

ADR UK Research Fellowship

GRADE: GRading and Admissions

Data for England

The assessment process

As mentioned in the [Funding Opportunity specification](#), there are two parallel application processes to be completed for the GRADE Research Fellowship. An overview of the application review process is outlined below, and this document provides more detail about each of those stages.

1. Research Funding Approval (Je-S)

Following basic office checks, proposals will be sent to a panel of expert independent reviewers (ADR UK Research Fellowship Funding Panel). Reviewers will represent academic and non-academic experts including data owners and other government or public service representatives. Applications will be reviewed and scored by at least two reviewers based on the criteria below and read by additional Panel members. Final funding recommendations will be made at a panel meeting of all reviewers though these will be subject to full data owner approval. Full assessment criteria are provided in the [ADR UK Research Fellowship Specification](#).

In parallel to ADR UK's Research Fellowship Funding Panel's recommendation, **Ofqual–DfE–UCAS will use the Je-S and RAS forms for an initial feasibility check** and provide feedback to ADR UK in advance of the Funding Panel meeting to give assurance that applications are likely to be able to gain data owner approval and assist with the assessment of project feasibility.

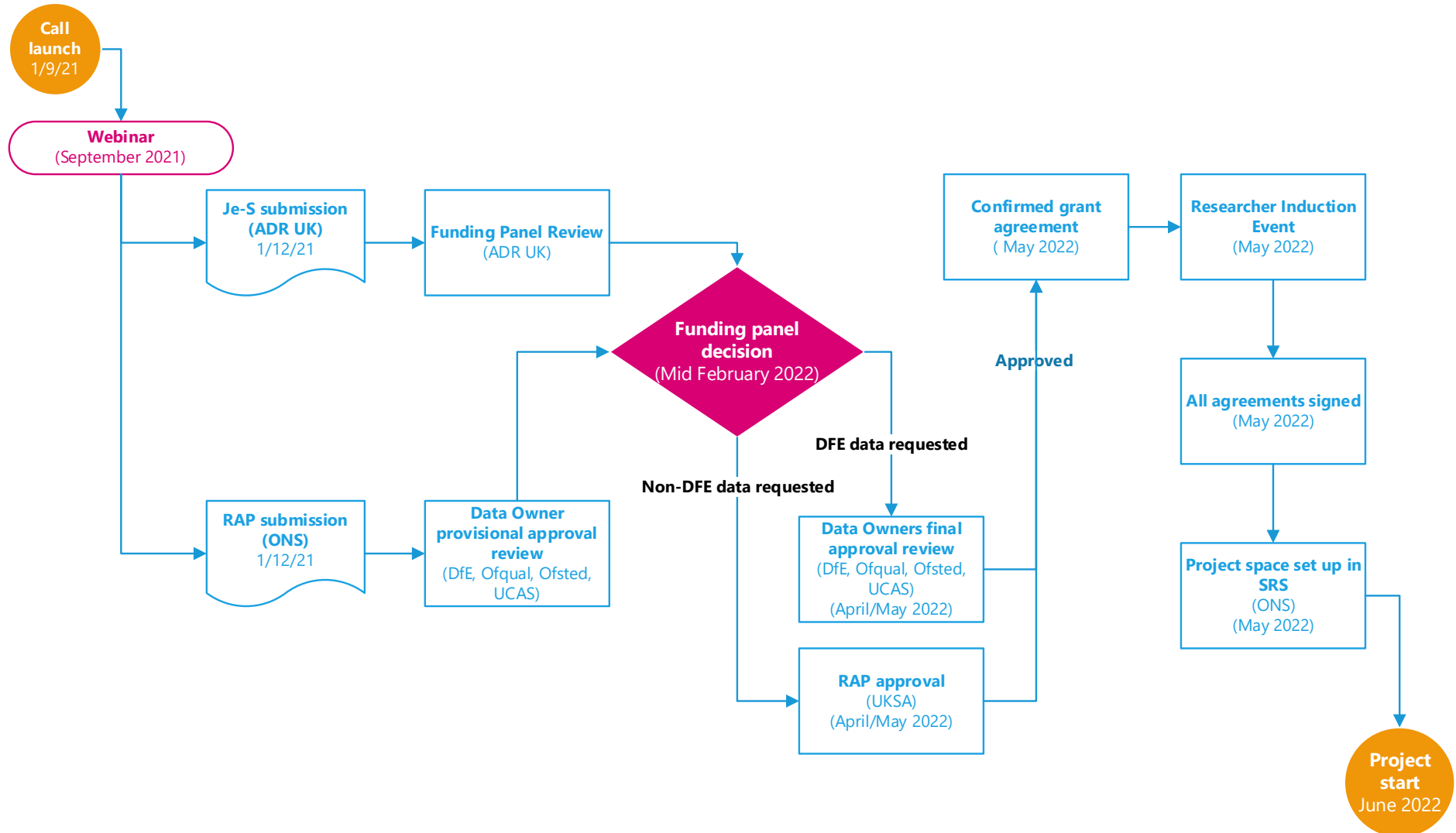
12 weeks

14 weeks

10 weeks

6 weeks

Indicative timescale for illustration only; dates are subject to change



2. Research project accreditation (RAS)

The process is initiated by the submission of the research project application process to ONS through the [Research Accreditation Service \(RAS\)](#) by the researcher. Depending on the specifics of the data requested through the project application form, researchers may be requested to submit supplementary information at a later stage.

Once the research project application is submitted through the ONS RAS, each application will be reviewed by ONS and by each of the organisations providing the data applied for. Full details of the data access application and review process is set out in the [GRADE Data Sharing Framework](#) produced by data owners.

2.1 ONS review

ONS will conduct two types of checks when a project application is submitted:

- An administrative check to assess whether all the necessary information has been provided and with a sufficient level of detail.
- A feasibility check, to assess that the research project can be conducted with the data that has been requested.

If necessary, ONS will provide guidance to the researcher on how to improve the application.

2.2 Research Accreditation Panel (RAP)

Once the application is deemed to be up to the required standard, ONS will send the application to Ofqual and/or DfE/UCAS for data owner approval and will submit relevant applications to the RAP panel for accreditation. A **supplementary form** is required for applications including DfE data, and these applications will not need to go to the RAP panel.

2.3 Data owners' review

