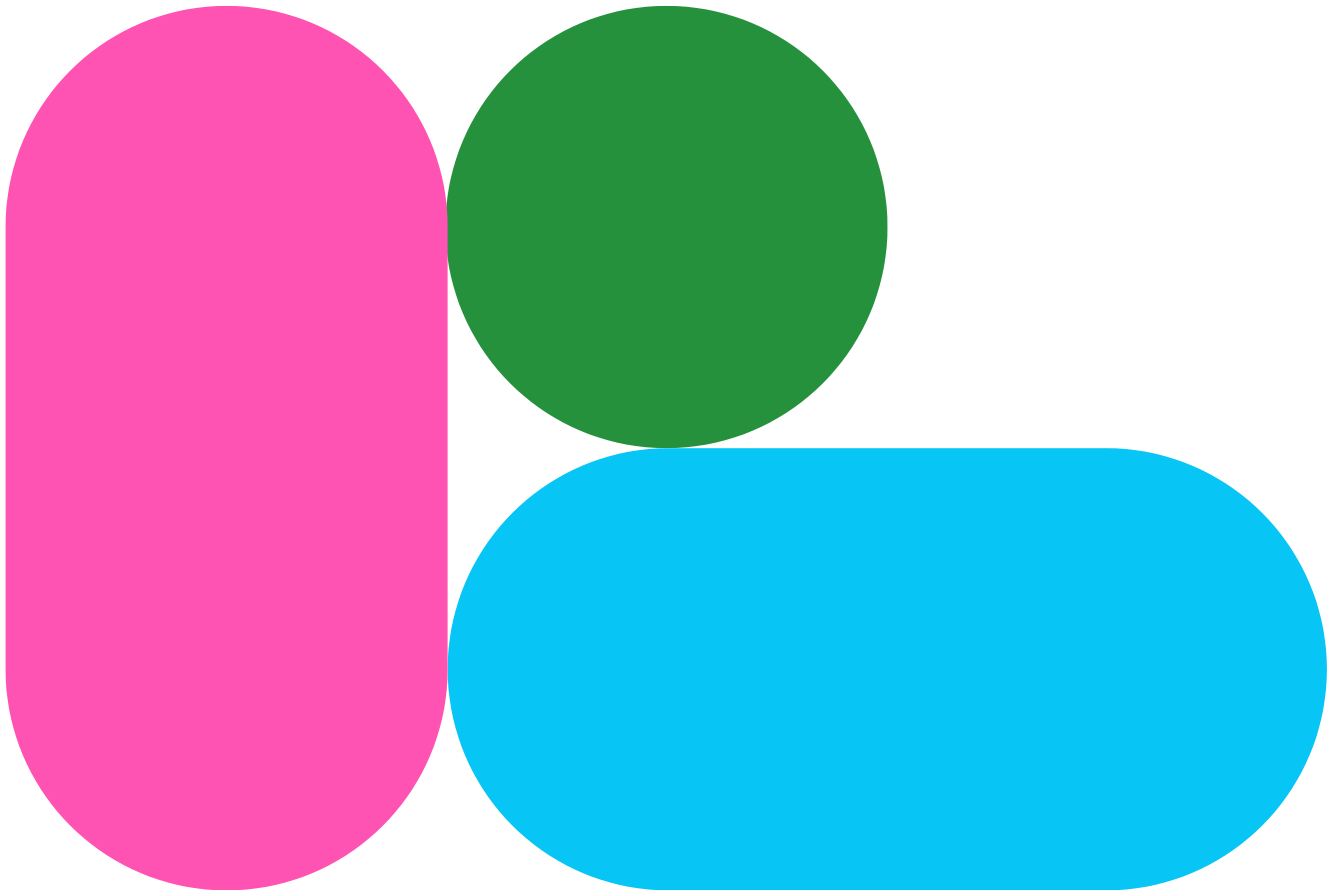




Research Network Code of Conduct

Membership terms for the Genomics England
Research Network

October 2024



The Genomics England Research Network encompasses member research institutions and their affiliated academic and clinical researchers who utilise data from the National Genomic Research Library (NGRL). The aim of the Research Network is to advance the understanding and practice of genomic medicine through discovery research and to discover potential diagnoses for participants who have consented for their data to be part of the NGRL. Additionally, we foster an interdisciplinary network that encourages knowledge sharing, collaboration, and innovative research development.

This Code of Conduct outlines ways of working and behaviours that your research institution has contractually agreed to with Genomics England through the Research Network Access Agreement (formerly Participation Agreement). The Code of Conduct does not cover all terms in that agreement but highlights the main ones that all users of the Genomics England Research Environment must adhere to. Please take the time to read this document carefully.

Key Research Network membership terms

a) Accessing the NGRL via the Genomics England Research Environment

- i) All research conducted within the Genomics England Research Environment must be registered in the [Research Registry](#) to enhance transparency, facilitate collaboration, and obtain approval according to Genomics England's 'acceptable uses of data' set by the independent Access Review Committee (ARC) and outlined in the NGRL Governance Framework. Project approval in the Research Registry must precede data analysis and occur at least one month prior to any data export request via the Airlock process.
- ii) All data export from the Research Environment is subject to review under the Genomics England [Airlock Policy](#). For guidance on adhering to this policy refer to the [Research Environment User Guide](#). Genomics England reserves the right to halt the data export process if any criteria outlined in the Research Network Access Agreement or Research Network Code of Conduct are not met.
- iii) Members of the Research Network must adhere to the [Genomics England Publication Policy](#). This requires submitting manuscripts and other research communications involving or referencing NGRL data to Genomics England for review at least ten (10) working days prior to external peer review or public presentation.
- iv) To retain Research Network membership and access to the Research Environment, members must register a new project or join an existing one within three (3) months of joining. Failure to participate in an active project for over six (6) months results in the loss of membership and Research Environment access.
- v) Research Environment logins are monitored to comply with the Five Safes framework: safe people, safe projects, safe settings, safe data and safe outputs. Access to the Research Environment is revoked if there has been no login activity for six (6) months, in compliance with our data governance. To reactivate login, members must contact the [Service Desk](#).
- vi) Research Network members shall keep their Research Environment login credentials confidential and refrain from sharing them with anyone. They should not share their screen, or screenshots, with unauthorised individuals.
- vii) Research Network members must promptly inform Genomics England of any changes to their affiliation, such as leaving or joining a new institution, by raising a ticket through Service Desk. Maintaining Research Network member status is contingent upon the new institution signing or having already signed the Research Network Access Agreement.

