

# Secure Data Center

## Application guide for sensitive GESIS data

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## 1 Introduction to the Secure Data Center

The Secure Data Center provides access to a range of disclosive research data that is subject to special access requirements and restrictions. Sensitive, restricted data can only be analyzed via the Safe Room in Cologne, as it cannot be downloaded. Researchers must first complete the application process. Once their project has been approved, researchers can book an appointment to visit the Safe Room. In the Safe Room environment, we provide access to a range of statistical and office software, including R, RStudio, Stata and SPSS.

On-site access to these datasets is also possible via the Safe Rooms at the UK Data Service Secure-Lab, Colchester UK and the German Microdata Lab (GML), GESIS Mannheim. Please see the table below for details of which data is available at which location, and on which days visits are possible.

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Safe Room Location	Availability	Data available
<b>GESIS Cologne</b>	Monday – Friday	All Secure Data Center data
<b>GESIS Mannheim</b>	Monday – <i>Tuesday</i>	ALLBUS, GLES, GESIS-PANEL
<b>UKDS, Colchester (UK)</b>	Monday - Friday	All Secure Data Center data

Researchers must first complete the standard Secure Data Center application process before scheduling a visit to any of these locations.

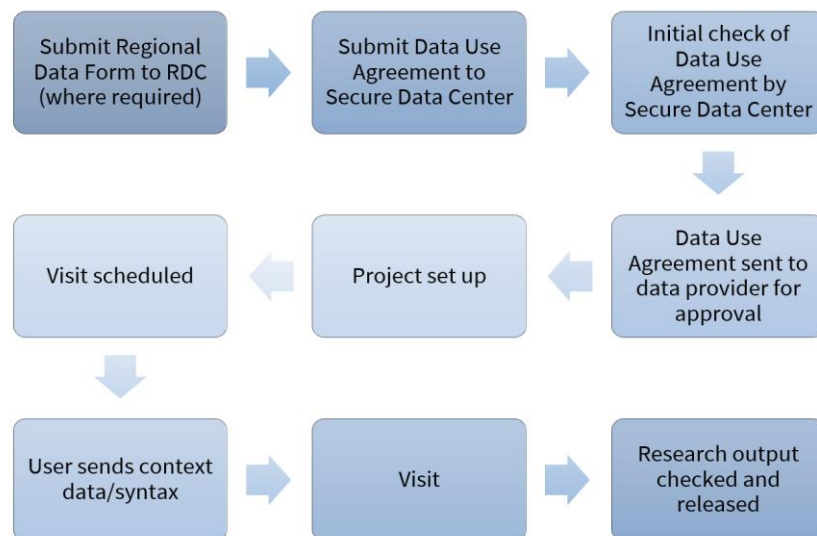
## 2 Requirements for access

Sensitive data are only available in the Secure Data Center to researchers who are able to fulfil the following requirements:

- You must be at least at the level of PhD students
- You must be from a recognised research institute
- You must have a clearly specified research project
- You must check any specific access restrictions for the study that you wish to use (these can be found in the studies' micro-site findable through the GESIS website search function)
- You must be able to travel to one of the designated Safe Rooms in order to access the data

## 3 About the application process

Applying for GESIS sensitive data involves several different steps that must be completed before access can be granted. We will advise you of any outstanding actions and be on hand to answer any queries you may have. Please read the guidance and complete all forms fully as this will prevent delays to your application.



### 3.1 The Regional Data Form

Some studies, such as ALLBUS, require researchers to complete a Regional Data Form and submit this to the data provider prior to applying for regional and geo data. You should check the relevant webpage for the dataset you are requesting and follow the instructions there carefully.

For example, on the webpage for the [ALLBUS study](#), you will find the following instruction with a link to the Regional Data Form.

Please contact the [ALLBUS User Service](#) first and send us the **filled ALLBUS regional data form**, specifying exactly which ALLBUS datasets and regional variables you need. Please note that due to the large number of enquiries we can't grant students access to the data.

gesis  
Leibniz Institute  
for the Social Sciences
fdz ALLBUS

### ALLBUS (GGSS) Sensitive Regional Data - Usage in the Secure Data Center (SDC)

Dear user of ALLBUS (GGSS – German General Social Survey) Sensitive Regional Data,  
for more precise advice and for preparing your ALLBUS working dataset we would like to ask you for some details of your project.

1. Please give your name and the institution you work for.
2. Please name planned title and publication format of your project that you want to use ALLBUS Sensitive Regional Data for (e.g. article in science journal, book chapter, monography). If you plan to publish your analyses in more than one publication, please name all of them.

Click on this link to open the 2-page form, which you should complete fully, giving details of which regional information you require. Please ensure all relevant fields are completed as incomplete forms cannot be processed.

Once completed, the form should be emailed to the relevant data provider.

### 3.2 The Data Use Agreement

Before access is given to the data, each project member who wishes to work with the data must complete our Data Use Agreement. The form can be downloaded under the section 'Completing the Data Use Agreement'.

