

# UKDS SecureLab: access to non-ONS data

UKDS SecureLab application guide for non-ONS data



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## Introduction to UKDS SecureLab

SecureLab is the UK Data Service's flagship secure environment providing researcher's access to the most sensitive and confidential data in the collection since 2011.

Data accessed in this way cannot be downloaded. Once researchers and their projects are approved, they can analyse the data remotely from their organisational desktop, or by using our Safe Room. We provide access to statistical and office software to make remote analysis and collaboration secure and convenient. We invite data owners and researchers to join the UK Data Service community to enable responsible use of detailed data for high-quality research.

This guide provides details on the application process to access non-ONS data. Guides to access ONS and SERL data are also available.

## Requirements for access

### Researcher requirements

Controlled data are only available in the SecureLab to researchers who are able to fulfil the following requirements:

- The purpose of the use of the data for your project must provide a public benefit/serve the public good.
- You must have an undergraduate degree (or higher) including a significant proportion of maths or statistics, or be able to demonstrate at least 3 years quantitative research experience.
- Postgraduate students must apply jointly with their supervisor(s).
- You must check any specific access restrictions for each study in our data catalogue that you wish to use, found in the Access tab.
- You must only access data from within the UK.

### System requirements

You will access the data either remotely from an approved institution through the UK Data Service Secure Remote Access, using the [SafePod Network](#), or at the Safe Room at University of Essex (depending upon the data you are applying for).

Most researchers access SecureLab from their institutions using an approved connection from their office. This must be a device either managed by their institution or a designated third party on behalf of their institution. The use of personal devices for SecureLab access is strictly

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prohibited. The device used for SecureLab must be connected to the internet either via a wired Ethernet connection or WPA2/3 encrypted wireless connection managed by the host organisation (see Technical checks).

## About the application process

The application process has a number of components and can seem complicated but is essentially made up of the following four areas that must be completed before access can be granted. These may be completed concurrently as the process can take some time and we will advise you of any outstanding actions and be on hand to answer any queries you may have. Please read the guidance and complete all forms precisely as this will prevent delays to the application.

### Project application

The application must be approved by Data Owners

### User agreement

To be completed by each researcher on a project

### SRT training

Each researcher must complete Safe Researcher Training or equivalent

### Technical checks

Carried out on each researcher's office device

## Project application

### Submitting an application

- Login/Register with the UK Data Service.
- Add the required Secure Access dataset(s) to your account, then follow the prompts to add the dataset(s) to a registered project, or create a new project.
- Within the project, click Request Access to display the steps to be completed
- Click Complete actions, instructions and links to any forms that must be submitted will be displayed under each step.
- The Project Lead must download and complete the project application form and the ESRC Research Proposal.
- Each team member (including the Project Lead) must download and complete the Secure Access User Agreement and the ESRC Accredited Researcher application form. If we already have a completed User Agreement on record for you, this step will already be marked as complete.
- Each team member must complete the online SecureLab Account Set Up form under the SecureLab Access step.
- Please email your completed documents with your project ID in the subject line to: [secure.applications@ukdataservice.ac.uk](mailto:secure.applications@ukdataservice.ac.uk)

### Adding team members to projects

Each team member must be registered with the UK Data Service. The Project Lead can then add each team member to the project. To do this the Project Lead should:

1. Log into their UK Data Service account.
2. Expand the Data section and then click on Projects.
3. Click the relevant project title, where a number of tabs will be visible, e.g. Projects, Datasets, Members.
4. Click Members, then New member.
5. Enter the UK Data Service registered email address for the team member you want to add.
6. Click Add member and their details will be shown in the Project team invitations section of the screen. An invitation will automatically be sent.
7. Each team member will receive an invitation email to ask whether they wish to be added to the project.

8. Once a team member accepts the invitation to join the project, the Project Lead should check their details are correctly displayed in Project team members.

Each project member will be able to see the project and associated datasets within their own account and should complete any actions required. The Project Lead should collect the Secure Access User Agreements and ESRC Accredited Researcher forms from all team members and email them with the project application form to: [secure.applications@ukdataservice.ac.uk](mailto:secure.applications@ukdataservice.ac.uk). Additional researchers can be added to teams at a later stage with data owner approval.

## User agreement

### Completing the Secure Access User Agreement

Before access is given to the SecureLab, each team member and a suitable delegated authority in their institution must sign our Secure Access User Agreement. The form can be downloaded under the step Complete Secure Access User Agreement.

