

How to write a Data Access Statement

A data access statement, also known as a data availability statement, is a specific section of a publication that states where data that underpins the research analysis can be found and the conditions under which it can be accessed.

Placement of the data access statement

Many journals allocate a separate section of the paper template for the data access statement. Where no such section exist, it is advisable to include the data access statement in the acknowledgement of funder support.

Required information

It is advisable to provide the following information in a data access statement:

- The location where the data is hosted and may be accessed/requested. E.g. a Digital Object Identifier (DOI) of a digital repository or email address of a data custodian
- A description of any access conditions, e.g. data will be made available following an embargo period, data will be made available on request to bona fide researchers only
- A description of any usage conditions, e.g. a data transfer agreement may state that data cannot be used to identify participants, a Creative Commons licence may allow any use, on condition that the data creators are cited.

Consult guidelines provided by your research funder and journal for details on the citation format to use.

Examples

Open data hosted in a digital repository:

"data supporting this paper can be accessed through [repository name] at <https://doi.org/DOI.goes.here> and used under a Creative Commons Attribution (CC-BY) licence."

Restricted data available on request through a digital repository:

"Due to the ethically sensitive nature of the research, interview transcripts will be made available to bona fide researchers only, on condition they provide evidence of ethics approval and sign a Data Transfer Agreement. To request data visit <https://doi.org/DOI.goes.here>"

Secondary data available through a third party:

"This paper used third party data that the author does not have permission to distribute. Traffic pollution information may be requested from the traffic department of Brighton County Council at email@address.com. Quarterly labour force data can be accessed by visiting <https://doi.org/DOI.goes.here> and registering with the UK Data Service.

Physical data:

"Tissue samples used in the study have been deposited with the UK Biobank. Visit <https://doi.org/DOI.goes.here> for details on how samples may be accessed for research."

Further information:

- ESRC: Data Citation: What you need to know
<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding/guidance-for-grant-holders/data-citation/>
- LSHTM: Write a Data Access Statement
<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding/guidance-for-grant-holders/data-citation/>
- Nature: Data Availability Statements – guidance for authors and editors
<http://www.springernature.com/gp/group/data-policy/data-availability-statements>