UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

Research Accreditation Panel

Minutes

Thursday 15 May 2025
Microsoft Teams
12:00-13:00

Members Present
Paul Boyle (Chair)
Mark Brewin (HM Revenue & Customs)
Michael Chapman (NHS England)
Andrew Garrett (Independent Member)
Emma Gordon (Administrative Data Research UK)
Roger Halliday (Independent Member)
Sarah Henry (Office for National Statistics)
Stephanie Howarth (Welsh Government)
Mike Jones (Department for Work & Pensions)
Alistair McAlpine (Scottish Government)

Advisers
Nicola Shearman (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
Russell Black (Department for Business and Trade) (Item 2)
Julian McCrae (Office for National Statistics) (Item 2)
Barnaby Watts (Office for National Statistics) (Item 2)

Secretariat
Daniel Beck (UK Statistics Authority)
Stephanie Jacobs (UK Statistics Authority)

Apologies
Sue Bateman (Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs)
Ann Berrington (Independent Member)
Martin Bowyer (Central Digital and Data Office)
Chris Dibben (Independent Member)
Tricia Dodd (Independent Member)
Geraint Jowers (HM Revenue & Customs)
Andrew McHugh (Independent Member)
Alexander Singleton (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 Anne Berrington, Sue Bateman, Martin Bowyer, Chris Dibben, Tricia Dodd, Geraint Jowers, Andrew McHugh, Alex Singleton and Philip Wales.

1.2 The Chair thanked the Research Accreditation Panel (RAP) for attending at short notice and introduced the purpose and structure of the extraordinary meeting.

2. Project Application Introductions

2.1 Russell Black, Julian McCrae, and Barnaby Watts introduced the 'Analysis to Incentivize Business Growth' project application and answered RAP members questions, in particular regarding:

   i. the proposed data sets and use of Real Time Information data;
   ii. the proposed methodology;
   iii. the information provided in the application regarding bias; and
   iv. data owner approvals.

2.2 Julian McCrae and Barnaby Watts also introduced the 'NHS-E's Health, Work, Prevention and Inequalities (HWPI) Programme Including Health & Growth Accelerators' (HWPI Programme) project application and answered RAP members questions regarding the application's proposed methodology.

3. Project Application Discussions

3.1 Stephanie Jacobs invited the Research Accreditation Panel (RAP) to review the research proposals presented in the previous item, with a view to accredit them in line with Part 5, Chapter 5 of the Digital Economy Act 2017 (DEA), and to advise where any additional reporting measures were required.

3.2 RAP began the discussion by considering the HWPI programme project application.

3.3 RAP agreed to accredit the HWPI programme in line with Part 5, Chapter 5 of the DEA.

3.4 RAP then discussed the 'Analysis to Incentivize Business Growth' project and considered the following points in discussion:

   i. whether it is appropriate for data owner approval to be sought after RAP approval;
   ii. whether this project should be accredited as an exploratory project;
   iii. that this application should have emphasised explicit links between this application and a 'starting point' project already accredited with the same lead researcher; and
   iv. that this application could have been strengthened by including more research questions.

3.5 During this discussion, the Head of Legal and Data Services for the Authority informed RAP that data owner approval for a project prior to RAP accreditation was not a requirement of the Research Code of Practice and Accreditation Criteria and should not block the accreditation of this project if otherwise appropriate.

3.6 RAP agreed to accredit the 'Analysis to Incentivize Business Growth' as an exploratory project with Office for National Statistics data until data owner approvals are agreed with HMRC. RAP also agreed to host another extraordinary meeting to discuss an updated application once HMRC data owner approvals were agreed.

3.7 RAP agreed that for future applications researchers would need to provide more information regarding their project in the project application form, and that it would be difficult to accredit broader scoped projects without this additional information.

3.8 RAP also discussed the possible implications of accrediting a proposal prior to data owner approval. A potential risk that applicants might use a RAP decision to put pressure on data

owners to release data was discussed. The appropriateness of RAP making decisions prior to data owner approval needs to be considered at a later RAP meeting.

4. Establishing Parameters for Programmatic Access to Data under the Digital Economy Act 2017

4.1   Stephanie Jacobs introduced a paper presenting the RAP with a framework proposal to enable accreditation of programmes of research under Part 5, Chapter 5 of the Digital Economy Act 2017 (DEA). RAP members were invited to review the proposed framework for programmes of research by the Authority.

4.2   RAP requested that the framework was amended to include an approval process concurrent with the proposed milestone approach and agreed to provide further feedback on the framework to the Authority via correspondence.

5. Any Other Business

5.1   The next RAP meeting is scheduled for 23 June 2025.