User guide
For your Secure Lab account
Welcome to the Secure Lab

It is my privilege to welcome you as a member of our trusted community of researchers.

Within this guide, you will find everything you need to know in order to access and use the highly detailed, sensitive data for which you have been trained and approved.

While the UK Data Service team will always be available for individual help and guidance we hope this User guide will be a handy reference to the most common questions. Our aim is to help you launch your research using the Secure Lab as quickly, securely and responsibly as possible.

Matthew Woollard
Director of the UK Data Archive and the UK Data Service
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1. An important message

Use of the Secure Lab is based on trust. As a Secure Lab user, you trust us to make available an efficient, reliable service with good quality data, and documentation provided by the data owner. You trust that we are on hand to support you when using the Secure Lab, and help you with any queries about using the data.

In turn, we trust that you will use the Secure Lab in accordance with the terms and conditions specified in the User Agreement. In particular, you will use the Secure Lab safely and ensure that the confidentiality of the data is protected.

We understand that undertaking your research in the Secure Lab requires a small change in how you work that you may not be used to. This might seem inconvenient – but please remember that you are accessing highly sensitive and confidential data. We believe that a small change in the way you work is a small price to pay for accessing these data from the convenience of your institution.

The Secure Lab will continue to evolve. It may be the case that we can improve your experience of using the Secure Lab. If you think that something is unnecessarily inconvenient and could be improved, please tell us – we may be able to find a way that makes life easier for you but maintains data confidentiality and reassures data owners.

⚠️ Deciding to ignore the rules and procedures outlined in the training course and in this User Guide may well put you in breach of the terms and conditions of use – even worse, it may jeopardise everybody’s access to these data.

If you ever struggle with using the Secure Lab, the first action you should take is to contact us:

Email: support@ukdataservice.ac.uk.
Helpdesk (9:00 – 12:00): 01206 874968

We are here to help you and make your research possible in a secure environment.
2. The 5 Safes

The 5 Safes Data security model enables us to provide safe access to data that meets the needs of data protection yet fulfils the demand for open science and transparency.

- **Direct identifiers have been removed, but the risk of re-identification must still be managed**

- **Research projects should have valid statistical purpose and a demonstrable public good**

- **Educate researchers to use data safely**

- **The Secure Lab enables access to sensitive data**

- **Outputs are screened for statistical disclosure control (SDC)**

Through the combination of these 5 Safes, we can ensure the Safe Use of research data.
3. First steps

3.1 Setting up your environment

As part of applying to access Secure Lab your working environment will need to comply with a number of requirements. The setup of your working environment may have already been completed. However, if it has not been completed at this time, or if during the life of your project you move office or institution, your new working environment will need to be assessed as follows:

You will need to confirm the following will be met and provide us with the necessary screenshots as attachments, either in “.jpg” or “.png” format. If you will be accessing from a shared office, you must send photographs showing the view to the front, left, right and rear of your desk. A privacy filter must also be fitted if there is a chance that your screen will be overlooked.

The endpoint device which accesses the Secure Lab (i.e. your workstation) must:

- be owned and managed by the institution from which the Secure Lab will be accessed.
- have a direct connection to the internet via a wired Ethernet connection; proxy servers may not be used
- have a dedicated, static, public IP address (1-to-1 Network Address Translation is allowed)
- have no other network connections present except for the one being used to access the Secure Lab, this includes using VPNs
- not be running any services which allow third parties to connect to the workstation e.g. a web server or email server.

The following security measures must also be observed:

- when Secure Lab is accessed, only the wired Ethernet is used, and that the wireless is not connected simultaneously
- the user only accesses Secure Lab from their designated office, not from any other location on or off campus
- that good security measures are observed by the user, for example locking screens when leaving unattended, not allowing screens to be visible to people other than Secure Lab users working on the same Secure Lab project
- the user’s Secure Lab credentials are not saved in the web browser
- no other applications, particularly web based ones, are running whilst Secure Lab is being accessed
- if the layout of your room/workspace changes substantively you must notify the Secure Lab Helpdesk immediately and not use the service until authorised to do so.

In addition to this, please can you attach screenshots of the following:

- for Windows PCs - the output of running the command “ipconfig /all” in Command Prompt
- for Mac/Linux - the output of running the command “ifconfig -a” in Terminal
- the web page at http://www.whatsmyip.org/.
4. Logging on

4.1 Getting started

Before you can begin using your Secure Lab account, we will require the IP address of the computer you will be using to access the Service. You should ask your IT support to provide you with this information. The IP address should be ‘static routable’ (which means that it doesn’t change each time you switch on your computer).

⚠️ Note that it is not possible to log on to the service using a machine with a different IP address unless this has been prearranged with the Secure Lab.

We will also have asked to you install a small piece of software from Citrix. This is known as the ‘Citrix Receiver’. It is a plug-in for your browser to make the connection to the Secure Lab. The latest version can be downloaded from receiver.citrix.com

4.2 Anti-virus and anti-malware software

One of the conditions of using the Secure Lab is that the computer that you are using has appropriate anti-virus and anti-malware software installed. Please ensure that you have such software installed on your computer, and that it is up-to-date at all times. For help, you might need to speak to your institution’s IT support.

4.3 Username and password

Remember to keep this password safe – don’t write it down or share it with anyone else including other members of your project and the UK Data Service support team. If you forget your password, you can request a new password by completing a ‘Website/technical issue’ online form (https://ukdataservice.ac.uk/help/get-in-touch)

4.4 Logging on

You can log into your Secure Lab account via the UK Data Service website ukdataservice.ac.uk

Just click on the ‘Register / Login’ button in the top right corner

For a refresher, you can review our How to log into Secure Lab video here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FqEdDF7beiE
Then choose the 'Login to Secure Lab' link for approved researchers:
This will take you to the Secure Lab login screen, shown below. This is where you need to enter the username and password provided to you when you were issued with your Secure Lab account.

![Secure Lab login screen]

The screen below should appear. Click on the ‘SDS Desktop’ icon to access your account.

**Please note:** researchers working with LaTeX should select ‘SDS Desktop – Mplus & TexWorks SDS3’ from the list of desktops that appears.

⚠️ **Do not double click** on the ‘SDS Desktop’ icon as this opens up two sessions which will cause problems later.
A window will then appear which tells you that your account is launching.

After a few seconds, a standard Windows desktop will appear.

Note that after five minutes of inactivity, you will be asked to re-enter your password to access your account.

You will notice that no applications are available from the desktop itself. They are stored in a different folder which we will explain shortly.

You will also notice a Citrix SmartAuditor message. This will remind you that your Secure Lab session is recorded for security purposes.

Now go to the ‘Start’ menu (bottom left corner) and select ‘Computer’.
(Please note that if you don’t have the window at full size you might only see the blue desktop background; set window to full size to see the start button).

You are now logged on.

You should make a note of the login URL in case for some reason the web page is unavailable: https://sdslogin.essex.ac.uk/Citrix/XenApp/auth/login.aspx

5. Logging off

It is really important that you log off from the Secure Lab properly; otherwise you might experience future connection problems.
To log off properly, go to the ‘Start’ Menu and choose ‘Log off’.
If you wish to leave a program running (for example a Stata program that takes a few hours to run) you may do so. You should just close the Secure Lab window (by clicking the cross on the top-right hand corner). This is called ‘disconnecting’ – you are still logged on, and your program will be running. To return, just log back into the Secure Lab using the normal method (see previous section). But if you have finished your session please log off – otherwise you are taking up somebody else’s Secure Lab space.