### What is the Secure Access User Agreement?

The user agreement is a legally binding contract between you, your organisation and the University of Essex, which is the legal entity for the UK Data Service. The user agreement was written by the University of Essex's legal team, so we are not a signatory party to the agreement and we are unable to accept edited versions of the agreement. The agreement outlines the terms and conditions of use of SecureLab and includes:

- Agreement that you will complete our training.
- Information about your security responsibilities, e.g. not sharing your password, nor disclosing or compromising any personal information.
- Information about penalties and breaches, set out in our Licence Compliance Policy
- Our outputs release policy.
- Our citation and copyright requirements.

The agreement is a per person, per organisation agreement. You therefore only need to complete it once whilst you are at your current institution – if you were to move organisation and still require access to SecureLab, then you would need to complete and submit a new agreement.

### Whom should I ask to countersign the agreement at my organisation?

Your agreement must be countersigned by someone who can accept legal responsibility for your data access on behalf of the entire organisation. You should therefore approach your organisation's Research and Contracts Office or equivalent, to arrange for an appropriate person to countersign your agreement. Line managers, PhD supervisors, Heads of Department/School are not acceptable signatories. The exception to this is researchers from the University of Essex, who should ask their Head of Department to countersign their agreement, as the University's legal team cannot countersign their own agreement.

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## Training

### Completing Safe Researcher Training

All team members must complete the Safe Researcher Training (SRT) course which covers:

- Data security and personal responsibility, including legal background, security model, breaches and penalties.
- Statistical Disclosure Control - how to make statistical outputs safe and what principles are used.
- Using the UKDS SecureLab - how to use the interface and how to prepare and request data imports and suitable statistical outputs.

If you have not attended SRT you will be invited to book on one of our courses. We run these online approximately every three weeks.

If you have trained with another SRT provider within the past three years, then we will verify your attendance and you will be asked to complete a short Moodle course that covers the use of our SecureLab.

The SRT course we deliver is valid for Accredited Researcher (AR) applications made via ONS, if you're applying for AR status and are attending training with us, then you can confirm your training date to ONS and they will verify your attendance and successful pass with us before issuing you with AR status. AR status is valid for a period of five years.

If you completed SURE researcher training with the UK Data Service before 1 January 2019 you will need to complete the SRT course as this is the most up-to-date and relevant SRT course to protect data privacy and required to access SecureLab.

If you have not logged into SecureLab for more than three years, you must complete a short online MoodleX refresher course before accessing SecureLab.

## Technical checks

### Completing the SecureLab Account Set Up form

In order to access SecureLab, you must connect from a device located at your organisation/institution.

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Each team member must complete the SecureLab Account Set Up form under the SecureLab Access step. When completing the form, you will be asked to submit the following evidence from the office device:

- Screenshot of accessing the web page [What Is My IP?](#)
- Screenshot of output of running the command **ipconfig /all** in Command Prompt (Windows) or **ifconfig -a** in Terminal (Mac).

Please speak to your IT department if you are unsure if your device will meet our requirements. Current SecureLab users must complete the form and confirm if the office device has changed when applying for access to a new project.

## Technical requirements for SecureLab access

The office device from which you will access SecureLab must:

- Be owned and managed by the institution from which the SecureLab will be accessed.
- Have a direct connection to the internet via a wired Ethernet connection or WPA2/3 encrypted wireless connection managed by the host organisation.
- Have no other network interfaces connected except for the one being used to access the SecureLab, this includes using VPNs.
- Is not running any services which allow third parties to connect to the workstation e.g. a web server or email server.

Researchers must ensure that the following security measures can be observed:

- You must only access SecureLab from your designated office, not from any other location on or off campus.

- You must observe good security measures e.g. locking your screens when leaving unattended, not allowing your screens to be visible to people other than SecureLab users working on the same SecureLab project.
- Your SecureLab credentials must not be saved in the web browser.

## What happens next

Following receipt of your application and evidence, our Data Access team will process your application as soon as possible.

Our team screen your application for completeness, including what you intend to do with the data; your proposed use of the data is justified and that your project will deliver clear public benefit.

Once it passes the initial screening, then it progresses to further checks, including feasibility assessment, ethics and methodology checks, if needed.

The data owners then receive your completed and checked application from us to decide whether to permit research access.

Applications are usually approved but there are occasions where a data owner may have queries, or they may decline the application. In this instance, we will return it to you with feedback to address the queries and then resubmit your application. This is likely to cause additional delays.

Whilst the application is with the data owners for consideration, our Technical Support team will undertake checks on your device and begin setting up your project (and account, if you're not already a SecureLab researcher).

