UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

Research Accreditation Panel

Minutes

Monday 31st March 2025
Microsoft Teams
10:00-11:20

Members Present
Paul Boyle (Chair)
Ann Berrington (Independent Member)
Mark Brewin (HM Revenue & Customs)
Michael Chapman (NHS England)
Chris Dibben (Independent Member)
Tricia Dodd (Independent Member)
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
Colin Farrell (Office for National Statistics) (Items 3, 4, and 5)
Jo-Anna Hagen (UK Statistics Authority) (Items 2, 3, 4, and 5)
Paul Jackson (Research Data Scotland) (Item 6)
Richard Thomas (UK Longitudinal Linkage Collaboration) (Item 7)

Secretariat
Daniel Beck (UK Statistics Authority)
Amy Curtis (UK Statistics Authority)
Lewis Hopcroft (UK Statistics Authority)
Stephanie Jacobs (UK Statistics Authority)

Apologies
Sue Bateman (Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs)
Martin Bowyer (Central Digital and Data Office)
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 Sue Bateman, Martin Bowyer, Geraint Jowers, Andrew McHugh, Alex Singleton and Philip Wales.

1.2 The Chair introduced Nicola Shearman, the newly appointed head of UK Statistics Authority's (the Authority) Legal and Data Services and Data Protection Officer, and Mike Jones, the head of Department for Work and Pension's Central Analysis and Science Strategy division, as new Research Accreditation Panel (RAP) members

1.3 The minutes from the meeting on 04 December 2024 were agreed, and actions were reviewed.

2. **DEA Processor Accreditation Feedback from Processors on Capability Framework**

2.1 Jo-Anna Hagen introduced a paper to provide the RAP with a summary of the feedback received from Trusted Research Environments (TREs) regarding the capability framework used for processor accreditation under the Digital Economy Act (DEA) 2017.

2.2 RAP members were invited to note the feedback from TREs accredited under the DEA regarding the capability framework and its implementation and consider and comment on the high-level summary of proposed next steps and changes to the framework.

2.3 RAP were supportive of the proposed approach to make immediate amendments to the framework over the next three months prior to implementing more substantive changes from June 2025 onwards. RAP requested that TREs are consulted prior to the implementation of any changes to ensure their needs are met and lead to intended improvements.

ACTION: Jo-Anna Hagen to review the capability framework for processor accreditation, engaging with processors and other stakeholders. The review will include considerations on the best approach for collecting service delivery times.

3. **Processor Accreditation: UK Longitudinal Linkage Collaboration (UK LLC), Provision and Preparation of Data, Annual Review**

3.1 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 UK Longitudinal Linkage Collaboration (UK LLC) for the provision and preparation of data under Chapter 5 of Part 5 of the DEA.

3.2 RAP were supportive of the findings and recommendation provided by the DEA assessors and agreed to continue the accreditation of UK LLC for the provision and preparation of data, based on the evidence provided in the accreditation report.

3.3 RAP requested a one-page summary for future meetings to provide information on the latest maturity ratings for all TREs. RAP also queried TRE output checks and it was agreed that it would be beneficial to have an item on DARE UK's Semi-Automated Checking of Research Outputs (SACRO) at a future RAP meeting.

ACTION: Processor accreditation assessors to submit one-page summary of latest maturity ratings for all processors for future Research Accreditation Panel meetings.

ACTION: Secretariat to liaise with processor accreditation assessors and DARE UK to include an item on the Semi-Automated Checking of Research Outputs (SACRO) project at a future RAP meeting.

4. **Processor Accreditation: UK Data Archive (UKDA), Provision and Preparation of Data, Full Accreditation Review**

4.1 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 and preparation of data accreditation of UK Data Archive (UKDA).

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

4.3 RAP also requested that assessors collect metrics on service delivery times from TREs, ensuring these are standardised to maintain consistency.

ACTION: Secretariat to ensure metrics on processing environments service delivery times are provided to the Research Accreditation Panel (RAP) at future meetings.

5. **Processor Accreditation: Office for National Statistics (ONS) Data Access Platform (DAP), Preparation of Data Full Accreditation 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 preparation of data accreditation of Office for National Statistics (ONS) Data Access Platform (DAP).

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

5.3 RAP also considered whether they were appropriately informed of technological changes that occur within accredited processing environments. Colin advised that this could be formalised through the Secretariat, updating RAP on any upcoming changes within processing environments at future meetings when required.

ACTION: Colin Farrell to bring an item to a future Research Accreditation Panel (RAP) meeting to update on technological changes within Digital Economy Act (DEA) accredited processing environments.

6. **Applying the Digital Economy Act (DEA) for the Scientific and Statistical Research Enabled by the Researcher Access Service in Scotland**

6.1 Paul Jackson, from Research Data Scotland (RDS), presented to RAP the proposed adoption of the DEA and the principles of the Research Code of Practice and Accreditation Criteria for all qualifying scientific and statistical research projects enabled by the Researcher Access Service (RAS) Panel in Scotland.

6.2 RAP were invited to note the design of the RAS, its project approval pathway, the adoption of the DEA conditions and Code of Practice principles and provide advice for its implementation.

6.3 During discussion, RAP considered how a similar approach could be applied across all regions of the UK, ensuring consistency of the governance relating to the DEA and Code of Practice principles. RAP also expressed interest in understanding the views of data owners on whether this approach is feasible.

6.4 RAP were supportive of RDS's proposed adoption of the DEA and Code of Practice principles as long as RAP have the final decision on accrediting research proposals under the DEA.

ACTION: Paul Jackson to collect feedback from data owners to understand their views on the feasibility of the proposed approach of Research Data Scotland aligning research proposals with the Digital Economy Act (DEA) and Research Code of Practice and Accreditation Criteria.

7. **Accessing Data within UK Longitudinal Linkage Collaboration (UK LLC)**

7.1 Richard Thomas provided RAP with a demonstration on UK LLC Explore, showcasing the web-based data discoverability tool which provides search functionality with advanced filtering to enable researchers to identify datasets most suited to their research.

7.2 RAP members were invited to consider how UK LLC are supporting researchers with discovering and requesting datasets suitable for their research and whether best practice could be shared with other TREs.

7.3   RAP members welcomed the demonstration and expressed there are clear efficiencies made by UK LLC which are beneficial to researchers. RAP members recognised the importance of engaging with data owners when producing a comprehensive metadata catalogue.

8. Any Other Business

8.1   RAP were content with the supplementary information provided within the paper pack and were invited to review the forward agenda before providing feedback to the Secretariat to ensure important discussions are scheduled.

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