

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

Research Accreditation Panel

Draft Minutes

Monday 23 September 2024

Microsoft Teams

14:00-17:00

Members Present

Paul Boyle (Chair)
Sue Bateman (Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs)
Ann Berrington (Independent Member)
Martin Bowyer (Central Digital and Data Office)
Mark Brewin (HM Revenue & Customs)
Andrew Garrett (Independent Member)
Emma Gordon (Administrative Data Research UK)
Alistair McAlpine (Scottish Government)
Alexander Singleton (Independent Member)

Advisers

Rhys Nadin (Data Protection Officer, UK Statistics Authority)
Jason Marsh (Deputising for Keith Nicholson (Security Advisor, Office for National Statistics))
Matthew Ford (Deputising for Jason Riches (Legal Advisor, UK Statistics Authority))

Other Attendees

Pete Benton (Office for National Statistics) (Item 4)
Luke de Charmoy (Office for National Statistics) (Items 5, 6, 7 and 8)
Colin Farrell (Office for National Statistics) (Items 5, 6, 7 and 8)
Jo-Anna Hagen (UK Statistics Authority) (Items 5, 6, 7 and 8)
Siobhan Tuohy-Smith (Office for Statistics Regulation) (Item 2)
Barnaby Watts (Office for National Statistics) (Item 4)

Secretariat

Daniel Beck (UK Statistics Authority)
Lewis Hopcroft (UK Statistics Authority)
Amy Curtis (UK Statistics Authority)

Apologies

Michael Chapman (NHS England)
Chris Dibben (Independent Member)
Tricia Dodd (Independent Member)
Roger Halliday (Independent Member)
Sarah Henry (Office for National Statistics)
Stephanie Howarth (Welsh Government)
Geraint Jowers (HM Revenue & Customs)
Paul Lodge (Department for Work & Pensions)
Andrew McHugh (Independent Member)
Philip Wales (Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency)

1. Minute and matters arising from the previous meeting

- 1.1 Members were welcomed to the meeting and apologies were received from Michael Chapman, Chris Dibben, Tricia Dodd, Roger Halliday, Sarah Henry, Stephanie Howarth, Geraint Jowers, and Paul Lodge.
- 1.2 Daniel Beck informed the Research Accreditation Panel (RAP) of updates to the minutes and introduced the new action table. The Panel were content with the new version of the minutes and action table. The minutes for the meeting on 28 June were agreed, and actions were reviewed. It was agreed that the Secretariat would review the existing actions in the table to ensure they are all still relevant and timely.

2. A Review of the Transparency Obligation in the Research Accreditation Criteria

- 2.1 Daniel Beck introduced a paper to seek clarification from the Research Accreditation Panel (RAP) on the transparency requirement set out in paragraph 34.1 of the Research Accreditation Criteria (the Criteria) by either considering the case to change the wording of the Criteria or whether RAP should draft guidance to accompany the Criteria. RAP members were invited to consider the justification for making a change to the Criteria and, if in agreement, consider whether an adoption of the Intelligent Transparency concept would be appropriate.
- 2.2 RAP discussed the proposal and considered the following points in discussion:
 - i. the proposed wording required further nuance to cover non-government analysts, who account for the majority of researchers using the Digital Economy Act (DEA) 2017, and to prevent researchers from deciding what can be published without limitation;
 - ii. the need to avoid different rules for government and non-government researchers;
 - iii. further consideration is required to determine whether it is appropriate to update the Criteria rather than the Research Code of Practice; and
 - iv. it would be beneficial for RAP to hold a follow up face-to-face workshop to discuss various nuances raised in discussion and provide full clarification on the Panel's interpretation of the transparency requirement in the Criteria.
- 2.3 RAP did not endorse the proposed re-wording of the transparency requirement within the Criteria. RAP recommended the UK Statistics Authority consider the points raised in the discussion for a future item.

3. Review of the DEA Accreditation Project Proposal Form

- 3.1 Daniel Beck presented a paper to the Research Accreditation Panel (RAP) requesting a review of the project proposal form. This paper highlighted areas of the form which the Secretariat have been informed would most benefit from review.
- 3.2 Members of RAP were invited to endorse a collaborative workshop discussing the barriers and challenges faced by users of the DEA project proposal form. RAP considered whether the proposal for a collaborative workshop with users of the DEA project proposal form would be appropriate and discussed the initial challenges outlined within the paper.
- 3.3 RAP agreed that whilst the project proposal form is important and should be considered during the proposed workshop, it would be beneficial to focus on a broader range of barriers and challenges.
- 3.4 The Panel were supportive of the proposed collaborative workshop and provided the Secretariat with considerations to support engagement with stakeholders.

4. Accrediting Programmatic Access to Administrative Data

- 4.1 Daniel Beck introduced a paper requesting RAP's view on where the current parameters for a programme of research lie. Barnaby Watts and Pete Benton presented use cases and outlined proposed requirements for the development of the scope of such a programme. Members of RAP were invited to review the use cases presented, advise where RAP sees the parameters

of a programme of analysis to lie and endorse a follow up item at the next RAP meeting to review the effectiveness of any agreed approach.

