

Preconditions for UQ Honours students to access ABS microdata via DataLab

The DataLab is a complex data analysis service enabling researchers to work with the most secure and detailed microdata available through the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). The microdata contained in the DataLab environment is real time data that is de-identified and requires skilled users that are also able to maintain confidentiality and legal requirements.

This document outlines the procedures that a University of Queensland Honours student needs to complete to apply for access to ABS microdata in the DataLab environment.

Preconditions

The following preconditions must be met before a student can apply.

- The student must be working on a research project other than their own honours project. This would typically be as a part of a research group on a research project. The student must be under the supervision of an academic who is an experienced University of Queensland researcher (the primary supervisor).
- The primary supervisor and a senior executive* from the school or institution associated with the project being undertaken will be required to complete and sign the [ABS DataLab Referral form \(U15R1\)](#) and submit it to the ABS to obtain approval for the student to have access to microdata in the DataLab.
* The minimum level of authority required to be held by the senior executive must be at the level of Head of School or equivalent (see Step 2 below).
- By completing the DataLab Referral form (U15R1), the primary supervisor is indicating that they have:
 - at least three years of either quantitative research experience or university study with a significant component working with quantitative data
 - are working on the same project within the DataLab as the student
 - agree to direct, supervise and take responsibility for the work of the student, and have the agreement for this referral of a senior executive from the student's school or institution associated with the project being undertaken
- The primary supervisor must confirm that the student has skills with one of the statistical software packages (R, SAS, Stata and Python) used in the DataLab.
- **All parties must be aware that if the student breaches any terms and conditions of their [Individual Undertaking](#) or [DataLab Declaration of Compliance](#), the ABS may impose access restrictions on the student, the referrer (primary supervisor), the senior executive, and the organisation.**
- The student must be able to commit to the time required for the [Safe Researcher Training](#), data custodian approval timelines, and for the project.
- The student and supervising researcher must consider the timeframe of their project and need to plan ahead and provide adequate time to complete the application and approval process.
- The student must understand their obligations in using and managing microdata safely as outlined in the [Responsible Use of ABS Microdata](#) and [Microdata User Obligations](#)

Application procedures

Once all parties have addressed the preconditions above, follow the steps outlined below. These steps align with ABS application procedures.

Step 1 - Apply via ABS Registration Centre

Students must first register via the [ABS Registration Centre](#).

To be recognised as affiliated with The University of Queensland ABS organisational account, students must register with a UQ student email (e.g. s1234567@student.uq.edu.au).

In registering, the student agrees to the [conditions of use](#). For further details on registering and activating your account, go to [Applying for & using DataLab](#)

Note: The primary supervisor will also need to be registered with the ABS for DataLab access.

Step 2 - Primary supervisor completes referral form & seeks Head of School approval

The student needs to be vetted and signed off by a senior executive who confirms that the student complies with the preconditions for the application. This senior executive should be the Head of School (or delegate of equal authority within the School).

This confirmation must be in writing using the [ABS DataLab Referral form \(U15R1\)](#). The primary supervisor should complete the form, including the following detail:

- 'Project(s)' section: Project name and description
- 'The less experienced researcher will contribute to the project(s) by' section: Detail why the student requires access to ABS microdata and how this access will contribute to the research project

Once approved, the DataLab Referral Form should be submitted to the ABS by email to microdata.access@abs.gov.au. A copy also needs to be lodged with the UQ ABS Contact Officers in the Library by cc'ing the form to data@library.uq.edu.au

Before proceeding, students should consult the ABS instructions for [Applying for & using DataLab](#)

Step 3 - Apply for DataLab safe researcher training

The student will need to enrol in [DataLab safe researcher training](#). This training will cover shared responsibilities as a DataLab user, legislative requirements and appropriate output for ABS clearance and data release.

Training will be provided virtually/online and must be done before students can proceed. Project leads should be mindful of their project timeframe and whether the student is able to complete the training within the project's time constraints.

Step 4 - Required legal documentation

Once the DataLab safe researcher training has been completed, a series of legal compliance documents are required to be signed to allow the student researcher to proceed to accessing the DataLab. These documents include the [Individual Undertaking](#); [DataLab Declaration of Compliance](#); DataLab quiz; and additional documents relevant to particular datasets, if requested by the ABS.

Final steps

- [Submit a project proposal to the ABS](#). This will include the purpose and expected outcomes of the project, the datasets to be analysed, and the applicant's statistical experience. Students should seek their primary supervisor's input when completing this proposal. Templates are available from the [Applying for & using DataLab](#) page.
- [Approval, access and output clearance](#). Following approval, a DataLab account is created for the student and they will be able to access the DataLab.

If the student needs to use code, notes or data in the DataLab they will have to request [input clearance](#). Any analytical output and or notes or code that is to be used outside the DataLab are cleared by the ABS before release with an [output clearance](#).

Further information on the DataLab can be found in the [DataLab User guide](#).