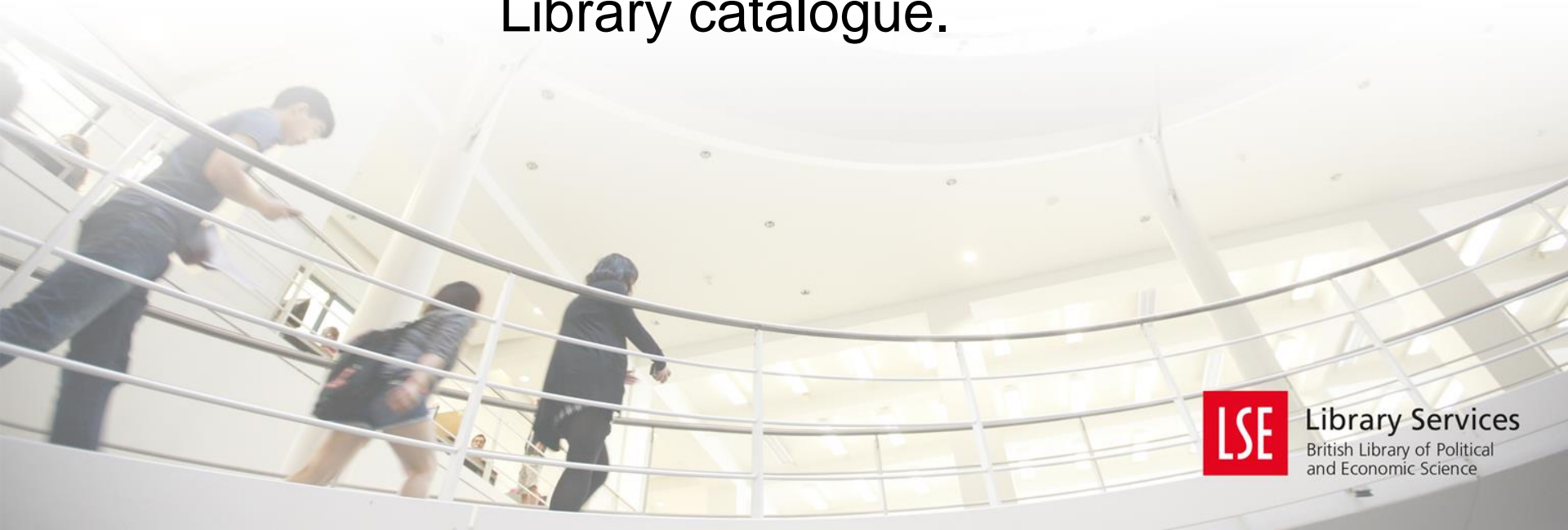
# Policy contains a statement on how data will be accessed



# Access

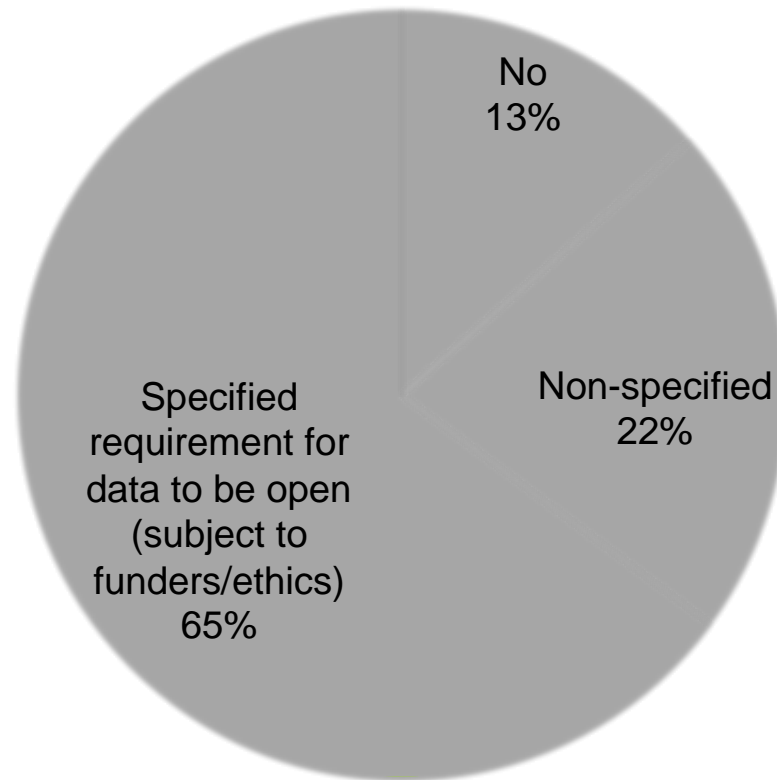


- **Recommendation:** that the policy include a requirement for all generated research data – even if deposited elsewhere - to have a catalogue reference in publications repository, or Library catalogue.