Please be warned however, that if you leave a session running unattended, there is a possibility of a network error at our end or your end, which could interrupt the session.
6. Your Secure Lab account

Once you have successfully logged on, you can click on ‘My Computer’. You will see the following three drives:

![Drive screenshot]

6.1 Your M: drive

Inside your M: drive, you’ll find a project folder for each project that you are registered to undertake using the Secure Lab. In turn, each project folder contains the five folders pictured in the screenshot below. You cannot change this folder structure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date modified</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Original_data</td>
<td>03/11/2011 11:10</td>
<td>File folder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDC</td>
<td>03/11/2011 10:29</td>
<td>File folder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uploads</td>
<td>03/10/2011 17:44</td>
<td>File folder</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.2 Original_data folder

Here’s where you’ll find the data for each project that you have applied to access. Each dataset will be stored in its own dissemination pack (for example, 6644_ARD):

![Data screenshot]

This is useful if you have applied to use more than one source of data for your project. Note, this is a ‘read only’ section – you cannot overwrite any files saved in the ‘Original_data’ folder. This ensures that you always have a ‘clean’ copy of the data.
6.3 Statistical Disclosure Control (SDC) folder

When you have completed your project and you would like the UK Data Service team to release your work to you, save your files to the 'SDC' folder (for more information on this, see section 14 'Requesting Outputs').

6.4 Syntax folder

We recommend that you keep all of your syntax files in this folder.

It is important to note that after you have finished your project, we will only keep files that have been saved in the Syntax folder. We cannot store data files for all our users as this would become expensive for us. Instead, we encourage our users to write good syntax that can easily recreate data files in the future.

Also, if you accidentally delete a data file, you can use your syntax to recreate it (although we can recover deleted files, there may be some delay). The Syntax folder is the place to store these syntax files.

6.5 Working folder

Your Working folder is your project working area. You can use this folder to save data files that you are manipulating, drafts of papers, presentations and other outputs, draft results of your analysis, etc.

6.6 Uploads folder

If you ask us to upload any files to your Secure Lab account (e.g. syntax that you have written at home, background information, or external data), we will save the files here, in the Uploads Folder. However, please note that this is a ‘read only’ folder.

Exceptions are publicly available files and that might be relevant to other Secure Lab users too. Such files will be placed in the References drive (see below). We will let you know where a file you requested has been uploaded to.

6.7 Important: please remember

Do not save files onto your desktop: if you do, they may not be available the next time you log on.

The UK Data Service operates the Secure Lab with a ‘Fair Usage Policy’. This states that, if the size or number of files that you generate impacts on other users or the overall system performance; we reserve the right to request that you remove files, or the UK Data Service team can delete files.
6.8 References (R:)

In this drive you’ll find reference files. The reference files contain useful information for all researchers to access. For example, the References drive contains:

- the National Statistics Postcode Directory
- Standard Occupational Classification codes
- Standard Industrial Classification codes
- geographical lookup tables.

If there are data you would like added to the References drive, please email us (with a link to the source) and we will add it.

You will also find a folder called ‘ADO_Files’. This folder contains ADO files for Stata users. If you need to run an ADO file you cannot do this in the usual way as the Secure Lab has no internet connectivity; however, you can run them from this folder instead.

Enter the following command into Stata to set the ado path directory:

```
adopath ++ R:\ADO_Files\n```

This will enable you to subsequently call the ado files stored on the references drive.

If you require an ADO file that is not yet available in the ‘ADO_Files’ folder, please email us and we will add it for you. Please remember to check the ‘ADO_Files’ folder before you make a request.

A similar folder – ‘R Packages’ – is available for R users. There is a guide to using R in the subfolder ‘Guide to working with R packages in the Secure Lab’.

Enter the following command into R to set local package library:

```
.libPaths("M:/Syntax/R")
```

Then to install the package you wish to use:

```
(install.packages("package_name", contriburl= "file:R:/R Packages/"))
```

NB: Please, keep all the brackets and only replace `package_name` with the name of the package e.g. `tidyverse`

6.9 Applications (S:)

In this drive you can find the analytical and word processing software you need to carry out your work.
These include Stata, SPSS, R and Microsoft Office. If there are applications that you would like to use, but can’t see, please speak to a member of staff at the UK Data Service, and we might be able to install these for you.

LaTeX can be made available by request. If you have not had LaTeX made available to you the shortcut will not work.

You can make short-cuts of the applications and save onto the desktop. But remember; don’t save any data files in the Applications (S:) drive here.

6.10 SPSS functionality

Researchers who intend to use SPSS in the Secure Lab should note that we only have the Base Subscription version of SPSS available without any additional add-on modules.

As demand for SPSS in the Secure Lab is very low, and the cost of modules is very high, we do not have any plans to add these.

What is included in the Base Secure Lab licence:
• read/write text, Excel, SAS, and more; no size limits
• descriptive statistics, data prep, and graphing
• programmability/extensibility; supports R/Python
• bivariate statistics procedures, factor and cluster analysis
• linear and ordinal regression
• basic reporting with export to Microsoft/PDF.

Examples of add-ons NOT available in the Secure Lab:

• Custom Tables and Advanced Statistics: Custom tables; Non-linear, logistic, 2-stage least squares regression; Generalized linear modelling and survival analysis; Bayesian Statistics
• Complex Sampling and Testing: regression with optimal scaling including lasso and elastic net; principal components analysis, multidimensional scaling and unfolding, and multiple correspondence analysis
• Forecasting and Decision Trees: ARIMA and exponential smoothing forecasting capabilities; Classification and decision trees based on four established tree-growing algorithms; neural network predictive models; RFM analysis.

If any of these functions are crucial for the research, we advise researchers to switch to Stata, Mplus or R to run their analyses. This will allow researchers to continue with their research.
7. Dissemination packages

Each dataset that the UK Data Service provides access to in the Secure Lab comes in a ‘Dissemination Package’. This is the folder in the ‘Original_data’ folder with the study number, name of the dataset and the date when the data were received from the data owner (e.g. 6340_BHPS_1st_Ed_Jun11). When you open up this folder, you'll see something similar to this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>File</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mrdoc</td>
<td>12/03/2012 16:41</td>
<td>File folder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stata</td>
<td>12/03/2012 16:41</td>
<td>File folder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6340_file_information</td>
<td>04/02/2011 06:50</td>
<td>Rich Text Format</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>read6340</td>
<td>03/02/2011 11:17</td>
<td>HTML Document</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UKDA_Study_6340_Information</td>
<td>04/02/2011 07:02</td>
<td>HTML Document</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ‘mrdoc’ folder contains all available documentation for the dataset. The documentation varies from one dataset to another, but generally includes the survey questionnaires and a user guide. It also includes a ‘Data Dictionary’ - this is a complete list of all variables and label values within each data file.

Documentation for each Secure Lab dataset is provided by the relevant data owner. Part of the remit of the UK Data Service is to improve the quality of documentation, which is an ongoing process. For example, you'll find miscellaneous documentation compiled into bookmarked pdf files for easy searching of queries and terms.

The data files are contained in the folder with the name of the data format. In the example above, you'll find all the data files in the ‘Stata’ folder and the files will be in Stata format (if you asked for another format other than the one you see, call us and we'll replace it).

The Word document with ‘file information’ is useful because it provides a complete list and brief description of all data and documentation files contained within the dissemination package. This allows you to search for types of data, or available documentation, in a convenient place.

Before you begin using the data, have a look through the ‘read’ file. This contains important data processing notes, and will include any data quality issues that we have identified when processing the data.

You will find the ‘Study information’ file (‘UKDA_Study_xxxx_Information’) useful because it contains the correct data citation and acknowledgement statements that you should include when you are publishing your work. The ‘Study information’ file also contains all the information that is available on the online (ukdataservice.ac.uk) Data catalogue record for the study, including sampling frame details and topics covered in the data.
7.1 Data revisions and new editions

A **new edition** of a dataset is made available when a new time period has been covered by the study, or reweighted data have been received from the data owner, and are ready for us to make available to researchers. For example, if the latest quarter of the Labour Force Survey is ready, we will create a new edition of the ‘Dissemination Package’ that will include this new quarter. We will automatically deposit each new edition into your project when it's ready and will notify users via email. New editions will be contained in a folder named with the edition number (e.g., 6697_BSD_2nd_Ed_Oct11).

Sometimes data will be **revised**, for example as a result of a quality improvement, or amendment of a previous error. In this case, we will create a revised dissemination package, and add this to your project in a folder named with the word ‘Update’ (for example 6697_BSD_2nd_Ed_Nov11_Update). New researchers will only receive the most recent revision. However, we will archive previous editions in case any researchers require older versions.
8. Working on multiple projects

There is no limit on the number of projects that you can apply to undertake in the Secure Lab. Users will often be engaged in several projects at a time. As you become familiar with the Secure Lab setting, we hope you will consider applying to use more of the data that we can provide access to. If you wish to use the data you are already using in Secure Lab for a different research purpose you will need to apply to set up a new project – remember, you have been granted access to that data for the specific purpose you outlined in your original research proposal only.

Working on multiple projects should be straightforward. As you apply for data to undertake additional projects, you will find that a new project folder will appear in your user account.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date modified</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WINDOWS</td>
<td>17/04/2013 10:57</td>
<td>File folder</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>123456_Project</td>
<td>19/07/2013 09:04</td>
<td>Shortcut</td>
<td>1 KB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>123457_Project</td>
<td>19/07/2013 09:04</td>
<td>Shortcut</td>
<td>1 KB</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this example, you'll see a folder for each of two current projects.

Each folder will be set up, as explained in section 6 ‘Your Secure Lab Account’.

When you request an output, make sure you provide the correct project number. The same applies for requests to have syntax and data imported into your account. You must not attempt to copy files of any sort from one project area to another as this would constitute a breach of your secure access agreement.

8.1 Using a derived dataset for more than one project

If you have created a derived dataset, using UK Data Service sources and/or your own data in one of your projects that you would like to use in another of your projects, please let us know and we can upload this into the second project for you.

You are responsible for ensuring that you have permission to use the data with the new project.

8.2 Using syntax for more than one project

If you have created some syntax in one of your projects that you would like to use in another of your projects, please let us know and we can upload this into the second project for you. You are unable to do this yourself (and it would constitute a breach if you were able to!) However, the syntax must not contain any data and the owner/creator of the syntax must give their permission. You are responsible for ensuring that you have
permission to use the data with the new project.

9. Permission to use data

Please be warned: you should only use data for a project that you have permission to use. If you want to use a derived dataset for a new project, you must apply to use the data that generates the derived dataset.

If we review an output and we find that you have used data – derived or otherwise – that you have not been approved to use for that project, we will not be able to send you your output and there may be additional penalties.

Applying to use additional data sources is simple. For details, see section 12 ‘Applying to use additional data’. Remember; always talk to us if you need advice. If you require additional data to be added to your project, we can help arrange permission.