The Data Use Agreement is a legally binding contract between you and GESIS-Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences so you should read it carefully as it outlines the terms and conditions of use of disclosive data via the Secure Data Center and includes:

- Information about your project, the conditions and period of usage rights
- Information about your security responsibilities, e.g. not disclosing or compromising any personal information, not carrying out unauthorised data linkage
- Information about penalties and breaches
- Our citation and publication requirements

If any changes are required to the information on the Data Use Agreement after it's submitted for approval, for example if you move organisations, your project scope changes or you require additional data, then you would need to complete and submit a new agreement. The new Data Use Agreement would then need to go through the approval process, causing delays to your project. Therefore, please complete your contract carefully. If after reading the section 'Completing the Data Use Agreement' you are still uncertain about how to complete the form, please contact the Secure Data Center at [sdc@gesis.org](mailto:sdc@gesis.org).

## 4 Completing the Data Use Agreement

The Data Use Agreement is a PDF form, which should be completed *electronically*. You can download the Data Use Agreement here: [Data Use Agreement](#). This forms your contract with GESIS and must be clearly legible. Therefore, Data Use Agreements that are filled out by hand will not be accepted. The information required is in four sections and guidance on how to complete these can be found in the following sections.

### 4.1 Personal information

**Last and first name:** There should be just one applicant named here, other project members must complete their own Data Use Agreement.

**E-Mail:** This should be your institutional email address NOT your personal email. In case of multiple institutional affiliations, please use the email address of the institution indicated in the contract.

**Institution:** This is the research institution to which you are affiliated. If you have multiple affiliations, please include the institution to which the project is associated.

**Business address:** This is the address for the institution named on the Data Use Agreement.

**Position of data recipient:** This is your job title or academic position, for example full professor, scientific associate, post-doctoral researcher.

## 4.2 Subject to this contract

Please include the details of all datasets that you require. For example, some studies that have additional specific variables, such as municipality ID, make the additional variables available under a different study number. Therefore, you will need to request both the survey data as well as the dataset with the geographical units. You can find the information requested about each dataset on the website via the GESIS search on <http://www.gesis.org/en>.

**Study title:** The exact name can be found in the data catalogue record for the dataset.

**Study number:** This is the ZA-Number (e.g. ZA5260) which can also be found in the data catalogue record.

**Persistent Identifier/DOI:** This is the Digital Object Identifier found in the data catalogue record.

**Where applicable: specific variables:** Please add the name of any sensitive variables that you are requesting separately to be added to data already available.

## 4.3 Purpose of usage

**Title of research project:** Title of the research project.

**Start date of research project:** Either official start of the research project or today's date.

**End date of research project:** This is the date your contract (and your access to the data) will expire. Contracts cannot be extended for legal reasons, so if you required extra time you would need to submit a new Data Use Agreement for a new project. Therefore, we recommend you allow plenty of time to allow for any unforeseen events, such as revisions required for a journal publication.

**Where applicable: (context) data:** If you would like to merge further data to the data requested in this Data Use Agreement, (for example external data provided by yourself or available at GESIS), please provide details here. You should include the name of the additional data, the source of the data and information on the variables and aggregation level. This is important information that the data providers require in order to assess whether they can approve the project.

**Description of research goal:** This should be a detailed description of your project, including the purpose of the research, what you are trying to find out and/or what hypotheses you are testing. This should be sufficiently detailed to enable the data provider to understand how you will use their data.

**Description of methodological approach:** Please include information on the research methods you plan to use, for example multi-level analysis, network analysis, regressions.

## 4.4 Signing and submitting the Data Use Agreement

Please sign your Data Use Agreement with your *full name*. This is a legally binding contract, so initials cannot be accepted as a signature.

You can insert your signature into the contract in two ways:

- (a) You insert a scan or photograph of your signature in the PDF using the "Sign" function. (Instructions can be found here <https://helpx.adobe.com/acrobat/using/signing-pdfs.html>.)
- (b) You print out the Data Use Agreement, sign it by hand, and then send a scan of the signed document.

Please check that you have provided all the information required. Once you are satisfied that you have fully completed the Data Use Agreement, please email it to the Secure Data Center **from your institutional email included in the contract** to [sdc@gesis.org](mailto:sdc@gesis.org). Please include in your email which access location you wish to visit – Cologne, Mannheim or the UK Data Service. Please note that in order to schedule visits to the UK Data Service, we will need to forward your name and email address to the UKDS team.

## 5 What happens next

Following receipt of your Data Use Agreement, we will process your application as soon as possible. Our team screen your application for completeness and feasibility. Once it passes the initial screening, we forward your Data Use Agreement to the data providers who then assess it and decide whether it can be approved. Applications are usually approved but there are occasions where a data provider may have queries, or they may decline the application. In this instance, you will receive feedback from the data providers so that you can address the queries and resubmit your application. We will confirm the data providers' decision to you by email. Once approval has been granted, we will proceed with scheduling a date for you to visit to the Safe Room and with the setting up of your project.

### 5.1 Turnaround times

We will start screening your application as soon as possible and keep you informed of the progress of your application. The application process starts from when you submit all your application documents to us. Turnaround times can vary but if the application is well prepared and approval is

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granted by the data owners with no changes required, you can expect to gain access to the data in approximately 4 weeks, although please be aware that some applications may take longer. If you require an update on a current application, please email us via [sdcs@gesis.org](mailto:sdcs@gesis.org).