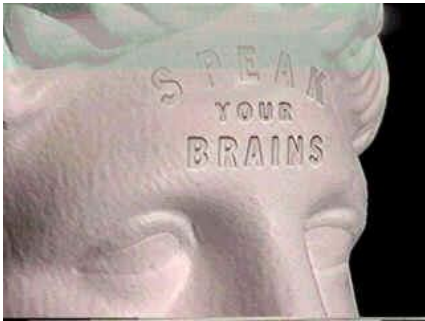




# Policy contains a statement on data availability



Open

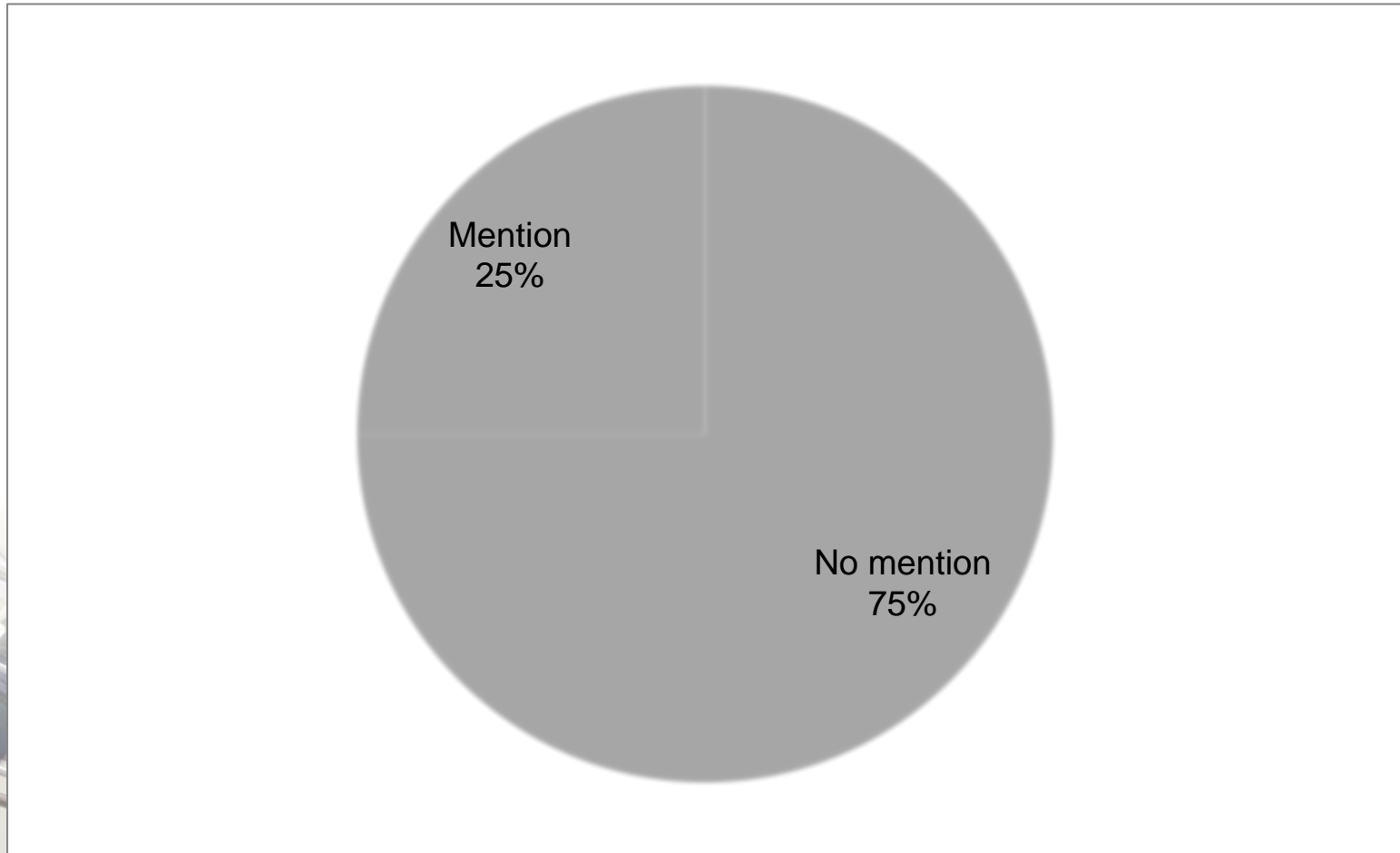


- **Recommendation:** Better to not mention specific types of licences for data.