9.1 Project expiration dates

When you are working on more than one project, you should be aware that one project is likely to expire before another. Our Access team will contact you prior to any of your projects expiring, to see whether or not you need an extension to the project.
10. Working with team members

The Secure Lab has been designed so that researchers can easily work together on the same project.

Please note that all researchers who wish to access data or results within the Secure Lab environment must apply for access, and therefore must be Approved Researchers or Accredited Researchers.

All researchers working on a project will be provided with their own username and password (as they are each provided with a Secure Lab account). Researchers that work on a joint Secure Lab project must not share their usernames and passwords with each other. Each researcher should only access the project with their own user account.

For example, when two researchers are working on the same project, both will see the project folder relating to their joint project. This is illustrated in the diagram below.

In this example when Member 2 logs on, she will only be able to access one project folder (Project 1235), which she can work on collaboratively with Member 1. She cannot see the other projects Member 1 is working on.

If either member creates a file and saves it in this folder, then the other member will be able to access it. Therefore, results can be shared.

It is also possible for both members to open up the same file. This is useful if they wish to discuss their results over the telephone. However, researchers should not discuss the details of the project with people outside of the project team.
10.1 ESRC Associate Researchers

If you are working with a researcher using ESRC, or other non-ONS data, in Secure Lab, but you do not need to work with the data yourself (the most common example of this is a PhD supervisor), you may take the Associate Researcher online training course. Passing this short online course entitles a PhD supervisor (for instance) to look at results on the researchers' screen, which may be useful for discussion, but **they must not look at the data.** Again, the researcher must not share their password with the Associate Researcher.

10.2 If you wish to add a new, or existing, researcher to your project

Adding a researcher that is new to Secure Lab, or a researcher that is already using Secure Lab, to a current project is straightforward:

1. The additional researcher should be registered with the UK Data Service ([ukdataservice.ac.uk](http://ukdataservice.ac.uk) – see the black box to the right hand side of the Home page marked ‘Register’)

2. You should log in to your UK Data Service account and click on ‘Usage Details.’ Now click on the ‘Usage Number’ relating to the project that you want to add the additional researcher to.

3. At the bottom of the page, enter the email address of the additional researcher registered with the UK Data Service, and click ‘go’.

This will generate an automated email that will be sent to the additional researcher with instructions on how to apply to use the data.

4. The additional researcher will be asked to complete an ‘Approved Researcher’ or ‘Accredited Researcher’ form in the usual way. We will then confirm that the application has been successful, set up an account for them and then invite the researcher to attend a training course.
11. Importing data, syntax, documents and programme extensions into your project area

11.1 Importing data into your project area

This section applies to data not available from the UK Data Service collection. To learn more about how to add UK Data Service data, see section 12 ‘Applying to use additional data’.

If you wish to import data into your project area, we must be satisfied that you have permission to use the requested data in your Secure Lab project.

There is an expectation that data to be used in your project is specified at the point of application (i.e. on your Research Proposal) so that the relevant Approvals Panel can make decisions on feasibility and suitability for the specified work. Requesting data later on causes a significant amount of administrative work, including returning back to the Secure Access data owners for further approval.

If you wish to import data into your account, please complete a ‘Secure Lab: Request to Import Data’ form, available at https://www.ukdataservice.ac.uk/help/get-in-touch/securelabimport

This form asks you to provide:
- information about the type of dataset you wish to import:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Type of data</th>
<th>Select one option only*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>Open data</strong> – data available under an Open Licence, either downloaded from a public website (e.g. Office for National Statistics) or obtained from another public source. Note: this is unlikely to include any data scraped from commercial websites such as Twitter, Google etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>Data created by you, the researcher</strong> (created and owned by you, and excluding data from the UK Data Service).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><strong>Data created by another researcher</strong> (created and owned by them, and excluding data from the UK Data Service). This may be a member of your project team or another researcher.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>Third party licensed data</strong> - Data for which a contract exists between you or another member of the project team and the data owner. Note: This can include purchased data as well as web scraped data e.g. social media. Do not include open licenced data.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• dataset title and data owner/producer name
• variable names and variable descriptions
• information on how the data will contribute to your research project and how its use is within the scope of your approved project
• information on how you intend to link these data (where applicable)
• information about the data licence conditions
• evidence that you have permission to use the requested data in the Secure Lab

A form must be completed for each dataset to be imported. If you have any questions about completing the form please get in touch with us.

All third party licensed data and data owned by another researcher, must be requested by the Project Lead and it their responsibility to demonstrate proof that all project members, listed by name and institution/organisation, have the right to access these data. Where new researchers are added to a project, it is the Project Lead’s responsibility to provide updated permission from the data owner, with the new researchers listed by name and institution/organisation. Use of these data without explicit permission, could constitute a breach of the licence.

Researchers importing data must ensure that all project members are aware of the licence conditions of the imported data.

Please send the form, variable information and any evidence required to us using the University of Essex’s ZendTo Service (instructions available at: https://ukdataservice.ac.uk/media/622520/zendtoinstructions.pdf).

11.1.2 Sending us your data

Your request will be reviewed by the UK Data Service and, where necessary, the relevant Secure Access data owners. If your request is successful we will ask you to send your dataset.

You must not send any data via email. All data should be sent using our University of Essex’s ZendTo Service (instructions available at: https://ukdataservice.ac.uk/media/622520/zendtoinstructions.pdf). ZendTo is a drop-box style online server, which allows you to upload files. You can submit up to 2GB of files in a single request.

If you are sending data owned by yourself, data owned by another researcher, or third party licensed data, you must encrypt your dataset using VeraCrypt (available at https://veracrypt.codeplex.com). Our YouTube video “How to create an encrypted volume using VeraCrypt” (available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ogm9QHOpFqU) explains the process. The encrypted folder containing the dataset should be sent via the
University of Essex ZendTo Service. You must not send any encrypted folders by email. We will send you instructions for providing the encryption password.

Please ensure that the variables in your dataset are labelled clearly. If your dataset contains any direct identifiers (e.g. name, address, email), these must be removed for confidentiality reasons, before sending us the file.

**Please scan your files for viruses or malware before sending them to us.**

When you have sent your files, a notification is sent to our Helpdesk. We will download the file and after scanning it for viruses, carry out a content check to ensure the file does not contain any direct identifiers (e.g. name, address, email).

We will then place the file inside the ‘Uploads’ folder, within the relevant project folder and notify you when this has been done.

11.1.3 Turn-around time

Once we receive your import request form, we will check:

1. The form is complete and full variable information has been provided.
2. The licensing information is correct and where required, evidence of permission has been provided for all project members to use the requested data in the Secure Lab.
3. That the use of the requested data has been approved by the Secure Access data owner/s.

We aim to carry out these checks within 10 working days. Where we need to contact you for clarification, or to request a change to the form, this may take longer.

