# *UK Data Service - UKDS*

**Key contact details:**

Queries relating to the UK Data Service and available datasets should be directed to help@ukdataservice.ac.uk.

**UKDS data dictionary:**

UKDS hosts the largest trusted digital archive of economic, social and population data in the UK and specialises in data curation, data literacy and actively managing long-term access to high quality data, transforming social science research, teaching and learning.

The UKDS data catalogue is a great place to start exploring what datasets are held and how they can be accessed for research.

**Accessing UKDS data:**

Each dataset deposited with UKDS has an access level designated by the data provider depending on the detail, confidentiality and sensitivity of the data. Data access levels are categorised as: **Open**, **Safeguarded**, **Controlled**.

*Open data:* Researchers can access open datasets without the need to register or log in with UKDS. Open data collections can be accessed through the UKDS catalogue, and then downloaded or accessed directly. These data are for use with an open licence and are not classified as personal.

*Safeguarded data:* Safeguarded datasets can be downloaded and ordered online by registering and accepting the UKDS End User Licence (EUL). The UKDS EUL establishes the terms and conditions under which secondary research can make use of the data. Every registered user will have agreed to the terms and conditions upon registration. Some safeguarded data may have additional conditions attached, details of which will be listed on the dataset's catalogue record.

Accessing UKDS safeguarded data:

To access safeguarded data, you will need to be registered with UKDS and agree to the EUL. Researchers, students and teachers from any discipline, organisation, or country may register with the UKDS and obtain data.

If you are based at a UK institution of higher or further education, or if your institution is part of the UK Access Management Federation (UKAMF) and is on the Federation Identity Providers Asserting User Accountability list, you can register using your usual institutional credentials via the UKDS login page. The registration process is as follows:

**Step 1:** UKDS login page (UK Data Service)

**Step 2:** Choose your organisation/institution from the list on the login page

**Step 3:** Enter your usual institutional credentials to login

**Step 4:** Complete the registration form

**Step 5:** Agree to the End User Licence which outlines the terms and conditions of use

**Step 6:** Once registration is complete you will be able to download and request access to safeguarded data

Further information about the registration and login process can be found here. You will also find guidance on registering if your institution is not a member of UKAMF or you are a personal user.

Once registered you will have access to safeguarded data. Information on downloading and ordering data from UKDS can be found here.

Datasets in the UKDS main collection are usually made available in the following formats: SPSS, Stata or TAB.

*Controlled data:* Data that are too detailed, sensitive or confidential are classified as controlled data, and are only accessible through the UKDS SecureLab environment. After registering, experienced researchers can then apply to request access to controlled data and the SecureLab. Different application pathways are set by the data providers, meaning there are slight variations in application processes. The different pathways are outlined here.

The UKDS SecureLab allows researchers to access data and undertake analyses without the need to download data. Researchers will be able to analyse data remotely either from their organisational desktop or at one of the UKDS SafePods which are located across the UK. Researchers will produce all of their work within the SecureLab, from initial data exploration to writing the final paper. A list of the software features available in the SecureLab environment can be found here. There is also opportunity to collaborate with approved project colleagues through the use of shared project folders within the SecureLab.

Applying for access to controlled data and the UKDS SecureLab:

Researchers must be a registered user to access UKDS controlled data. Details of the registration and login process can be found above, with further guidance available here: registration and login process.

Registered users will then need to complete a detailed project application which will be reviewed by the Data Access Services team and the data owners. Researchers will need to meet all the access criteria and be undertaking a project that serves a public benefit. The relevant access criteria for the dataset can be found on the 'access data' tab of the catalogue record. Further details about SecureLab access criteria can be found here.

The application steps for accessing controlled data are outlined below.

**Step 1:** Once registered, researchers will be need to complete a detailed project application and submit this to UKDS along with supporting documentation. Guidance on completing an application can be found here.

**Step 2:** Following the receipt of an application and evidence, the UKDS Data Access Services team will process the application as soon as possible.

**Step 3:** Once passed the initial screening, the application will progress to further checks including feasibility assessment, ethics and methodology checks.

**Step 4:** When satisfied with quality of the application the Data Access Services team will send it to the data owner who will review the project proposal outlined in the application.

**Step 5:** If the data owner approves the project the researcher will be given access to the requested data. The team will keep in touch throughout the review process and the final decision will be confirmed by email.

**Step 6:** Once approved, if all elements of the application, user agreements and training have been completed, it is likely researchers will be able to access the data immediately after approval. It is expected that the application process from submission to data access will take approximately 3 – 4 months (if the application is well prepared and approval is granted with no changes required).

Not all applications are approved straight away, the data owner may have queries. In this instance, it will be returned with feedback to the applicant, for them to address any outstanding queries and resubmit for review. Alternatively, the data owner may decide the application is not satisfactory and decline the request.

**User access agreements and training requirements:**

When accessing UKDS safeguarded data, it is a requirement to be a registered user and complete and agree to the EUL.

When applying for access to controlled data and the SecureLab, the UKDS Secure Access User Agreement will need to be completed and adhered to. This agreement is an important and compulsory document in the application process, signed by the researcher and a suitable officer at their organisation. The agreement must be fully executed, returned to UKDS and in place before access is given to the SecureLab. Further information and guidance on the Secure Access User Agreement can be found here.

Researchers applying for controlled data access will also need to complete all required training specified by UKDS. Safe Researcher Training, for example, is a requirement. UKDS run this course roughly every 3 weeks. If the researcher has already completed Safe Researcher Training with a different provider, UKDS will confirm attendance and pass certification. Following this, researchers will need to complete a short online course that covers the specifics of working within the UKDS SecureLab environment. Researchers will be invited to do this training, if required, whilst their application is being processed.

Further information about Safe Researcher Training and other useful training materials and resources can be found on the ARC KSS Data Science Hub.

**Cost of access:**

Accessing data from UKDS is free of charge, this includes use of the SecureLab service, a resource funded by UKRI. Data access is not charged if for non-commercial use.


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End of document.