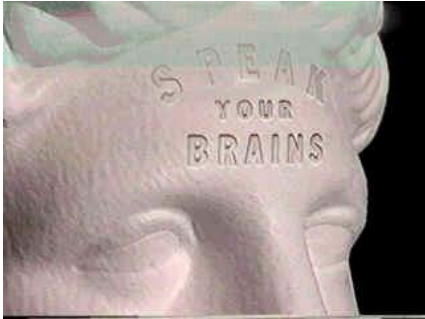


Library Services  
British Library of Political  
and Economic Science

# Policy contains a statement on costing of RDM



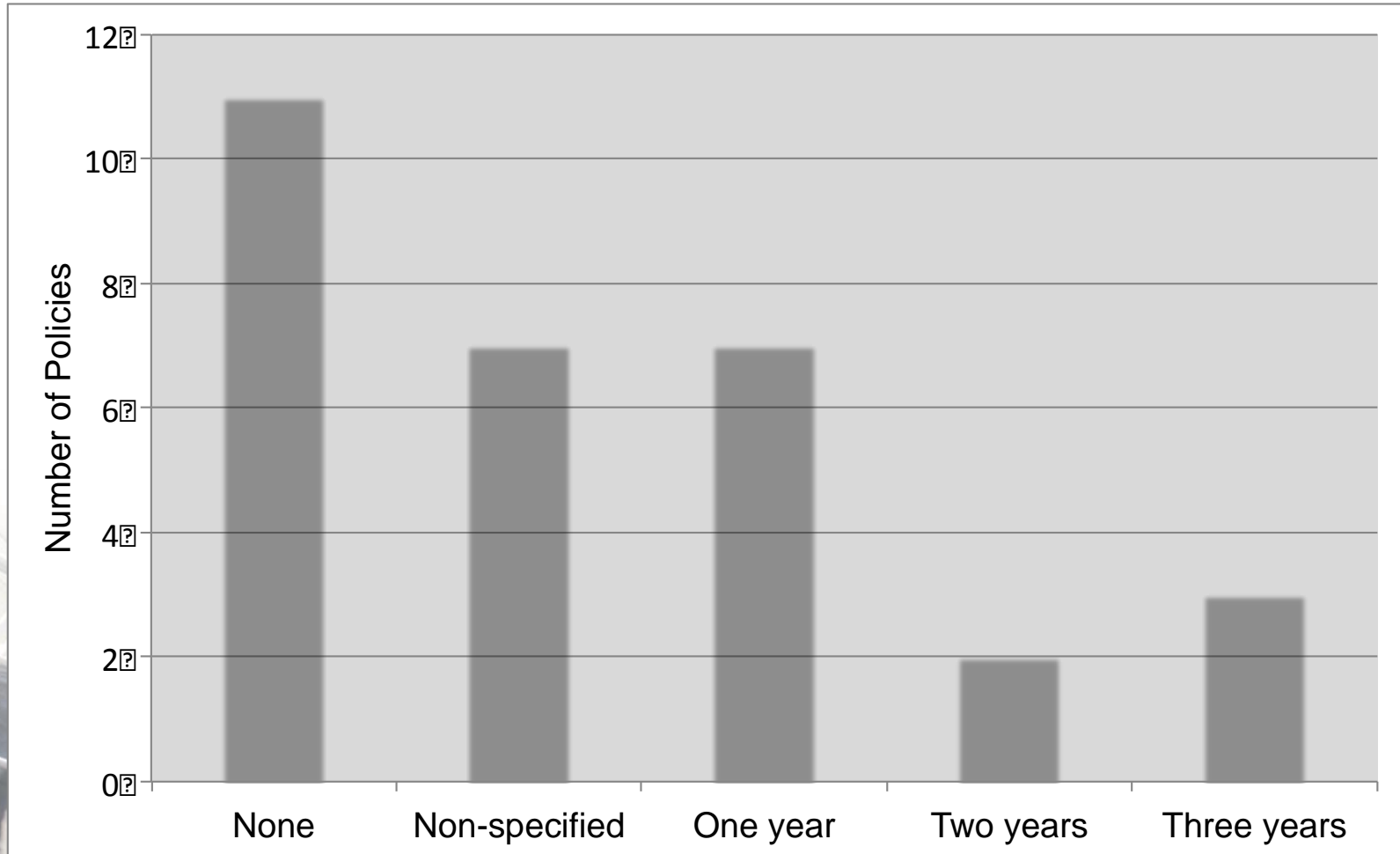
# Costs



- **Recommendation:** given the difficulty in identifying costs and variation in how different researchers see this as their responsibility, it would be better not to mention costing. Supporting advice can be given either through the RDM service or Research Office.



