

UKDS SecureLab: access to non-ONS data for researchers outside of the UK via Safe Room Remote Desktop Access

UKDS SecureLab application guide for non-ONS data for researchers outside of the UK via Safe Room Remote Desktop Access



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Introduction to UKDS SecureLab

Since 2011, UKDS SecureLab (formerly Secure Data Service, SDS) is the UK Data Service's flagship secure environment providing researcher's access to the most sensitive and confidential data in the collection.

Data accessed in this way cannot be downloaded. Once researchers and their projects are approved, they can analyse the data remotely using Safe Room Remote Desktop Access via our Partner's Research Data Centres (RDCs). 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 for researchers outside of the UK via Safe Room Remote Desktop Access.

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 the specified access points in the Safe Rooms at our Partners' Research Data Centres.

System requirements

Connection to the UKDS SecureLab can only be made from the specified access points in the Safe Rooms of our Partners' Research Data Centres.

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

Training

Each researcher must complete Safe Researcher Training or equivalent

UKDS SecureLab account setup

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.
- Please email your completed documents with your project ID in the subject line to: 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. 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 UKDS SecureLab. 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 and the Licence Compliance Policy of our partner institutions.
- 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 UKDS 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.

Training

Completing Safe Researcher Training

All team members must complete the virtual 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 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 already have a UKDS SecureLab account but have not logged in for more than 3 years, you must complete a short online MoodleX refresher course before accessing UKDS SecureLab.

UKDS SecureLab account setup

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 begin setting up your project (and account, if you are 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 and attended Safe Researcher training, the Technical Access team will finalise the account set up and provide you with your SecureLab login details.

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 3 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.

www.ukdataservice.ac.uk

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