

Annex 2: ADR UK Academic Lead Roles & Responsibilities

ADR UK Academic Leads play a central role in maximising the public value of [ADR UK flagship datasets](#) working in active collaboration with the government departments that own these data. Their contribution supports data owners in fulfilling their responsibilities to maintain, enhance and promote their flagship datasets in line with the ADR UK Flagship Dataset Framework (See Annex 1) and wider ADR UK strategic aims (see the ‘what we are looking for’ section in the funding opportunity specification). Overall, the aim of the Academic Leads is to drive up policy-relevant and impactful research using ADR UK flagship datasets.

These responsibilities may be delivered directly by the Academic Lead or in partnership with others – including ADR UK, data owning departments, Trusted Research Environments (TREs), and wider communities of practice reflecting the collaborative ecosystem required to unlock the full potential of flagship datasets. As part of this, it is important to acknowledge and recognise that disclosure and security will be a key concern for government departments when working with their administrative data, particularly as additional data linkages increase the number of variables accessible to researchers.

Academic Leads are also expected to work collectively as a cohort, learning from one another, sharing best practice, and offering mutual support to strengthen the overall research, capability, and impact landscape built around these nationally important datasets.

Objectives for Academic Leads (ADR UK) – in partnership with ADR UK

1. Strengthen researcher capability to use flagship datasets for public good research

Outcome focus: Researchers understand the data, can use it effectively, and have access to high quality support and resources.

Flagship dataset alignment: Facilitated

Key responsibilities

- Ensure researchers have clear routes to dataset-specific technical advice, including pre-approval feasibility assurance, providing support within your means and engaging data owners and communities of practice where needed
- Develop and deliver dataset-specific training, guidance materials and learning resources (see our [ADR UK Learning Hub](#) for existing ADR UK flagship dataset resources).
- Promote and help build repositories for code, exemplar projects, and publications to support reproducibility and shared learning.
- Develop or champion data descriptor papers that provide qualitative assessments, exemplar analyses, and richer context beyond metadata.
- Promote or develop publicly available summary statistics to improve understanding of the data

2. Represent researchers in the continuous improvement of flagship datasets and the wider researcher journey

Outcome focus: Researcher needs are understood and acted upon, and datasets evolve in ways that improve usability, quality, and impact.

Flagship dataset alignment: Accessible, Curated, Documented, Enhanced

Key responsibilities

- Collaborate with data owners to improve the quality of datasets and documentation, ensuring feedback from researchers on dataset-specific issues is considered and acted upon.
- Advocate for researchers in advising data owners on future dataset enhancements that maximise research value within the [five safes framework](#) and minimise disclosure risks.
- Keep the research community informed of updates, changes, and emerging issues to dataset improvements.
- Serve as an expert or peer reviewer for ADR UK outputs (e.g., Data Insights, Data Explained).

3. Build and sustain an active, engaged community of researchers using the data

Outcome focus: A vibrant, collaborative research community that shares learning, builds capability, and strengthens the evidence base.

Flagship dataset alignment: Facilitated

Key responsibilities

- Convene and facilitate a flagship dataset community of practice for example via user groups, discussion forums, and data owner-led engagement events. (See our Learning Hub for existing user groups and communities: [User groups & communities - ADR UK](#))
- Build relationships with academic departments and research networks across the UK nations to encourage uptake, collaboration and peer to peer learning.
- Champion ADR UK through communications and events and being a visible partner to the programme across government and academic research communities

4. Expand policy relevant and impactful use of flagship datasets

Outcome focus: More research that addresses real policy needs, reaches decision-makers, and demonstrates the value of ADR UK data.

Flagship dataset alignment: Broad

Key responsibilities

- Promote and raise awareness of flagship datasets and research across academia, policy partners and research funders.
- Contribute to identifying and communicating evidence gaps and priority research questions.
- Demonstrate the value of the data through exemplar analyses, case studies, or engagement activities.
- Advocate for meaningful engagement with lived experienced individuals/groups or representatives to support research