

# Handout: Data Management Change Control Process

## Purpose

The Change Control Process ensures that all modifications to data systems, structures, or policies are evaluated, approved, documented, and monitored to maintain data integrity, compliance, and quality.

## Key Principles

- **Accountability** – All changes are traceable to a responsible party.
- **Consistency** – Standardized procedures reduce risks of errors.
- **Transparency** – Decisions and actions are documented and accessible.
- **Compliance** – Aligns with regulations (e.g., HIPAA, GDPR, SOX).

## Types of Data-Related Changes

- **Structural** – Database schema, field definitions, metadata.
- **Process/Policy** – Data handling procedures, retention schedules.
- **System/Technology** – Upgrades to platforms, software, or ETL tools.
- **Access & Security** – User permissions, encryption methods.

## Steps in the Change Control Process

1. Request – Submit a formal request describing the proposed change.
2. Impact Assessment – Analyze effects on data quality, compliance, operations, and stakeholders.
3. Approval – Review by Data Governance Board, Data Owners, or designated authority.
4. Implementation – Apply change following agreed standards and timelines.
5. Testing & Validation – Confirm the change works as intended without negative impacts.
6. Documentation – Record rationale, actions, and results in the Change Log.
7. Review & Audit – Periodic review to ensure sustained effectiveness.

## Roles & Responsibilities

- **Data Owners** – Approve/reject changes, ensure alignment with business needs.
- **Data Stewards** – Conduct impact assessments, enforce quality checks.
- **IT Administrators** – Implement and test changes in technical environments.
- **Change Advisory Board (if applicable)** – Cross-functional group that reviews major changes.

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## Example RACI Model for Change Control

Task	Data Owner	Data Steward	IT Admin	Governance Board
Submit request	C	R	R	I
Assess impact	A	R	C	I
Approve change	A	C	I	R
Implement & test	I	C	R	I
Document & report	A	R	C	I

**Legend:** R = Responsible, A = Accountable, C = Consulted and I = Informed

## Best Practices

- Use a centralized change request system (e.g., ticketing tool).
- Maintain a Change Log with dates, approvals, and outcomes.
- Require dual sign-off for high-risk or compliance-sensitive changes.
- Conduct post-implementation reviews to capture lessons learned.