



# Engaging Researchers with Data Management The Cookbook

CONNIE CLARE, MARIA CRUZ, ELLI PAPADOPOULOU, JAMES SAVAGE,  
MARTA TEPEREK, YAN WANG, IZA WITKOWSKA, AND JOANNE YEOMANS



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# 3.4. Open Courses at UiT The Arctic University of Norway

Author: Yan Wang

Contributor: Helene N. Andreassen

*Lessons learned while engaging researchers through a series of open, online RDM training courses at UiT The Arctic University of Norway.*

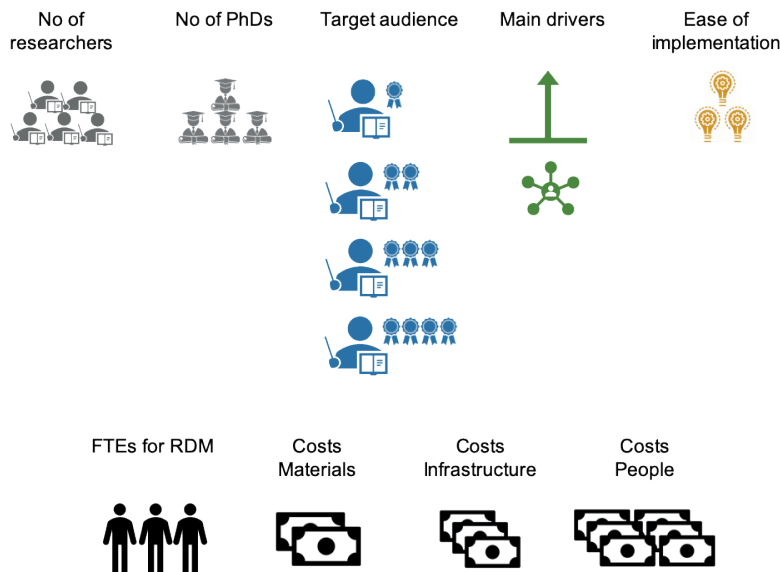


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## Opening the Door to RDM Training

In 2016, the library of UiT The Arctic University of Norway launched a brand new archive for open research data: UiT Open Research Data. To train researchers and graduate students how to use it, the library developed introductory courses, with time for questions and discussions. After one semester, they realised that they also needed to include more narrowly defined courses in the programme, and this opened the door to introducing various Research Data Management (RDM) topics. 'If you open one door, there will be people knocking on other doors too. For instance, when we talk about open data, there is always someone in the audience wanting to talk about sensitive data,' reflects Helene N. Andreassen, Head of Library Teaching and Learning Support.

The UiT Library has gradually developed a series of short open courses:<sup>5</sup> currently it consists of one introductory course focusing on the 'whys' and 'hows' of RDM, and seven thematic courses focusing on topics such as how to write a Data Management Plan (DMP) and how to share research data. The courses are announced on the university web portal, and all researchers, students, and administrative staff at UiT can freely attend any of the courses. All courses are delivered both in classrooms and via Skype, with Norwegian and English as the languages of instruction.

## Tips for Embedding Engagement in the Course Delivery

Helene offers the following tips for embedding engagement tactics into the courses:

1. **Provide online video-conferencing to reach people remotely.**

This is especially helpful for multi-campus institutions. UiT has nine campuses across the northern part of Norway, and providing regular classroom training to all UiT staff is challenging. People find it convenient to follow the courses via video-conference (Skype, for example) and bringing together a group in this way helps to bridge the distances. However, to make the best use of video-conference technology as a teacher, it is important to practice how to deliver the course in this new way. In particular, you should become familiar with aspects such as sharing screens, using desktop applications, and being comfortable with talking to people who are only present via a camera.

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5 Open Courses at UiT Library, <http://site.uit.no/rdmtraining/course-info/?lang=en/>

2. **Keep the courses short and focused.** All UiT open courses are limited to 45 minutes and focus on specific topics so as not to overload participants.

3. **Make the course interactive;** using a variety of teaching materials helps. A selection of thematic RDM issues are currently being recorded as separate instruction videos that will be made available online. This will make it possible to adjust the balance of the course: by asking participants to watch selected videos before coming to the course, more time can be devoted to activities and discussions.

4. **Keep the content of the course up-to-date.** The team pays attention to emerging subjects, such as the European General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), or data processing agreements, and regularly incorporates new topics into the course. Helene explains: 'We actively seek out the gaps in the course series, as it should eventually reflect the entire RDM life cycle.'

5. **Use all channels at your disposal to promote the course.** The RDM training at UiT is presented in a central portal, containing all the necessary course information, calendar of dates, and much more. The team use social media channels, mailing lists, personal contacts at the faculties and, of course, rely on the message being spread by word of mouth. Key individuals such as subject librarians (specialised librarians in certain disciplines) are also encouraged to send information to their networks.

6. **Do not just think about engagement: start doing it.** This is especially crucial for large institutions with multiple campuses. The UiT RDM team is based on only one campus, but regularly goes on 'Open Science Tours' to other campuses. The team uses these tours as an opportunity to talk to campus managers and local library staff, provide courses, and generally to make themselves visible to colleagues on different campuses.

Since the introduction of the open courses, there has been an increasing proportion of researchers among the attendees, relative to administrative staff. This could indicate a cultural change across the institution, and an increasing appreciation of RDM principles among researchers.

Helene offers a final tip to those interested in implementing a similar initiative: 'Don't wait too long until you get going. You don't need a full-scale plan, just start with what you have. We have learned a lot simply by meeting people.'