The Data Access Levels of the data.bris University of Bristol Research Data Repository

The data.bris University of Bristol Research Data Repository holds data generated by activities carried out by the University's academic researchers. This page explains how our data can be accessed.

The vast majority of our research datasets are 'Open' and access does not involve registration, nor an application process. However, some of our data is not Open. This may be, for example, because ethical consent does not permit for data to be shared openly or industrial partners have requested access be controlled.

Therefore, we publish datasets under three different access arrangements:

Open data

Open data is the most permissive data access level and is used for data which has no particular sensitivities. Where research participants are involved, they have given consent to share anonymised data as 'Open' data; the risk of re-identification of participants is considered to be extremely low. Open data is released under a [re-use licence](#).

Restricted data

Restricted data has some degree of sensitivity involved. For example, research participants have not given explicit consent to share data as Open data. However, the risk of re-identification of participants is considered low. Data is made available to approved bona fide researchers only, after their host institution has signed a [Data Access Agreement](#).

Internal (University of Bristol) applicants must agree to abide by our [Principles for Handling Sensitive Research Data (UoB only)](#).

Controlled data

Controlled data has a large degree of sensitivity involved. For example, research participants have not given explicit consent to share as Open data and/or the risk of re-identification of participants is medium to high. Requests for Controlled data are referred to an appropriate Data Access Committee (DAC) for approval before data can be shared with bona fide researchers, after their host institution has signed a [Data Access Agreement](#).

Internal (University of Bristol) applicants must agree to abide by our [Principles for Handling Sensitive Research Data (UoB only)](#).

Request access to Restricted or Controlled datasets

External users may request access via the online [External user data request form](#).

Internal users (University of Bristol staff) may request access via the [Internal user data request form](#). [*n.b. excludes internal users' requests for One-in-a-Million dataset - [please contact OIAM Data Steward directly](#)*].

FAQ

How do I learn that a dataset exists?

All datasets available via the repository are listed at the data.bris repository regardless of their access arrangements.

Who can apply for access to a Restricted or Controlled dataset?

We will consider applications from any organisation where an established research governance process is in place. Restricted and Controlled datasets cannot be released to an individual. Please note, if the requested dataset includes personal information the repository will abide by ICO's Eighth Data Protection Principle regarding Sending personal data outside the European Economic Area (Principle 8).

How can I apply for access to a Restricted or Controlled dataset?

Please complete either an External user data request form or an Internal user data request form [*does not include One-in-a-Million - please contact OIAM Data Steward directly*].

I'm not sure whether my proposed use of the data counts as 'research'. What should I do?

We take a broad view of research, which can include use for clinical practice. Please complete a data request form outlining your proposed use, and we will assess whether it is allowable under the terms of the Data Access Agreement.

How do you process applications for Restricted data?

The Research Data Service team review the application, and will check that the information you have provided is complete and in adherence with the following criteria:

- The dataset you have applied for is available via the repository
- You have provided a verifiable institutional affiliation
- You have provided verifiable institutional contact details
- You have provided verifiable institutional contact details for an appropriate institutional signatory (see below)
- You have ethical approval in place and have included evidence (this is only required where the requested dataset concerns human participants)
- If your research is funded, commissioned or sponsored you should also include documentary evidence of this

If your application meets these criteria, a Data Access Agreement is sent to your nominated **institutional signatory**. An appropriate institutional signatory may be an individual from your contracts department, legal department or research office, depending on the nature of your organisation. *Your institutional signatory cannot be your supervisor, head of school, team leader or a senior academic colleague.*

Once the agreement is signed and returned, the Research Data Service team will arrange for you to have secure access to the dataset. The data creator will be informed that the dataset has been released to you.

How do you process applications for Controlled data?

The assessment of requests for Controlled data access is very similar to the Restricted data process, with two key differences. If your application meets the criteria given above, the Research Data

Service team will forward your request to the creator of the data (or a colleague nominated by them) to check that your planned research can be supported by the dataset. If there is some doubt, you may wish to amend your planned research. This stage can take some time and should be seen as a conversation between yourself and the creator of the data.

If you decide to proceed with your application, your data request form and any other documents you've sent for our consideration will be reviewed by the University of Bristol Data Access Committee (DAC). For current membership see the [Terms of Reference (UOB only)](#) for the DAC. The DAC review each request for a Controlled dataset separately.

If your request is approved, a Data Access Agreement is sent to your nominated institutional signatory. Once the agreement is signed and returned, the Research Data Service team will arrange for you to have secure access to the dataset.

How long does the process take?
We will endeavour to reply to all requests within 20 working days of initial receipt.

What if my request is refused?
If a request for data is refused because it does not meet the criteria given above, you may appeal with additional information (if appropriate). If you are not able to meet the criteria you may wish instead to make a request to access the data under the Freedom of Information Act (contact freedom-information@bristol.ac.uk).

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