Where the use of the requested data has not been approved by the Secure Access data owner/s, we will contact them to seek approval. The time taken to gain approval varies by data owner and can take around 6-10 weeks.

Once the necessary permissions are in place, we will ask you to send the dataset and provide the password. Once we’ve received the dataset and password from you, we aim to check the dataset and upload it to your project area within three working days. Where we need to contact you for clarification or to request a change to the dataset (e.g. if a variable needs removing), this may take longer.

11.2 Importing syntax into your account

If you have created your own syntax file (for example, a Stata file or SPSS syntax file) and you would like this to be available in your Secure Lab account:

1. Send the syntax file to us using the University of Essex’s ZendTo Service (instructions available at: [https://ukdataservice.ac.uk/media/622520/zendtoinstructions.pdf](https://ukdataservice.ac.uk/media/622520/zendtoinstructions.pdf)).
2. Please remember to include your **name** and **project number** (so we can save the file in the correct location).

We will check your syntax file(s) for viruses and carry out a content check to ensure no data are included.

We will place the syntax files inside the ‘Uploads’ folder, within the relevant project folder and notify you when this has been done.

We aim to upload syntax to your project area within four working days.

### 11.3 Importing Word documents into your account

If you have written part of your future paper, such as the literature review, study aims or methodology, in Word outside of Secure Lab and you would like this to be available in your Secure Lab account:

- Send the Word file to us using the University of Essex ZendTo Service (instructions available at: [https://ukdataservice.ac.uk/media/622520/zendtoinstructions.pdf](https://ukdataservice.ac.uk/media/622520/zendtoinstructions.pdf)). Please remember to include your **name** and **project number**. (This will ensure we save the file in the correct location.)

- We will check your file for viruses and carry out a content check to ensure no data are included. **We will place the Word file(s) inside the ‘Uploads’ folder, within the relevant project folder and notify you when this has been done.**

We aim to upload Word documents to your project area within four working days.

### 11.4 Importing programme extensions into your account

If you require programme extensions that are not currently available in the references drive to be available in your Secure Lab account:

#### 11.4.1 Stata ADO files

In the case of ADO files you should check the ‘ADO_Files’ folder in the Secure LabReferences (R:) drive. If the ADO file you require is not already supplied in the ‘ADO_Files’ folder please email [support@ukdataservice.ac.uk](mailto:support@ukdataservice.ac.uk) to request the ADO file you need. Please note that we will only upload Stata packages from the verified repositories such as Boston College Department of Economics (SSC) or GitHub. We will download the file and, once a virus check and content check have been performed we will add the ADO file to the ‘ADO_Files’ folder and email you to let you know it is available.
We aim to upload ADO files within four working days. For guidance on how to use ADO files from the ‘ADO Files’ folder, please read the ‘11.Setting Stata path directory for ado files’ document, which is in the same location.

11.4.2 R packages

In the case of R packages you should check the ‘R Packages’ folder in the Secure Lab References (R:) drive. If the R file you require is not already supplied in the ‘R Packages’ folder please email support@ukdataservice.ac.uk listing the packages you require. Please note that we will only upload R packages that are available from the CRAN (Comprehensive R Archive Network) or GitHub sites. We will download the package/s and, once a virus check and content check have been performed, we will add the R file to the ‘R Packages’ folder and email you to let you know it is available.

We aim to upload R packages within four working days.

For guidance on how to use R packages from the ‘R Packages’ folder, please read the ‘Guide to working with R packages in the Secure Lab’ document, which is in the same location.
12. Applying to use additional data

You may have started your project and realised that you need to use data from other sources. This section helps you apply to use sources of data in addition to those sources in your original application.

12.1 If you’re not sure what data you need

Please contact the UK Data Service team. We are happy to advise you about data that can assist you with your project. Alternatively, use our Data Catalogue to search for related data: https://ukdataservice.ac.uk/

12.2 To apply for additional data

If you would like to add additional datasets from our collection to your Secure Lab project, please contact our Access team via our ‘Existing project/order’ contact form (https://beta.ukdataservice.ac.uk/help?id=existingOrder) and specify which datasets you would like to add, including the study numbers (SNs), along with your project number, and an explanation of how the additional data will benefit your research project. Our team will review your request and provide you with information on the rest of the process.

Depending on the access restrictions of the dataset you wish to add (i.e. whether they are ‘Controlled’, ‘End User Licence’ or ‘Special Licence’), and whether the datasets were specified on your original project application form, you may need to complete some additional paperwork for the request and the team may need to contact data owners to obtain approval to add these datasets to your project.

Once the team have ensured that any additional permissions are in place, they will arrange for the datasets to be added to your Secure Lab project area.

Access to data is governed by our Data Access Policy, which can be found on the UK Data Service website: www.ukdataservice.ac.uk/get-data/how-to-access
13. Linking external business data to ONS business data

13.1 What services do we offer?

The UK Data Service can help researchers who wish to link external business data to ONS business data in the Secure Lab. We offer three types of assistance:

- matching Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR) references on to external business data containing Companies House reference numbers (CRN) e.g. Companies House or FAME data
- generating pseudo-anonymised identification numbers for data containing other identifiable variables e.g. Intellectual Property Office (IPO) patent data
- facilitating linking commissioned from the IDBR team at the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

Please remember that if you wish to link external business data to data available via your Secure Lab account, permission must be granted from the external business data owner (e.g. Growth Intelligence) and the Secure Access data owner (ONS). If the linking was not specified in your original project proposal the Service can contact ONS to request permission.

13.2 I have Companies House or FAME data, what do I do?

If you have Companies House or FAME data containing CRNs we are able to match the IDBR reference number/s for that company on to your dataset. This is achieved through a CRN to IDBR reference number lookup table we hold. We are not able to make this table available to researchers because it is quite easy to look up the name of a company on the Companies House website using the CRNs, so once these are linked to the ONS business data, there would be a greater risk of breaching confidentiality than we can accept. However, we are happy to link data containing CRNs to the IDBR reference numbers, and then make available the resulting data file without the CRNs included. You can then match the file to the ONS business data you are using.

The lookup table is provided to the UK Data Service by ONS, on an annual basis, with the latest table based on the 2018 IDBR. The IDBR reference number in the lookup table is the ‘enterprise’. See Box 1 below for details of the IDBR structure and the ‘enterprise’ variable. The look-up table contains the enterprise reference for the latest year and the previous four years, so you can select the most appropriate one to use when linking your file to the ONS business data you are using.

To request assistance with linking:

1. Please complete the ‘Secure Lab – Import Data Request’ form, which can be found here: https://www.ukdataservice.ac.uk/help/get-in-touch/securelabimport.

2. Under section 2.1 please indicate the type of assistance you require (e.g. I require assistance from the UK Data Service to match the IDBR reference to my file).
3. Please complete and return the form to the Support Helpdesk using the University of Essex’s ZendTo Service (see these instructions: [https://ukdataservice.ac.uk/media/622520/zendtoinstructions.pdf](https://ukdataservice.ac.uk/media/622520/zendtoinstructions.pdf)) with the following information:

- evidence that you have permission to use these external data in the Secure Lab, for example, by attaching any email correspondence confirming permission.

We may contact you to discuss the linking and if required we will forward the form to the data owners for approval.

4. We will send you instructions for sending your data if, following appropriate review by the Service (and relevant data owners where necessary), your request has been successful.

5. Once we have carried out the linking, we will place the data in your ‘Uploads’ folder.

**Box 1 The IDBR structure and ‘enterprise’ variable**

Enterprise Group