# UK HEI period policies state they are subject to review

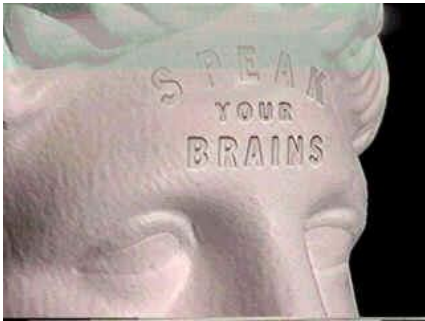




# UK HEI Policy states it is subject to periodic review by year of adoption

	No year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	TOTAL
None (Row %)	1 (9%)			2 (18%)	4 (36%)	3 (27%)	1 (9%)	11
Non-specified (Row %)				1 (14%)	3 (43%)	2 (29%)	1 (14%)	7
One year (Row %)		1 (13%)		1 (13%)	1 (13%)	4 (50%)	1 (13%)	8
Two years (Row %)					1 (50%)	1 (50%)		2
Three years (Row %)				1 (33%)		1 (33%)	1 (33%)	3
TOTAL	1	1		5	9	11	4	31

# Review



- **Recommendation:** It is recommended the policy states it is subject to review at regular defined periods and by whom it is reviewed.



# Summary

**Table 2 Overview and analysis table courtesy of Laurence Horton. Downloaded by clicking on the image below.**

	Date	Definitions	Support	DMP	Scope	Ownership	External	Criteria	Retain	Ethics	Access	Open	Costs	Review
	Date the policy was adopted	Offers definitions of key RDM terms, i.e. "data", "documentation"	Broadly defines the role institution plays in supporting RDM and outlines RDM responsibility of researchers	Specifies a requirement to complete a DMP (either institutional or funder)	Policy specifies who it covers	Contains a statement on institutional ownership of research data	Contains a statement on the primacy of external funding requirements	Specifies criteria on what data and documentation required to be retained	Contains a statement on length of time data should be kept	Contains a statement on the ethical use/reuse of data, particularly how it affects potential reuse.	Contains a statement on how data will be accessed	Contains a statement on data availability	Contains a statement on the costs of RDM	States it is subject to periodic review
<b>HE Institution in chronological order</b>														
<a href="#">University of Birmingham</a>	2009 October	○	●	○	●	●	○	○	●	●	○	●	○	●
<a href="#">University of Edinburgh</a>	2011 May	○	●	○	●	○	○	○	○	●	○	●	○	○
<a href="#">University of Northampton</a>	2011 June	○	●	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	●	○	○
<a href="#">University of Hertfordshire</a>	2011 September	●	●	○	●	●	○	○	○	●	○	●	○	○
<a href="#">University of Warwick</a>	2011 November	○	●	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
<a href="#">Glasgow University</a>	2011 December	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
<a href="#">University of Southampton</a>	2012 February	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
<a href="#">University of East London</a>	2012 March	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
<a href="#">Brunel University</a>	2012 March	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
<a href="#">University of Essex</a>	2012 April	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
<a href="#">Queen Mary, University of London</a>	2012 June	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
<a href="#">University of Sheffield</a>	2012 July	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
<a href="#">University of Leeds</a>	2012 July	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
<a href="#">University of Oxford</a>	2012 July	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
<a href="#">University of the Arts London</a>	2012 October	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
<a href="#">Goldsmiths University</a>	2013 January	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
<a href="#">The University of Lancaster</a>	2013 February	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
<a href="#">University for the Creative Arts</a>	2013 February	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
<a href="#">Oxford Brookes University</a>	2013 February	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
<a href="#">University of Durham</a>	2013 March	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
<a href="#">Edge Hill University</a>	2013 May	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
<a href="#">University of Exeter*</a>	2013 June	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
<a href="#">University of Nottingham</a>	2013	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
<a href="#">University of Manchester</a>	2013	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
<a href="#">Birkbeck College London</a>	2013 June	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
<a href="#">University of Lincoln</a>	2013 June	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
<a href="#">University of Liverpool</a>	2014 January	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
<a href="#">University of Bath</a>	2014 April	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
<a href="#">London School of Hygiene &amp; Tropical Medicine</a>	2014 June	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
<a href="#">University College London</a>	2014 August	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
<a href="#">University of Dundee</a>	?	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
<b>Key</b>														
○	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None
●	Partially defined terms or reference to supporting documentation	Institutional support mentioned	Funder required or optional	Staff		Mention of contractual/funding requirements	Non-specified reference, or criteria specified in supporting document	Mentioned but not specified	Mentions of relevant legislation on data protection/FOI	External archive or repository with details available through university	Non-specified expectation		Review mentioned	
○	Full definitions	Institutional support mentioned and specified	Institutional requirement	Staff and postgraduate students	Yes	Specifies where funder policies take priority	Yes, specified	Specified length	Yes	University repository and/or external	Specified requirement for data to be open (subject to funders/ethics)	Mention	Specified period and responsibility	
* Exeter has similar but separate policies for PGs														
I looked at UK HEI adopted data policies roughly in order of adoption. All are available online, except for Northampton whose website is undergoing a revamp (an offline copy was provided by the university librarian). To guide comparison I utilised and adapted suggested Research Data Management Policy from DCC (2014) and Erway (2013) Digital Curation Centre. 2014. Five Steps to Developing a Research Data Management Policy [PDF]. Edinburgh: Digital Curation Centre. <a href="http://www.dcc.ac.uk/sites/default/files/documents/publications/DCC-FiveStepsToDevelopingAnRDMpolicy.pdf">http://www.dcc.ac.uk/sites/default/files/documents/publications/DCC-FiveStepsToDevelopingAnRDMpolicy.pdf</a>														
Erway, Ricky. 2013. Starting the Conversation: University-wide Research Data Management Policy. Dublin, Ohio: DCLC Research. <a href="http://www.oclc.org/content/dam/research/publications/library/2013/2013-08.pdf">http://www.oclc.org/content/dam/research/publications/library/2013/2013-08.pdf</a>														
Please cite as Horton, L and DCC (2014) 'Overview of UK Institution RDM Policies', Digital Curation Centre. Available at: <a href="http://www.dcc.ac.uk/resources/policy-and-legal/institutional-data-policies">http://www.dcc.ac.uk/resources/policy-and-legal/institutional-data-policies</a>														

