UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

RESEARCH ACCREDITATION PANEL

Minute

Monday 7 December 2020

Present

Committee Members
Professor Paul Boyle (Chair)
Mark Brewin (HM Revenue & Customs)
Tricia Dodd (Independent member)
Chris Dibben (Independent member)
Andrew Garrett (Independent member)
Emma Gordon (UK Research and Innovation)
Roger Halliday (Scottish Government)
Sarah Henry (ONS)
Stephanie Howarth (Welsh Government)
Paul Lodge (Department for Work & Pensions)
Sarah Mathieson (Independent member)
Misa Tanka (Independent member)

Advisors
Jason Riches (Legal Services, ONS)
Peter Stokes (Research Services & Data Access, ONS)
Andy Wall (Chief Security Officer, ONS)
Ross Young (Data Protection Officer, UK Statistics Authority)
Simon Whitworth (Data Ethics, UK Statistics Authority)
Bill South (Research Services & Data Access, ONS))

UK Statistics Authority
Lily O'Flynn
Grazia Ragone

In Attendance
Deborah Wiltshire (UK Data Archive), for item 2
Cynthia McNerney (SAIL Databank), for item 2

Apologies
Siobhan Carey (NISRA)

1.   Introductions
1.1   The Chair welcomed the members to the nineteenth meeting of the Research Accreditation Panel.

1.2   The Panel welcomed Misa Tanaka to the RAP in her first meeting as an independent representative of the Panel. The Panel also welcomed Mark Brewin as a newly permanent member of the Panel, replacing Kevin Fletcher as HMRC's representative.

1.3   Members approved the minutes of the meeting held on 22 October 2020.

1.4 Lily O'Flynn updated the meeting with progress on actions from previous meetings. All actions were complete or otherwise in progress. ONS representatives confirmed that the requested update following the ONS's annual accreditation review will be presented at the next meeting of the Research Accreditation Panel.

ACTION: ONS representatives to provide an update on implementing recommendations made in the annual accreditation review report at the next meeting of the Research Accreditation Panel.

2.   Project Accreditation: New Projects
2.1 Lily O'Flynn presented the Panel with a report of the six projects that the RAP Secretariat agreed could be accredited via precedent, given their high level of similarity to previous projects. The Panel was satisfied that the precedent process had been applied rigorously and that the projects accredited via precedent were of significant similarity to projects previously accredited by the RAP.

2.2 Lily O'Flynn presented the Panel with a new process of project accreditation which will allow Panel members to review projects and discuss their accreditation outcome through a virtual collaboration platform. The Panel welcomed this process and highlighted the importance of completing projects accreditation through positive rather than passive agreement after implementation. The Panel agreed for this process to be implemented with immediate effect, with meetings of the Research Accreditation Panel instead taking place on a quarterly basis.

ACTION: The Secretariat to implement the agreed project accreditation process with immediate effect and amend the RAP meeting schedule to ensure meetings now take place on a quarterly basis. The Secretariat to review the Research Accreditation Panel terms of reference to reflect the implementation of the new accreditation process, and present to the RAP for agreement at a future Panel meeting.

2.3 Given the sustained use of the UK Statistics Authority's Ethics Self-Assessment Tool by researchers submitting research proposals to the Research Accreditation Panel for consideration, the Panel requested additional guidance on how the Ethics Self-Assessment Tool is weighted to provide proposed courses of action to enable researchers to identify and mitigate potential ethical risks associated with research proposals.

ACTION: The Secretariat to work with the UK Statistics Authority's Data Ethics team to provide additional guidance to Panel members on the rationale behind the UK Statistics Authority's Ethics Self-Assessment Tool.

2.4 The Panel considered twenty-two new projects and the following sixteen projects were accredited:

- 2020/108 – Local Labour Market Opportunities and Crime: Evidence from 300 Community Safety Partnerships in England and Wales
- 2020/109 – Understanding the impact of data localisation
- 2020/111 – Analysis of teacher pay and retention, and the business cycle
- 2020/112 – Financing Choices and Firm Dynamics
- 2020/113 – The Impact of Brexit on the UK Productivity
- 2020/115 – Evaluation of the Scale-Up North East Pilot Programme
- 2020/116 – The local impact of BIDs

- 2020/117 – Participation in and Progression Through Education in Wales: The Role of Family
- 2020/118 – Utilising routine data and machine learning techniques to discover new multi-morbidity and polypharmacy phenotype's associated with poorer outcomes, health, resilience and wellbeing in the Welsh population
- 2020/121 – ISCF Industrial Decarbonisation Challenge Evaluation
- 2020/122 – Regional levels of overwork and underwork across the UK
- 2020/125 – The Effect of Foreign Investors on Local Housing Markets: Evidence from the UK
- 2020/126 – A Unified Approach to Measuring the Costs of Violent Crime Risk
- 2020/127 – Establishing the impact of COVID-19 on the health of domiciliary care workers in Wales: developing a model for UK service planning and carer support
- 2020/128 – The Role of Area-level deprivation for private and public family law cases concerning children in England and Wales
- 2020/129 – Born into care: Newborns in care proceedings in Wales

3.   Processor Accreditation: eDRIS Accreditation Report

3.1   Andy Wall presented the Panel with an accreditation assessment for the electronic Data Research and Innovation Service (eDRIS). It was confirmed that eDRIS works closely with Edinburgh Parallel Computing Centre (EPCC) and National Records Scotland (NRS) to process and host data for research purposes.

3.2   The Research Accreditation Panel agreed that the accreditation process had been applied rigorously to eDRIS and took the decision to accredit the facility for the preparation of data for five years.

ACTION: The Chair to write to eDRIS to inform them of the environment's accreditation under the Digital Economy Act.

4.   Processor Accreditation: NISRA Census Office Annual Review Report

4.1   Andy Wall presented the Panel with the first annual review report of the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) Census Office.

4.2   The Panel welcomed this annual review, acknowledging that NISRA Census Office has demonstrated great progress towards maturity since its initial accreditation in 2019. The Panel agreed to validate the continued accreditation of the NISRA Census Office under chapter 5 of part 5 of the Digital Economy Act, based on the evidence provided in the annual review report.

ACTION: The Secretariat to write to the NISRA Census Office to confirm the continuation of accreditation under the Digital Economy Act, following the successful completion of this annual review.

5.   Processor Accreditation: Office for National Statistics Secure Research Service Annual Review Update

5.1   Peter Stokes presented the Panel with an update on next steps that the ONS Secure Research Service is going to take to improve the maturity of certain accreditation controls identified in the annual review report presented at the October RAP meeting. The Panel welcomed confirmation that the ONS SRS will show improvements in key areas, which will be demonstrated at the next environment's next annual review.

6.   Any Other Business

6.1   The Panel welcomed the inclusion of the SafePod Network in the scope of the DEA accreditation of the UK Data Archive and SAIL Databank. Peter Stokes confirmed the ONS SRS will also pursue the inclusion of the SafePod Network within the scope of the environment's DEA accreditation.

6.2   The Panel noted the Research Code of Practice and Accreditation Criteria Compliance Review Terms of Reference presented for information purposes. The results of this review will be presented to the RAP at a future meeting.

6.3   The Panel also noted the report of ongoing accreditation processes undertaken outside of Panel meetings, presented for information.

6.4   The next meeting of the Research Accreditation Panel is on Tuesday 9 March 2021.