```
Small Motors
```

Enterprise

```
Small Motors Ltd
```

Local Units

```
Small Motors Newport
Small Motors Cardiff
```

The ‘enterprise’ can be thought of as the ‘company’. Local units are ‘plants’, for example, a retail outlet or factory. The plant is the source of business activity. It may be a factory that produces finished goods or an accountancy office. The example above shows an enterprise group which owns one company ‘Small Motors Ltd’. This company controls two local units: ‘Small Motors Newport’ and ‘Small Motors Cardiff’.

The CRN-IDBR lookup table contains the enterprise reference. Note that the mapping is not one-to-one: some CRNs map to more than one enterprise and some enterprises to more than one CRN.

---

13.3 I have IPO data, what do I do?

IPO data can be linked with business data in the Secure Lab. Similar to CRN data, IPO data contain identifiable reference numbers (e.g. patent and trademark identifiers). These numbers can be used to look up the name of a company on the Companies House website, so once a file has the IDBR reference number matched on to it, any other identifiable variables need to be removed.

In order to enable researchers to continue to work with these identification variables, the UK Data Service are happy to generate pseudo-anonymised identification numbers to replace the original identification numbers. These are anonymous but unique reference numbers which enable researchers to identify observations in the data and link datasets where necessary.

To request this assistance:

1. Please complete the ‘Secure Lab – Import Data Request’ form, which can be found here: https://www.ukdataservice.ac.uk/help/get-in-touch/securelabimport.

2. Under section 2 please indicate:
   - the type of assistance you require (e.g. I require assistance from the UK Data Service to match the IDBR reference to my file and generate pseudo-anonymised identification numbers)
   - the variables requiring new identification numbers. This can be done via the ‘Variable information’ box
   - whether you are likely to submit updated file/s with new, additional observations during the course of your project. If this is the case, we will specify the range the pseudo-anonymised identification numbers should take for the first dataset (e.g. 1 to 10,000) and then apply a different range of values to any new observations contained in the updated file/s (e.g. 10,001 to 10,200). This will ensure that the identification numbers generated are consistent and unique across the files you submit to us.

3. Please complete and return the form to the Support Helpdesk using the University of Essex’s ZendTo Service (see these instructions: https://ukdataservice.ac.uk/media/622520/zendtoinstructions.pdf) with the following information:
   - evidence that you have permission to use these external data in the Secure Lab, for example, by attaching any email correspondence confirming permission.

4. We may contact you to discuss the linking and if required we will forward the form to the data owners for approval.
5. We will send you instructions for sending your data, if following appropriate review by the Service (and relevant data owners where necessary), your request has been successful.

6. Once we have generated the pseudo-anonymised identification numbers we will place the data in your 'Uploads' folder.

13.4 I would like ONS to carry out the linking, what do I do?

The IDBR team at ONS offers a matching service whereby the IDBR reference can be matched on to data containing the CRN and/or other identifiers (e.g. VAT reference, PAYE reference, Companies House name). This can be more accurate as they have up-to-date IDBR information and can match by other identifiers such as Companies House name. The IDBR team make a charge for this service.

If you wish to commission linking work from the IDBR team, we can arrange for this. We will transfer your dataset to ONS and then, once the linking work is complete, into your Secure Lab account.

To request assistance this service:

1. Please complete the ‘Secure Lab – Import Data Request’ form, which can be found on: https://www.ukdataservice.ac.uk/help/get-in-touch/securelabimport

2. Under section 2 please indicate the type of assistance you require (e.g. I will be commissioning the IDBR team to conduct the linking and require UK Data Service to transfer the files).

3. Please complete and return the form to the Support Helpdesk using the University of Essex’s ZendTo Service (see these instructions: https://ukdataservice.ac.uk/media/622520/zendtoinstructions.pdf) with the following information:
   - evidence that you have permission to use these external data in the Secure Lab, for example, by attaching any email correspondence confirming permission.

4. We may contact you to discuss the linking and if required we will forward the form to the data owners for approval.

5. We will contact the ONS to arrange for the linking to be undertaken, and will copy you into the email correspondence. ONS can then liaise with you to agree the work and arrange payment.

6. We will send you instructions for sending your data, if following appropriate review by the Service (and relevant data owners where necessary), your request has been successful.
7. Once we have received the matched data from the IDBR team, we will place it in your 'Uploads' folder.

13.5 How long will the linking take?

For **IDBR reference matching** carried out by the UK Data Service please allow five working days. Note that this is from the date we receive the data from you and permission from the data owners.

Requests for **pseudo-anonymised identification numbers** to be generated by the UK Data Service vary depending on the number of files and identification number variables required. However you can usually expect this work to be completed within 7 working days (following receipt of the data and permission from the data owners).

ONS will advise on **linking commissioned from the IDBR team**.

It is important that we receive the data in the right format, see below.

13.6 How do I prepare data for linking?

If you submit data to us for **IDBR reference matching** please ensure that:

- the CRN variable is in the correct format or it will not produce a match. The Companies House reference number format is **8 digits characters allowable**. Any leading zeros must also be retained – this can be achieved by generating the CRN variable as a string
- the CRN variable is clearly labelled, i.e. ‘crn’
- for confidentiality reasons any identifiable variables are removed from the data (e.g. Company name, address).

Data submitted for **IDBR reference matching** and for **pseudo-anonymised identification numbers** to be generated, should:

- be stored as efficiently as possible. Please remember that the Secure Lab is a shared resource. Before submitting data to us please think about which variables you require for your analysis and remove any duplicate variables from files. Generate variables using the appropriate numeric type and convert any string variables to numeric where possible
- if you are submitting several files, it would be useful if they followed the same naming convention, to enable us to program the job as a loop in Stata. For example the following three files follow the same naming convention, with the exception of the final word which distinguishes between the types of data held in each file: gi_sds_companies.dta, gi_sds_employee.dta, gi_sds_event.dta.

See Box 2 below for examples of ‘unclean’ and ‘clean’ data (note that fictional data has been used).
Box 2
Example of ‘unclean’ data:

CRN variable not clearly labelled

Identifiable data such as address needs removing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>bvdidnumber</th>
<th>Address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GB00001234</td>
<td>1 Abbot Street, London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB00001235</td>
<td>33 High Street, Manchester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB00001236</td>
<td>CRN clearly labelled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB00001237</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB00001238</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB00001239</td>
<td>4 Long end, Birmingham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB00001231</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB00001232</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Variable length should be 8 digits

Example of ‘clean’ data:

CRN clearly labelled

Identifiable variables removed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>crn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>00001234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>00001235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>00001236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>00001237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>00001238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>00001239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>00001231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>00001232</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Variable length 8 digits

If you commission linking from the ONS IDBR team they will advise you on the required data format.
14. Requesting outputs

As you learned during the training course you attended, in order to keep data secure, it is not possible for users to remove any files from our Secure Lab servers.

We also examine your statistical outputs to ensure that they cannot be used by anybody to identify an individual or organisation from the data you have used (known as Statistical Disclosure Control).

14.1 What is an output?

By ‘outputs’ we mean statistical results that have been written up for publication and/or presentation. You will have selected the results you wish to present to the outside world, from the analysis you have generated inside the Secure Lab, and written up the results. The output should be of a ‘publishable quality’ and have a specific purpose/use.

Publishable outputs include written documents and presentations. The publishable output types that are permitted for release from the Secure Lab are:

- journal publication/paper
- working paper
- book chapter/book
- commissioned/policy report
- report to funder
- final report
- interim report
- conference/seminar presentation
- research dissertation/thesis/chapter

You should also ensure that your output meets our minimum requirements (see section 14.8 of this guide).

We recognise that outputs will not always be ‘final’ and that you may wish to carry out additional analysis inside the Secure Lab, for example, in response to comments from a journal or funder, and submit a revised output for checking. We are happy to check revised outputs, however, you should ensure that your output is finalised as far as possible before submitting it for checking.

Researchers must produce their output(s) inside the Secure Lab. If you wish to import textual information into the Secure Lab – i.e. written information such as literature review, study aims etc. that can be written without looking at the data – in order to compile a publishable output then you can send this to us. See ‘Section 11 Importing your documents, data, syntax, and programme extensions’ for guidance on how to do this. This is very common.

14.2 Intermediate results

We will not release results to researchers if they are not of a ‘publishable quality’. For
example, we will not release a Word document containing many tables and graphs, with some basic information (e.g. dataset used, sample), but no clear selection of results and/or write up of the results, as we would expect from a publishable output. Nor will we release one small table.

The above are examples of what we call ‘intermediate’ results. We do not release such results to users – only publishable outputs, as explained above.

A rule of thumb for remembering this is to ask yourself “What would I submit to a journal or funder?” or “What would I present to a conference?”. Clearly, you wouldn’t submit numerous tables or graphs to a journal, with no clear write up of the results. Nor would you submit one individual table.

If you are unsure of what you can request, please contact us. We’re happy to answer your questions.

14.3 Why do we only release publishable outputs?

When undertaking Statistical Disclosure Control of outputs, it is important that we are able to view the results in context. Reading the text that explains the results in a publishable output helps us to make a quick, and fully informed, decision about whether the output is suitable for release. If we undertook Statistical Disclosure Control of intermediate outputs, we would have to contact you and ask you to explain the context and meaning for each set of results. This would be tedious for you and slow down the process of releasing outputs to you.

The Support Team is a small team of dedicated professionals who have responsibility for many support tasks. Statistical Disclosure Control is a manual task carried out by two independent checkers and is thus a time-consuming activity. Releasing intermediate outputs would increase the workload to an unsustainable level.

