



The [Open Science at the ABS Program](#) provides DataLab access for up to 50 research projects that commit to contributing to integrated data research capability and the development of enduring open science resources.

In addition to delivering high-impact research, participating projects will support capability development, knowledge sharing and the creation of reusable research resources that benefit the broader research community.

Project eligibility and selection criteria

To be eligible for DataLab access under the Open Science at the ABS Program, projects must meet the requirements outlined below. These requirements are intended to ensure participating projects are well placed to undertake high-quality integrated data research while contributing to the program's broader objectives of capability development, knowledge sharing and open science.

- 1. Project teams must demonstrate the expertise required to deliver the proposed research and provide meaningful opportunities for researcher development. The following requirements apply:**
 - a. Projects must be led by an Australian university or research institute for the duration of the project.
 - b. Lead researcher should demonstrate relevant research experience and capability in integrated data analysis.
 - c. Project teams should include at least one Early Career Researcher (ECR) and/or HDR student.
 - d. Project teams may include a maximum of five analysts.
- 2. Projects must demonstrate a strong potential for policy impact and broader societal benefit. Specifically:**
 - a. Projects should produce at least one open-access publication or report within the program lifespan.
 - b. Projects that align with one or more of the program's priority research domains are particularly encouraged, including:
 - Closing the Gap initiatives and Indigenous outcomes
 - Social determinants of health and health equity
 - Preventative health
 - Aged care and disability outcomes
 - Housing affordability and housing security
 - Labour mobility, workforce participation and productivity
 - Migration, settlement and humanitarian outcomes
 - Program evaluation and policy effectiveness



3. Projects must commit to contributing reusable knowledge and capability-building resources that can be shared with other DataLab researchers to support the broader integrated data research community. Participating projects must commit to contributing to at least one of the following activities:

- a. Developing content for eLearning modules and/or supporting learning materials. Indicative timing for contributions: March – September 2027.
- b. Contributing reusable code, analytical workflows or methodological resources to ABS knowledge sharing repositories. Indicative timing for contributions: March 2027 to April 2028.
- c. Presenting research methods, lessons learned or project outputs through the National Integrated Data Research Community of Practice and/or the National Integrated Data Research Conference and Showcase. Indicative timing for contributions: July 2027 to June 2028.
- d. Developing case studies, technical guidance, training resources or other capability-building materials. Indicative timing for contributions: March 2027 to April 2028.
- e. Contributing to other approved open science initiatives that support program objectives. Indicative timing for contributions: March 2027 to April 2028

All contributions must comply with relevant ABS content, metadata, documentation and AI-readiness standards.

4. Participating projects are expected to actively support the broader objectives of the Open Science at the ABS Program, including capability development, researcher community building, knowledge sharing, research impact monitoring and the creation of enduring open science resources. This may include:

- a. Participating in the National Integrated Data Research Community of Practice and related knowledge-sharing activities.
- b. Adopting the ABS Persistent Identifier Strategy, including the use of identifiers such as ORCID, DOI and/or RAiD where applicable to researchers, projects and research outputs.
- c. Participating in relevant capability development activities, including eLearning, training, workshops and other program initiatives.
- d. Contributing to program evaluation and continuous improvement activities through feedback, surveys, case studies and other monitoring and evaluation processes.
- e. Supporting the monitoring of research outputs, public benefit and broader program outcomes arising from participation in the program.



Access conditions

- The Open Science at the ABS Program provides access to the ABS DataLab for up to five analysts. Non-standard DataLab services and custom data integration activities are not covered.
- The access period is through to June 2028, during which all committed contribution deliverables must be completed, even if the broader project continues beyond this timeframe. Timeframes for the delivery of open-science research and capability-building contributions will be agreed during project establishment and must be met.
- All outputs should acknowledge that access is provided under the Open Science at the ABS program, including publication and presentations.
- Projects must meet program reporting requirements, including a 6-month update on progress against agreed participation requirements.
- Projects must comply with all applicable ABS DataLab access, security, confidentiality, governance and ethical requirements throughout their participation in the program.
- Non-compliance may result in withdrawal or recovery of costs for access.

Assessment considerations

Assessment of project submissions will consider both the quality of the proposed research and the extent to which the project supports the objectives of the Open Science at the ABS Program.