Data owners will review the RAS application (including the supplementary form, if required) in two steps. First, there will be an independent review of each owner of the data applied for. This means that, for example, for Ofqual-only data, applications will only be reviewed by Ofqual. If the data applied for includes DfE and UCAS data, the two organisations will also review the application process independently. The focus of the data owner review will be on the purpose of the proposed research to assess whether this is in line with the organisation's remit. Where the researchers have been asked to submit a supplementary form, data owners will also assess whether there is a suitable legal basis for sharing data (see Table 1 below) for an overview of the reasons for sharing data).

Second, the outcome of each independent review will be submitted to the Project Board, where each organisation will be represented by at least one member of each data owning organisation with authority to approve the sharing of data. Each data owner will have a final say regarding the sharing of data they own, and the Project Board will not be allowed to overcome the decision taken by each individual organisation.

	Status	Organisation's remit	Reasons for sharing data
Ofqual	Non-ministerial government department with jurisdiction in England	Regulate for the validity of qualifications, ensure fairness to learners in England and promote public confidence in the system.	Facilitate the carrying out of programmes of research and retrieving evidence for purposes in line with its remit.
DfE	UK government Department	Responsible for education, children's services, higher and further education policy, apprenticeships, and wider skills in England, and equalities.	Promote research and analysis to provide guidance or advice on education and/or well-being of children in England.
UCAS	Charity operating the application process for British universities	Provide evidence into higher education access and outcomes (Higher Education Research Act 2017, Section 79).	Promote more comprehensive statistical analysis to allow the performance of tasks carried out in the 'public interest' (Article 6(1)(e) of the UK GDPR) and supports efforts to promote research under the Digital Economy Act.

Table 1. Organisations' remit and reasons for sharing data – an overview.

Access to the data requested will be granted assessing each proposal against the following criteria:

- Is there public benefit?
- Is there demonstrable analytical merit?
- Is the project feasible?
- Are any relevant privacy implications sufficiently mitigated?
- Has the project successfully completed a formal ethical review?

If the project is accredited, the researcher will be notified and provided with the documentation to sign to be able to access the data through ONS SRS. Once all the documentation is returned, the extracts of the data required can be prepared and the project can start.

2.4 Data Access feedback to researchers

The Data Access review process is rigorous, and feedback may be given to researchers at each stage of the process. This is to make sure that all the necessary information is provided, the contribution of the research is clear and the methodology is sound. At each stage of the process, researchers can expect to receive feedback and requests to make minor or major revisions to their proposal. This should minimise the risk that the project is rejected at the end of the process, therefore reducing the lead time from the submission of the research project application form to the actual access to the data.