- viii) Research Network members must use the Research Environment solely for their approved and registered Research Network project(s) or for diagnostic discovery via approved [Clinical Research Interface pathways](#).
- ix) Where multiple research projects are registered with overlap in scope, but each has permission to publish, no restrictions will be applied. However, authors will be encouraged to collaborate where appropriate.
- x) If any Research Network member uses results or information from the Research Environment for diagnostic discovery, they must do so exclusively through the designated Clinical Research Interface pathway or with explicit, documented consent from the patient / study participant.
- xi) Research Network members must not re-identify, attempt to re-identify or assist or enable any third party to re-identify or attempt to re-identify any participant in any of the datasets within the Research Environment, unless explicit documented consent is provided by both the participant and Genomics England, through the Clinical Research Interface pathway.
- xii) If a Research Network member re-identifies a participant without consent, or assists, or enables any third party to re-identify a participant without appropriate consent in place, they must immediately notify Genomics England via the Service Desk and promptly provide Genomics England with a report produced in good faith on the circumstances surrounding the incident. The case will be reviewed via the Genomics England sanction process.
- xiii) Research Network members commit to participating in the annual Project Audit, as outlined by the Research Management Team. Non-completion of the Project Audit results in the member's project being marked as inactive. From time to time members may be asked to provide a report on their research activities within the Research Environment or participate in user research according to the Research Management Team's requirements.
- xiv) Access to the Research Environment may be monitored and recorded by Genomics England in line with the Research Network Access Agreement and the [Genomics England Privacy Policy](#).
- xv) Genomics England reserves the right to apply charges for the use of Genomics England's Research Environment, including for compute and storage. In such an event, we will make every effort to minimise disruption to ongoing work and will inform affiliated institutions with no less than six (6) months advance written notice.
- xvi) Research Network members must organise and manage their folders and any data generated from their analyses in accordance with the required naming convention and minimise retention of obsolete data. Failure to comply may result in Genomics England deleting folders and data without notice.

b) Data protection, security and confidentiality

- i) Genomics England's research dataset is classified as special category personal data under Data Protection Legislation, even though the data within the Research Environment is de-identified. Each user of the Research Environment is considered an independent Data Controller for processing personal data held by Genomics England.
- ii) Research Network members recognise the critical importance of safeguarding the privacy rights of patients and their relatives who contributed data and samples to the NGRL. Unauthorised disclosure, use, or processing of personal data outside the Genomics England Research Environment and for non-approved purposes is strictly prohibited.
- iii) If Research Network members wish to import data or tools into the Research Environment, they

must adhere to the procedure outlined in the [Airlock documentation](#). Genomics England retains absolute discretion regarding the permission to bring materials into the Research Environment. Please consult our [documentation](#) for guidelines.

- iv) Research Network members must exercise due diligence to prevent the introduction of malicious or harmful software into the Research Environment.
- v) Research Network members must securely maintain confidential documents and items, including electronic files, to prevent theft, unauthorised copying, disclosure, or use.
- vi) Research Network members must promptly inform Genomics England of any unauthorised use, disclosure, access, theft, or loss of confidential information.

c) Intellectual Property (IP)

- i) The Genomics England IP Policy for the Research Network and research conducted within the Genomics England Research Environment is detailed in the Research Network Access Agreement.

d) Research integrity and respectful conduct

- i) We are committed to fostering a respectful and inclusive environment for all members of the Research Network and Genomics England staff. We have a zero-tolerance policy for bullying, harassment, discrimination, or any form of abusive behaviour. Any such behaviour will be immediately escalated to Genomics England's Executive Leadership Team and the Access Review Committee, and appropriate action will be taken.
- ii) We expect Research Network members to follow the standards outlined in the [Concordat to Support Research Integrity](#) and commit to:
 - Upholding the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research.
 - Ensuring that research is conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal, and professional frameworks, obligations, and standards.
 - Supporting a research environment that is underpinned by a culture of integrity and based on good governance, best practice, and support for the development of researchers.
 - Using transparent, timely, robust, and fair processes to deal with allegations of research misconduct, should they arise.
 - Working together to strengthen the integrity of research and to review progress regularly and openly.

e) Breaching terms in the Research Network Access Agreement or this Code of Conduct

- i) If a Research Network member breaches any clauses in their institution's Research Network Access Agreement or this Code of Conduct, Genomics England may immediately suspend or terminate their membership, and consequently, their access to the Research Environment, by providing written notice. Any grave misconduct will be reported to the researcher's institution. Depending on the severity of the breach, additional sanctions may be applied as outlined in the NGRL Governance Framework.
- ii) Amendments to the Research Network Code of Conduct may occur periodically, but the terms will remain in effect regardless of these amendments or prior notice.

By becoming a Research Network member, you agree to abide by this Code of Conduct.

If you have any questions please get in touch with the Research Management team (research-network@genomicsengland.co.uk).