The following criteria will be considered when reviewing project proposals:

- **Relevance:** The extent to which the project addresses an important policy, research or societal issue and aligns with one or more of the Open Science at the ABS Program's priority research domains.
- **Impact:** The extent to which the project is likely to deliver meaningful research, policy and societal outcomes.
- **Innovation & contribution:** The extent to which the project will contribute to building capability, promoting knowledge sharing and strengthening the integrated data research community.
- **Feasibility:** The extent to which the project team demonstrates the expertise, experience and project planning required to successfully deliver the research and agreed program contributions.
- **Researcher development:** The extent to which the project promotes researcher development and meaningful participation for early career researchers across the project team.

Eligible projects will be assessed against each criterion using a four-point assessment scale that measures the extent to which the proposal demonstrates alignment with the criterion (limited extent to exceeds expectations).

Assessment outcomes will be considered alongside the overall objectives of the Open Science at the ABS Program and the desired mix of projects, institutions and capability-building contributions across the project cohort.



Application components

- Short CVs for lead researcher, highlighting relevant expertise and roles.
- Identification of Early Career Researchers (ECRs)/HDR students and their planned involvement.
- A clear project summary outlining the research aims, questions and methodology statement outlining key datasets, demonstrating feasibility and appropriate use of integrated data. An ABS DataLab Project Proposal is sufficient.
- A summary of the proposed contributions to Open Science at the ABS.
- A project plan with a timeline, showing realistic research output milestones and the proposed knowledge-sharing contribution commitments to be delivered within the program's funding period. Evidence of project readiness, such as ethics status or planned approvals should be supplied, where relevant.
- Agreement to funding conditions and participation requirements.

Submission process

- You can request an application form by contacting mydataportal@abs.gov.au.
- Complete the application form and send this, along with supporting documents, to mydataportal@abs.gov.au by **31 October 2026**. Applications are considered complete only when all required components are received.
- Applicants will receive confirmation of receipt once their submission has been successfully lodged through the system.

Assessment and selection process

Stage 1: Screening

- Submitted projects will be reviewed for completeness and assessed against the program's eligibility requirements before progressing to formal assessment.

Stage 2: Assessment

- Eligible projects will be assessed against the criteria by the Open Science at the ABS Review Panel. The Review Panel will comprise representatives from the ABS and the Australian Research Data Commons involved in delivery of the Open Science at the ABS Program.
- Projects will be assessed based on their potential impact, research capability, alignment with program objectives and proposed contributions to open science outcomes.

Stage 3: Selection

- Projects will be selected based on their assessment outcomes and the number of places available within the program.
- Selection decisions may also consider the overall composition of project cohorts, including diversity of research domains, institutions, researchers and proposed contributions.
- Selection outcomes may be released progressively through multiple intake tranches to support timely onboarding and effective program delivery.



Stage 4: Notification

- Successful projects will be contacted to confirm acceptance of a place in the program and to finalise participation, access and contribution requirements.
- Projects that meet the assessment requirements but are unable to be accommodated in the initial intake may be placed on a reserve list and considered should places become available.
- Projects that are not selected will be notified once assessment and approval processes have been completed. ABS will provide information on alternative options for funding DataLab access for projects not selected for the Open Science at the ABS Program.

Stage 5: Additional Selection Rounds

- If available places remain unfilled following completion of the initial selection process, the ABS may undertake one or more additional selection rounds or targeted recruitment activities to support achievement of the program's participation and capability-building objectives.

Stage 6: Onboarding and Commencement

- Successful projects will finalise any required participation and access arrangements before commencing participation in the program and receiving DataLab access under the Open Science at the ABS Program.

Program timeline

- Application period opens: 1 Oct 2026
- Application period closes: 31 Oct 2026
- Eligibility and completeness check: completed within 5 working days of receiving the submission
- Assessment period: Nov to Dec 2026
- Outcome notifications: released in 3 stages (mid-November, mid-December and end-January), with most selections finalised by mid-December.
- Contribution and access agreements executed: December 2026 to March 2027
- Project progress reports due: 1 June 2027, 1 Dec 2027, 1 June 2028 (final)

Contact and support

Applicants can contact mydataportal@abs.gov.au for clarification on eligibility, application requirements or assessment criteria.

This program is delivered in partnership with the Australian Research Data Commons and National Research Infrastructure for Australia.



Australian Research Data Commons