We will confirm the data owners decision to you by email. If you have completed all the elements of the application, including attending Safe Researcher training and passed the Technical checks, before we confirm the decision, then you are likely to get access immediately.

## Turnaround times

We will start screening your application as soon as possible and keep you informed of the progress of your application. The application process starts from when you submit all your application documents to us, rather than when you add the dataset(s) to your project.

Turnaround times can vary as the UK Data Service must apply on your behalf to each data provider and there are additional legislative steps in the process to access controlled data, depending who the data provider is and the access pathway. If the application is well prepared

and approval is granted by the data owners with no changes required, you can expect to gain access to the data in approximately three months, some applications may take longer.

If you require an update on a current application, please email our [Helpdesk team](#). Please include your name, institution and the Project ID.

## Temporary home working access

### Completing the home working agreement

In order to access SecureLab projects from home, you must connect to your whitelisted office device using an organisationally/institutionally approved method of remote access from within the UK. If you do not have remote access direct to your office device, please speak to your IT support team for assistance. If you require further information please contact our [Technical Support team](#).



Each researcher wishing to access from home must complete a [Secure Access additional agreement: COVID-19 temporary home working \(Non-ONS data\)](#) online and agree to the conditions of access listed in the form. Once you have agreed to the conditions you will be able to access remotely, you do not need to wait for confirmation to access.

## Conditions for home access

**Home Working Conditions** - Important information regarding home access:

- Only submit the online agreement when you can agree to all of the conditions below.
- If you have more than one project that you will access from home, please complete the agreement for each relevant project.
- Accessing SecureLab from home without completing and submitting the agreement will amount to a breach of the licence agreement.
- Access is still restricted to the UK - accessing SecureLab from outside of the UK is not permitted and will constitute a breach of the licence agreement, unless very exceptional permission has been granted by the data owner.
- Do not use the agreement for ONS data, as this requires a different agreement. If your project contains both ONS and non-ONS data, and you intend to access the ONS data from home, you must [apply for ONS home working access](#) and be approved to access the ONS data from home before you complete the non-ONS agreement.

- You will be screened out of the agreement if you have not completed the application for ONS data access: if this happens, please complete the ONS application, then clear your browser cache to reattempt completion of the non-ONS agreement.

### Conditions for Remote Access

- I will access the UK Data Service SecureLab from home under the following conditions, and only where data owners have agreed, and are listed at [COVID-19: permitted ONS datasets and changes to SecureLab](#). I understand that where projects are using data from multiple data owners, all owners and the datasets I wish to use must be listed.
- I will use an organisationally/institutionally approved method of remotely accessing my organisational/institutional office computer, and will only access SecureLab through this.
- I understand that access to the SecureLab from home using data where data owners are not listed or, where I cannot meet their additional requirements listed, (see [COVID-19: Permitted ONS datasets and changes to Securelab](#)) will constitute a breach of the existing Agreement previously agreed. I understand that any breaches may incur the penalties listed under this existing agreement. I understand that if my project uses data from multiple data owners, all owners and data must have agreed to home access and are listed accordingly.
- I confirm that the current Operating Systems of both my organisational/institutional office computer and local home computer have all recommended security updates applied. Please keep proof of these using a screen capture of the computer updates.
- I confirm that the current Operating Systems of both my organisational/institutional office computer **and** local home computer have antivirus software installed and updated. Please keep proof of these using a screen capture of the antivirus computer status.
- While I am remotely connected to my organisational/institutional workstation, I will not access anything else on the internet and will close down all other windows and applications.
- I can confirm that I have completed an information security awareness training course (e.g. an online institutional course/module such as Information Security Essentials through Moodle or Blackboard), **within the past 12 months**. These are usually required to be taken and passed once a year by your institution. Please keep a record.
- Please note that any SURE or Safe Researcher training that you have undertaken previously for SecureLab access is not considered to be information security awareness training, for the purposes of this agreement. Please consult your IT team on suitable courses, if you are unsure.
- Please enter the name of the Information Security awareness training course and the date that you completed your Information Security awareness training.

- I will ensure that my monitor is not overlooked by other people in my household when I access SecureLab from home.
- I declare that my institution/organisation has approved me to access SecureLab from home under the same terms of the original Secure Access User Agreement.
- I understand that this is a **temporary service** offered by the UK Data Service and agree that I will stop accessing the SecureLab from home immediately upon cessation of this COVID-19 related service.

Please see the [UK Data Service Privacy Policy](#) for details of how we store and use your personal data.

[www.ukdataservice.ac.uk](http://www.ukdataservice.ac.uk)

[help@ukdataservice.ac.uk](mailto:help@ukdataservice.ac.uk)

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