



# LabArchives

## Suggested folder structures for groups

This guide contains some suggested folder structures for groups wanting to use LabArchives to record and share research data.

When you log into LabArchives for the very first time it will automatically generate some folders for you. Don't be put off by the names, while the folders are designed to suit clinical laboratory research, they can also provide ideas about what to add to your notebook no matter what your research topic may be. Also, because LabArchives is so flexible, you can easily rename, move, add and delete folders once you start using the notebook.

Once you have created a notebook and added folders to it you will need to think a little further about how other researchers might interact with your notebook. Below we provide some suggested folder structures that will help you decide how best to provide an environment for groups to work productively within your notebook/s.

### Example A

You are a researcher in charge of a group of individuals and you want to be able to access each researcher's data from a single location.

### Suggested structure A

In this structure you will create a dedicated notebook for your group. You will then invite researchers you are in charge of to this notebook as users, providing them each with their own personal folder within which they can add data as it's collected.

For instructions on how to do this and suggested ideas about how to further structure individual researchers' folders within this notebook see [Suggested folder structures – single group notebook](#).

### Pros and Cons

Providing each researcher with a personal folder in a group notebook can be advantageous for supervision and collaboration as it:

- Can simplify the sharing of pages and files with a common interest to group members, such as: group induction material, safe operating procedures, lists of people to contact for assistance, previous work published by the group etc.
- Simplifies navigation for supervisors reviewing the outputs of their research students.
- Can improve awareness of work being performed by other researchers within the group and increase opportunities for collaboration.

Disadvantages of a group notebook (in exclusion to personal and project notebooks) include:

- The notebooks of groups with lots of researchers may become cluttered.
- If personal folders contain all research outputs, there is a slightly greater chance of research outputs accidentally being shared with people that should not have access to them.



## Example B

You are a researcher in charge of a group of individuals. You are happy for them to store data in their own personal notebook, provided you have at least user access to each researcher's notebook.

### Suggested structure B

In this structure each researcher will create their own personal notebook and you should be added to each notebook as a user or administrator. Notebooks that you are a user or admin of will show up in your **Notebook navigator**.

### Pros and Cons

The main benefit of having a notebook for each researcher is that it:

1. Allows you to access each individual's research data separately.
2. Lowers the chance of notebook contents being shared with people who should not have access.
3. Allows you to take an "out of sight, out of mind" approach to what may be many HDR students/researchers.

There are disadvantages, however, including:

1. Navigation between researcher notebooks is a little less convenient for group leaders and supervisors than opening folders in the same notebook.
2. Separating work into different notebooks means that other researchers in your group will not have access to each other's work, thus reducing the visibility of other researchers and potential future collaboration.
3. More care is required to ensure that notebook ownership is taken by a supervisor or senior research group member when an individual leaves the group.

Note: even though notebooks can't be permanently deleted, retrieving notebooks from an individual who has left your group won't be very convenient. If this situation arose you would have to contact [Research Technology Support](#), who will take steps to retrieve the notebook on your behalf.

## Example C

You are a researcher overseeing a number of continuing research projects. Researchers who come and go from the group contribute to these projects incrementally before handing them on.

### Suggested structure/s C

There are two options for structure to choose between for this situation:

1. You will create a notebook dedicated to the group that will contain individual folders that are named for each project. You will add researchers in your group as users to the notebook and give them access to the relevant project folder/s as required.



2. You will create a separate notebook for each project. You will add researchers in your group to the relevant notebook/s as required. Note that you can add a user to multiple notebooks at once, see this [knowledgebase](#) article for instructions.

There are many ways in which you can organise folders when designing around Projects or Grants. You can set up folders for project goals, a folder for each lab member, or organise by date.

### Pros and Cons for 1

Creating a folder for each project has some advantages, including:

- Allowing researchers working on different aspects of the same project to collaborate more easily within the project specific folder.
- When a project ends, the relevant folder could be copied into a separate archival notebook for safe keeping. Alternatively, finished projects could be dragged and dropped into a “completed projects” folder within the existing group notebook. That way, researchers will still have the ability to access data that may be relevant for future projects.
- Allowing you to track project progress as a whole as you will have all records relating to a project (grant) in one place.

Disadvantages of having projects in separate folders include:

- If one or more of your projects deals with sensitive data, you will need to be careful that you only give the researchers who are cleared to work with that data access to these folders.

### Pros and Cons for 2

Creating a separate notebook for each project has some advantages, including:

- When projects end, the files and folders do not clutter the notebook of the next project.
- Lowering the chance of past researchers gaining access to new project research outputs after they have left the group.
- Lowering the chance of the research outputs of a project accidentally being shared with people who should not have access.

Disadvantage of having projects in separate folders include:

- Separating work into different notebooks can reduce the chance of seeing the work from past research projects, which might otherwise contribute to future projects.
- Slight increase in inconvenience as you will have to navigate between numerous project notebooks.
- You will need to manage users and user access across numerous notebooks.

Different approaches can be combined to good effect. For example, a shared group notebook can be used to share common pages and files while separate notebooks are also made for different research projects. The shared group notebook can be used to communicate and share work within the group and can include pages providing overviews for each project and researcher to improve researcher and project visibility within the group. A separate notebook



for each research project reduces the chance of sensitive research data and outputs accidentally being shared and can be useful for archiving the results at the end of the project without cluttering the group notebook.

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