The Smart Energy Research Lab: Applying for access to the SERL data

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Data Access Policy: our spectrum

Open

- No risk. Under open licence; almost no restrictions on reuse

Safeguarded

- Zero to low risk. Requires authentication and authorisation

Controlled

- Risk. Requires authentication and authorisation, Project approval, User vetting and training; Access via a safe setting; Output checking

The SERL data sits in this category

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Controlled data: Secure access agreement

Legislation allows access personally identifiable data under a legal gateway

- Who can access what data, for what purpose, under what conditions and for how long

Researchers access data and undertake analyses in a safe setting/haven

- Agree to conditions for handling personal data and breach penalties
- Agree to be trained to become an Accredited Researcher
- Research projects must also be accredited
- Institution must countersign on behalf of the user

The Application Process

- Multi-stage process
- Must be based in the UK
- Need to become an **Accredited Researcher**
  - Have to meet the data owners criteria
  - Need to attend a short training course
- Need to submit a **research proposal**
  - Valid statistical purpose
  - Must be feasible

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Accredited Researchers (AR)

- You need to submit an application form
- You need to complete the Safe Researcher Training course
- Need to meet the Accreditation criteria

- ONS manages the accreditation process
- AR status last for 5 years.
- Can be used across all accredited DEA Processors
- As an AR, you need to agree to your name being added to the UKSA site

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The Accredited Researcher Criteria

- 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

and

- have successfully completed the Safe Researcher Training course
- agree to their inclusion in a list of all accredited researchers, published on the ONS website
- agree to publish the results of all research projects completed through the Approved Researcher Scheme
- sign and adhere to a formal Accredited Researcher Declaration

Safe Researcher Training

- Using sensitive/controlled data is largely common sense
- BUT researchers will require some specific knowledge about disclosure risk and how to mitigate it
- This is why we train our researchers!

- Short course which covers:
- The wider context: understanding Data Access
  - The Five Safes framework
  - How might things go wrong?
  - Safe people and the Research Community
  - Technical knowledge: statistical disclosure control (SDC)
  - Basic principles
  - SDC applied to research

- Attendees need to take and pass an online test

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Accredited research projects

- Project applications will require approval by data owner(s) AND the independent Data Governance Board

- Project applications must be thoroughly completed.
- Pay close attention to:
  - How you are meeting the public good
  - Evidence of ethical approval, that needs to be submitted
    - Most academic projects will have gained ethical approval

Data Governance Boards

- Review and approve applications
- Aim to provide transparency and fairness
- Panel membership: Appropriate stakeholder representation, secretariat, lay members?
- Meet periodically – often monthly
- Some have precedents for common projects

- Is this an appropriate use of the data?
  - Is it legal?
  - Is it ethical?
  - Is it feasible?

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Data Governance Boards

- Materials for the panel:
  - Project application
  - Ethics assessments (institutional and UKSA)
  - Other supporting materials as appropriate

- Outcomes include:
  - Full approval
  - Conditional approval with amendments
  - Rejection

- The UKDS triage all applications before they go to the Data Governance Board

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Top tips for a successful project application

- Detail, detail, detail!
- Make sure you have clear research questions or aims
- Methodology – you may not have worked out all the details but have a plan
- Make sure you've included details of ALL data you need
- Meeting the public good criteria – don't over promise!
- Allow enough time!
- Take time over your ethics forms!

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Ethics Self-Assessment of research proposals

- UK Statistics Authority Ethics Self-Assessment Tool
- Easy-to-use framework to review the ethics of your projects
- Helps identify & mitigate any ethical issues
- 6 main principles

  Public good, potential harm

  Identification, data security

  Training, technologies

  Legal gateways, frameworks

  Public view, engagement

  Access, use & sharing of data
- Each principle split into a number of items

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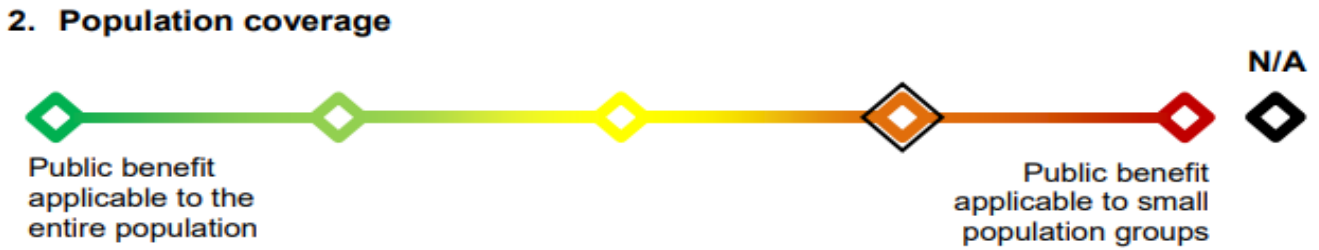
Completing the Ethics Self-Assessment form

- For each item – need to give a score
- Enter the score in the spreadsheet
- The spreadsheet calculates an overall score



			Please type "1" in the appropriate box below to indicate your rating for each question. Please add a comment in the far right column to briefly justify your selection						Score per principle	Please use this section to give a short justification of your selected rating
Item	Principle 1	Score	1	2	3	4	5	N/A		Score Justification
1	Public benefit	1	1						1.3	
2	Population coverage	2		1						
3	Potential harm	1	1							
4	Biases	1	1							

https://uksa.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/about-the-authority/committees/national-statisticians-data-ethics-advisory-committee/ethics-self-assessment-tool/

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Questions?

UKDS website:
www.ukdataservice.ac.uk

Contact:
https://ukdataservice.ac.uk/help/get-in-touch.aspx

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