4.2 RAP considered the use cases provided and discussed examples of programmes of research which have previously been accredited under the DEA. The following points were raised by the Panel in discussion:

- i. it is possible to accredit a project proposal with a broad range of research questions and there are already examples of this;
- ii. the concept of accrediting very broad or mission-based programmes may negatively affect the understanding of the public good of the research, and therefore should not be applied;
- iii. programmes of research which are exploring the parameters of DEA accreditation should be flagged for RAP's review and not accredited via the Project Accreditation Tool (PAT); and
- iv. the Panel are supportive of a new type of variation request to quickly expand the research to include new research questions, reducing burden for researchers.

4.3 RAP were supportive of accrediting programmes of research under the DEA and were provided examples of where this had already previously happened, which informed further discussion. It was agreed that project proposals will be reviewed by RAP on an ongoing basis to establish the parameters for accrediting programmes of research.

5. Processor Accreditation: Secure Anonymous Information Linkage Databank (SAIL), Preparation and Provision of Data Review

5.1 Colin Farrell and Jo-Anna Hagen introduced a paper updating RAP with the outcome of the assessment under the DEA requirements for a decision on the accreditation of the Secure Anonymous Information Linkage Databank (SAIL).

5.2 The Panel were supportive of the findings and recommendation provided by the DEA assessors and agreed to continue the accreditation of SAIL for the preparation and provision of data under Chapter 5 of Part 5 of the DEA, based on the evidence provided in the accreditation report.

6. Processor Accreditation: Digital Health and Care Wales (DHCW), Preparation of Data Accreditation Review

6.1 Colin Farrell and Jo-Anna Hagen introduced a paper updating RAP with the outcome of the assessment under the DEA requirements for a decision on the 'preparation of data' accreditation of Digital Health and Care Wales (DHCW).

6.2 The Panel were supportive of the findings and recommendation provided by the DEA assessors and agreed to continue the accreditation of DHCW for the preparation of data under Chapter 5 of Part 5 of the DEA, based on the evidence provided in the accreditation report.

7. Processor Accreditation: Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) Census Office, Preparation of Data Accreditation Review

7.1 Colin Farrell and Jo-Anna Hagen introduced a paper updating RAP with the outcome of the assessment under the DEA requirements for a decision on the preparation of data accreditation of the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) Census Office.

7.2 The Panel were supportive of the findings and recommendation provided by the DEA assessors and agreed to continue the accreditation of the NISRA Census Office for the preparation of data under Chapter 5 of Part 5 of the DEA, based on the evidence provided in the accreditation report.

8. Processor Accreditation: Integrated Data Service (IDS), Provision of Data Accreditation Review

8.1 Colin Farrell and Jo-Anna Hagen introduced a paper updating RAP with the outcome of the assessment under the DEA requirements for a decision on the provision of data accreditation of the Integrated Data Service (IDS).

8.2 The Panel were supportive of the findings and recommendation provided by the DEA assessors and agreed to continue the accreditation of the IDS for the provision of data under Chapter 5 of Part 5 of the DEA, based on the evidence provided in the accreditation report.

9. Discussion-based Workshop Proposal

- 9.1 Lewis Hopcroft presented a paper with a proposal for a discussion-based strategic workshop to take place before the end of 2024. RAP were informed that a discussion-based strategic workshop, intended for Panel members only, would enable RAP to carefully consider various items discussed throughout the year and appropriate next steps. Panel members were invited to endorse the workshop and consider how the discussion-workshop should be structured and delivered to enable effective discussion, consider the items proposed within the paper and inform the Secretariat of items they would like to focus their discussions on. Panel members were asked to provide the Secretariat with their upcoming availability to assist with scheduling the strategic workshop.
- 9.2 Panel members discussed the items proposed for a discussion-based workshop and recommended:
- i. providing an understanding of the full extent of barriers and challenges faced by users at each stage of the data access journey;
 - ii. consideration of key performance indicators and actions is required to ensure RAP are fully informed; and
 - iii. further conversation on items from RAP's agenda throughout 2024 is required to address current challenges being faced by stakeholders.
- 9.3 The Panel were supportive of a discussion-based workshop, although it was agreed that this would be arranged after the Secretariat has delivered the external user workshop to gain a full understanding of the current barriers and challenges being faced.

10. Updating RAP's Terms of Reference

- 10.1 Daniel Beck introduced a paper providing RAP with an updated terms of reference, informing members that the existing version includes out of date references.
- 10.2 Members recommended that the tenure of Panel members requires consideration, ensuring any agreed measures from a review are included within a revised Terms of Reference, and advised that a deputy chair of the Research Accreditation Panel should be established by the Chair and the Secretariat.
- 10.3 The Panel approved the updated Terms of Reference and requested that the recommendations are covered the next time they are reviewed by the Secretariat.

11. Any Other Business

- 11.1 Daniel Beck requested Panel members to provide their availability for December's meeting which requires re-scheduling.
- 11.2 Lewis Hopcroft requested that Panel members provide responses to the Five-Year Re-Accreditation Application Form paper which was provided to RAP via correspondence.
- 11.3 The next RAP meeting is being re-scheduled for December 2024, with the exact date to be determined depending on Panel members availability.