In addition, intermediate outputs tend to include a larger number of tables; this increases risk of secondary disclosure within the document. Releasing intermediate outputs would also result in a larger number of total output requests per project hence increasing risk of secondary disclosure across different output releases. We cannot check across different outputs.

There should be no need for us to release intermediate outputs. If each researcher on the team has a Secure Lab account, they can log on to their account to see the results produced by their colleagues. We also ask PhD supervisors to become Approved/Accredited Users so that they can also have a Secure Lab account, and can view their student’s results within the secure environment, and recommend any changes to the work that need to be made. However, if a project colleague is not based in the UK (which means they cannot have access to the Secure Lab) we may consider releasing intermediate results. You should contact us to discuss the situation.

It is also easier to clear publishable results as it is easier to understand what the results tell us, and we can return the results to you more rapidly.
14.4 Before you submit your output

We cannot release your output unless we are happy that the risk of re-identification of an entity is so low as to be virtually non-existent. If we have to contact you for clarification, this will cause delays. To increase your chances of having your output released at the first statistical disclosure check, you should use the following as a checklist:

General
We recommend that you allow 24 hours between finishing an output and submitting the output request form to us; this gives you a little time to reflect on the output and ensure it needs no further work before submission.

Researchers can submit one output request at a time. This means that you cannot submit a new output request until your original one is concluded – any new output requests made prior to your original output request being concluded will not be processed. We do not release Microsoft Excel files or PowerPoint files for security reasons.

Rules of Thumb
As part of the training course you attended you will have been given a comprehensive account of the ‘rules of thumb’. Before you submit your output to us for statistical disclosure checking please ensure that your output complies – and clearly demonstrates that it complies - with the following:

Threshold rule: No cells should contain less than 10 units (individuals, households or enterprises). You should provide the unweighted number of observations for each table, graph etc., even if in a separate file for us to check but not release. Remember, the threshold is 30 units for HMRC data.

Dominance rule: If we have a particularly dominant individual or business in the data being presented, then this could give away the presence of that unit in the data. Therefore the dominance rule states that the largest unit must account for no more than 43.75% of the total.

Degrees of freedom: Linear regressions must have a minimum of 10 d.o.f. (in modeled output: d.o.f. = n - k). Where the model is based solely on categorical explanatory variables, one of the coefficients should be suppressed for Statistical Disclosure Control reasons.

Constant/Intercept in regression models
Do you really need to report the constant/intercept in your model output? If all of the variables in your model are categorical we will ask you to remove one of the coefficients. Often the constant is of no real interest (although can help an attacker unpick the model) and can be removed.

Residuals
Residuals that show individual data points should not be released. This includes plots, although a written description may be allowed.
**Formatting tables and graphs**

Remember, your output should of a publishable quality so simply cutting and pasting output tables from Stata, SPSS or R is not acceptable. Instead you should recreate tables, including only those aspects you wish to report, in Word or Excel (if the latter then paste them into your output Word document). Graphs should be fixed format (e.g. JPEG).

**Variable names**

Variable names in datasets often seem to be little more than a random collection of letters and numbers when taken out of context so please ensure that the variable names in your tables are meaningful (i.e. it is unequivocal what they refer to without having to refer back to the documentation).

**Secondary disclosure**

Please check your output for secondary disclosure; e.g. where two ‘safe’ tables can be used in combination to reveal some potentially disclosive information. This can be a problem when presenting nested tables.

**Sufficient explanation**

Have you provided enough information for output checkers to be clear about what your output shows? You know your study area and the statistical techniques you have applied to the data inside-out, but it is unrealistic to expect output checkers to be experts on every area of inquiry and statistical technique. Please bear this in mind when submitting your output. It is a basic requirement that you supply some contextual information, and clear textual explanations of what each table and graph shows, and the underlying unweighted Ns. If you do not provide this we will contact you to request it, you will have to make changes and/or additions, and your output will go back into the system. All of this will delay the potential release of your output.

We understand that it is not unusual for journals to request additions or changes to a submitted paper and therefore you may request an output that is effectively an adjusted version of a previous one. However, you must treat this as an entirely new output and supply all necessary information. It is not sufficient to simply refer back to a previous output – we need to be able to understand the new output fully (and be able to demonstrate that this output is safe in a ‘standalone’ sense).

**Time management**

We aim to be in touch about your output within 4 working days. The number of outputs can be very high at certain times of the year and at these times we may not be able to respond to you until close to the 4 day deadline. The best case scenario is that we have found your output to be non-disclosive and release it to you within 4 days. However, in a significant number of cases we might need to get back to you to clarify some details or there may be problems with the output that need to be addressed. This may mean that it takes more than 4 days overall to receive your cleared output. Please bear this in mind and allow more than 4 days. Moreover, you should keep in mind that you need to be able to access your Secure Lab account after you have submitted your output to us in case we need to discuss details with you, or if you need to make any changes.
We deal with outputs in the order that we receive them as this is the fairest way; it is not our practice to 'leapfrog' outputs ahead of others so please don’t ask (we know your output is important, but so are everybody else’s).

**Watchwords**
Ensure that your outputs are clear, unambiguous and within the scope of your research proposal. You should only request material that you actually need.

### 14.5 What if I want to present some initial findings to an informal departmental seminar?

In this case we are happy to assess your outputs, providing they are clearly presented and clearly explained. For example, a collection of tables could be produced in a Microsoft Word document, with an explanation after each table to describe the results.

As you’ll have learnt from the training course, **nothing should be written down from the screen** – it will not have been vetted for Statistical Disclosure Control. You must make a request (see below). The UK Data Service is responsible for ensuring that only non-disclosive results are released from the Secure Lab.

With the above in mind, please do not refer to anything data-specific if you contact us (e.g. with a data query) – if you do it will mean that you have effectively removed something from Secure Lab without it being SDC checked and this constitutes a breach.

---

**WARNING**

DO NOT WRITE ANYTHING DOWN FROM YOUR SECURE LAB WINDOW

THIS IS A SECURITY BREACH AND WILL RESULT IN SUSPENSION OF YOUR SECURE LAB ACCOUNT
If you think that you will be able to explain your data query more clearly by referring to something data-specific then please make a note about it in a Word document in your project area and tell us where to find it. This approach means that nothing has been removed from Secure Lab and no breach has been committed.

14.6 Output checking of syntax files

You may wish to have some of your syntax released from Secure Lab. This is not a problem but it must be content-checked before it can be released to you. We check for the following:

- no data tables or raw data copied in
- nothing left in that, in conjunction with information outside Secure Lab, could identify and individual, household or business
- no descriptive sentences listed such as "there are 2 companies with x characteristics"
- no reference to the Secure Lab server in the path directory of the data file location.

14.7 How to request an output from your account

To request an output, please follow these steps:

1. Create a new folder in the SDC folder, named with your project number and date of request in the form of: 12345_YYYY_MM_DD
2. Save the files you would like us to release in the folder created in Step 1 (please give them a meaningful name, not something generic like ‘output’).
3. Visit https://www.ukdataservice.ac.uk/help/get-in-touch/outputrelease to complete the online ‘Output Request’ form.

We aim to respond to your request within 4 working days.

14.8 Points to remember when submitting output requests

- please allow 4 working days for a first response when submitting an Output request and to submit your requests in plenty of time before a deadline
- output requests are dealt with in the order in which we receive them and you will not be able to submit a new output request until your original one is concluded - any new output requests made prior to your original output request being concluded will not be processed
- please ensure that you are available to discuss, and/or amend, any problematic aspects of your output
• clearly label which tables or graphs include Secure Lab data and which don’t, if you are using a combination of Secure Lab and non-Secure Lab datasets
• we cannot release Excel files or PowerPoint slides from the Secure Lab
• if there are any problems with your output that necessitate changes being made it is you that will make those changes. We do not make amendments to outputs for researchers
• if you are submitting a LaTeX document please also include a PDF version in the same SDC folder, as this makes it much easier for us to check (thus meaning you should receive your output sooner).

14.9 Minimum requirements for ALL outputs

We have produced a checklist of minimum requirements that an output must meet in order for us to make a thorough statistical disclosure check and determine whether an output can be released. Minimum requirements are that:

• the output is one of the permitted output types
• the results have clearly been written up, with information about the data source, sample and methodology included, as well as explanation of what each graph, figure etc. shows
• graphs, Figures etc. must be fixed images (e.g. JPEG)
• unweighted cell counts must be provided for everything – e.g. graphs, figures, percentages, models results
• tables/figures must be correctly numbered and labelled
• variables must be given meaningful names, not just the labels from the dataset
• the following embedded items must not be present in the output (you should use the ‘Inspect Document’ function to check this):
  o Embedded documents
  o Invisible content
  o Hidden text
• you must include the data citation in the output (including the doi number). This can be found in the Study Information files in your project area and for each dataset at: https://ukdataservice.ac.uk/

Your output must not deviate significantly from your original research proposal. We are obliged to check the content of each output against the research proposal you submitted and/or any change of scope that has been agreed with the data owner/s. Where these do not match up we will ask our Access Team to liaise with the data owner. You may need to set up a new project or make an addendum to the original proposal, depending on how significant the difference is between the proposal, or agreed change of scope, and the output submitted. The outcome will be decided by the data owner. To avoid this, please check back to your research proposal/agreed change of scope regularly to see if you are still within the previously agreed parameters. Contact us if you feel your project may have drifted and we will be happy assist you. If any of the minimum requirements are not met,
**your output will not be released.** We will have to contact you for further information, thus delaying the release of your output and the outputs of other users.

14.10 Revising an output