Please cite as Horton, L and DCC (2014) 'Overview of UK Institution RDM Policies', Digital Curation Centre. Available at: <http://www.dcc.ac.uk/resources/policy-and-legal/institutional-data-policies>

# Data availability

<http://dx.doi.org/10.5255/UKDA-SN-851566>

## UK Higher Education Institution Research Data Management Policies, 2009-2014

---

**Horton, Laurence** 2015. UK Higher Education Institution Research Data Management Policies, 2009-2014. [Data Collection]. Colchester, Essex: UK Data Archive. [10.5255/UKDA-SN-851566](http://dx.doi.org/10.5255/UKDA-SN-851566)

---

This dataset compares existing research data policies at UK higher education institutions. It consists of 31 cases. Policies were compared on a range of variables. Variables included policy length in words, whether the policy offers definitions, defines institutional support, requires data management plans, states scope of staff and student coverage, specifies ownership of research outputs, details where external funder rights take precedent, guides on what data and documentation is required to be retained, how long it needs to be retained, reinforces where research ethics prevent open data, finalises where data can be accessed, speaks about open data requirements, includes a statement on funding the costs of Research Data Management, and specifies a review period for the policy. Hyperlinks to policies are also included. Institutions and policies are coded in line with ISO 3166-1/2 to enable regional comparison and allow for future international comparisons to take place. Data also includes the institution's year of foundation and a categorical variable grouping institutions by year of foundation allowing comparison across cohort groups of universities. A further two variables allow for identification of research based universities.

<b>Creators:</b>	<b>Creator Name</b>	<b>Email</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>ORCID</b>
	Horton, Laurence	<a href="mailto:l.horton@lse.ac.uk">l.horton@lse.ac.uk</a>	London School of Economics and Political Science	<a href="http://orcid.org/0000-0003-2742-6434">http://orcid.org/0000-0003-2742-6434</a>
<b>Research funders:</b>	Economic and Social Research Council			
<b>Subjects:</b>	Education Reference and instructional resources			
<b>Keywords:</b>	Higher Education, Research Data Management, policy			





# Contact

Laurence Horton

E: [L.Horton@lse.ac.uk](mailto:L.Horton@lse.ac.uk)

Tw: [@laurencedata](https://twitter.com/laurencedata)

Orcid: [orcid.org/0000-0003-2742-6434](https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2742-6434)



Library Services  
British Library of Political  
and Economic Science