If the output has been referred to you for revisions:

- Please save a revised version of the output file in the same SDC sub-folder that you created and append the new file name with ‘_updated_YYYY_MM_DD’. The original version and the new version should thus sit side-by-side in the same sub-folder.
- Once you have updated the document let the Support team know by replying to the same QTHELP email thread as the original output request.

14.11 Demonstrating impact

It is important to share how you think your research results may inform or benefit society.

Not only is this required by our funding council, the Economic and Social Research Council, but it also directly supports our shared purpose as a research community. Demonstrating that access to new data is valuable for research – and how that research may benefit society – helps us negotiate access to new sources of data and makes a strong case for continuing support.

On the online ‘Output Request’ form, you’ll see a question about the impact of your research. Please give some considered thought when answering.

14.12 Case study solicitation

To help demonstrate the impact of your research, and the impact of the UK Data Service, we may get in touch with you to ask you to complete a case study questionnaire. This will ask you questions about your research, your main findings and the data you used. With your permission, a case study will be drawn up using your answers, and these will be added to our website. These will benefit other users and prospective data owners enormously.

14.13 A note on data citation

Data are a vital part of the scientific research process and proper data citation should be a significant feature of research publications.

When submitting an output we ask you to include a full data citation in every output document. It is not necessary to include a citation under each table or figure within the same document.

The full citation can be found in the ‘UKDA_Study_xxxx_Information’ file in the ‘Original Data’ folder in your project area.
You can copy and paste the citation text if you use the Preview Pane to view files in a folder. Alternatively, you can open the data citation file from within the MS Word document by using the ‘File – Open’ command and locate the ‘Study Information’ file in the Browse window.

Below is an example citation for the ‘Business Structure Database Longitudinal, 1997-2013: Secure Access’ dataset:

15. Finishing your project

15.1 What is the project expiry date?

When applying to access data for a project in the Secure Lab, you will specify the start date and expiry date yourself.

We will email you one month before the expiry date is due, to remind you that the expiry date is approaching.

You should consider whether you have finished your project or whether you require more time to complete it.

15.2 If you have finished your project

We encourage you to maintain syntax that will allow you to recreate data and analysis. Remember that we are unable to keep users’ derived data files in the long-term.

However, we will keep syntax – but only those files saved in your Syntax folder.

The outputs that we release to you will also be saved, although not in the Secure Lab area itself.

Other files in other folders will be removed when your project expires.

How long do we keep a finished project in our system in order for you to re-visit it at a later date? Indefinitely!

Please ensure that you have requested all necessary files to be released to you (subject to SDC checks) before project closure.
16. General do’s and don’ts

There are a lot of things to remember about using the Secure Lab. As a reminder, here are some guidelines that we please ask you to remember:

16.1 DO remember

- that your session is recorded by ‘SmartAuditor’ for security and training purposes
- that the screensaver is activated after five minutes of inactivity
- that you will be asked to change your password every three months to familiarise yourself with the ‘Code of Practice’
  ukdataservice.ac.uk/media/144901/sds_code_of_practice.pdf
- that if you have a data query and feel that it would be best explained by referring to some specific aspect of the data, you should make a note in Word and save this in your project area. Then, you can email the support team to tell them where to find this note. **Do not write anything down from the screen and email it to us** – this constitutes a serious breach (see below)
- you can only use results that have been SDC checked and released by us to you. No information regarding Secure Lab data, including general trends, should be reported or discussed in any way outside of Secure Lab without first undergoing SDC and release. This includes any details that you may have kept in your head from the session when you did analysis in the Secure Lab.
- to contact us if you are not sure about anything related to secure data and related policies.

16.2 DO NOT ⚠️

- write anything from the screen – this is a breach and a disciplinary offence. We have installed Microsoft Office so that you can make notes and save them in your Secure Lab account. It is hard to be 100% sure that something you write down doesn’t constitute data of some kind so the best option is to copy nothing down from the screen
- take screenshots from your working session
- try to log into the Secure Lab from outside your institution
- share your password with anyone – not even a member of the UKDS Support team or other researchers working on the same project
- discuss individual observations or data in emails to the Support Team as this means you are effectively removing data from the Secure Lab environment. If you need to refer to a specific case, please add a note in your project folder and let us know where to find it
- allow unauthorised people to see the data/un-cleared outputs over your shoulder.

Finally...DO please tell us if there is any way we can improve our service to better suit your needs.
17. Help and support

Contacting the UK Data Service for help

For advice on common technical problems and support on technical issues please see section 18 ‘Advice and technical support’.

Support for researchers accessing data via the Secure Lab (formerly the Secure Data Service), is provided by the UK Data Service. To contact us for help and support, please use the relevant online form:

www.ukdataservice.ac.uk/help/get-in-touch

If you have a query about the data you are accessing, use the Analysis/using data form.

If you would like us to release a statistical output to you, use the Output release form (note you no longer need to complete an Output Request form within your account).

If you experience a technical difficulty (for example, you cannot log into your account), please use the Technical issues form.

(IMPORTANT: when using this form, make sure you identify the correct issue by clicking on the ‘Type of website/technical issue’ drop down menu, and choosing an option relating to Secure Access).

If you wish to upload data to your account, please use the ‘Secure Lab – Import Data Request’ form. This can be found on our website, here: https://www.ukdataservice.ac.uk/help/get-in-touch

If you wish to import syntax to your account, please email support@ukdataservice.ac.uk.

For queries about making an application to access data in the Secure Lab, please email help@ukdataservice.ac.uk
18. Advice and technical support

18.1 Technical Problems

Unfortunately, sometimes IT doesn’t work. This is especially the case of network dependent systems such as the Secure Lab. However, you might find the following points useful. Always try restarting your machine – this often resolves problems. Also, remember that the Secure Lab cannot be accessed during the weekly maintenance period on Tuesday mornings until around 12:30pm. Before you contact us, note the following details (which will help us to identify and solve the problem):

- what date and time did the error occur (please be as accurate as possible)?
- have you rebooted your PC – is the error reproducible (and please note the time you tried this)?
- please describe the error and what you were doing when it occurred
- please provide precise details of any error messages that occur (verbatim).

18.2 Some common errors, and possible solutions, are listed below:

I try to click on the log in page but I can’t get through to the username and password page

Have we got your correct IP address? Usually this error occurs because you are trying to access the Secure Lab from a computer that our secure server firewall doesn’t recognise. Did you recently change your computer? Check with your IT support to confirm your computer’s IP address, and check that it is a ‘static routable’ IP address (dedicated to your computer and doesn’t change every time you start the machine).

Please submit a ‘Technical issues’ form from our website with your confirmed IP address and we’ll update our firewall if necessary.

When I click on the SDS Desktop icon, the Secure Lab window doesn’t launch. Nothing happens

This could be a software error at your end. Uninstall your Citrix client software, and install the latest version (visit receiver.citrix.com). Restart your computer and try again. Your IT support may have to do this for you.

The Citrix software is the small software application that you installed on your computer just before we provided you with your username and password.

I was logged in; now the screen is locked and I can’t get back in

This could have been caused by a network connection issue, either at your institution’s end
or ours — it is difficult for us to tell. In this case, please use the online form (see below) and we'll log you off, allowing you to log back in again.

When you have tried the above…

…and find that the problem is not resolved, please contact us using the ‘Technical issues’ online form, available at www.ukdataservice.ac.uk/help/get-in-touch. Please remember to include (verbatim) any error messages that are displayed.
19. General problems and FAQ’s

If you experience any difficulties using the Secure Lab, help is at hand.

19.1 FAQs

First, check the ‘Frequently Asked Questions’ for the Secure Lab on the UK Data Service website: https://www.ukdataservice.ac.uk/help/faq/securelab

We keep this updated as we receive similar questions from different researchers. There is a good chance that your question will be answered here.

19.2 Personal contact

If your question is not answered on the website by use of the FAQ’s or the appropriate online forms then, please get in touch with us directly by email and telephone:
Support is normally available 9.00 to 17.00, Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays).
T 01206 874968
E support@ukdataservice.ac.uk

19.3 Support available

We are happy to provide information and guidance, including:
- advice on projects (for example, finding suitable data)
- how to apply to use data through the Secure Lab
- how to use the Secure Lab (for example, where files are stored)
- how to request outputs and Statistical Disclosure Control
- extending your project and using more data sources.

In addition, we can negotiate with data owners for access to data, particularly as we meet strict international standards in data management and security. If you think that we might be able to help you to access data that are not currently available from the Secure Lab then please get in touch.

19.4 Our promise to you

Please remember that this is your service – and our shared responsibility as a research community. ‘Our Service Promise’ details what you can expect from us – you’ll find this in your Training Pack (supplied on the training course).

19.5 Feedback

If you have any ideas about how we can improve the Secure Lab, we would be pleased to hear from you. Please contact us at any time.
20. UK Data Service Activities

We do more than provide secure access to confidential data. We also support researchers in other ways. Here are some of the ways we help to promote applied research.

20.1 Organise workshops

This is a chance for anybody with a stake in the Secure Lab (users, staff, funders or data suppliers) to come together to share knowledge about general strands of research (such as labour markets), or particular data sources (such as the British Household Panel Study).

20.2 Negotiate for access to more data

The high security standards we meet put us in a strong position to negotiate for access to new data sources from a range of suppliers to enable our users to conduct more effective research.

20.3 Publicise research

We provide details of research undertaken on our website and regular e-bulletins. Everybody in our community can see the research that the UK Data Service is helping to support – which is especially useful for users and good news for data owners in particular.

20.4 Data dissemination standards

The Secure Lab is one of a number of core services provided by the UK Data Service. We are at the forefront of developing technologies and improving standards to disseminate data, documentation and metadata. This benefits researchers because we can supply a better service to you.