**Criteria for accessing data and bio-samples**

The METADAC data access committee considers the more sensitive access decisions for five longitudinal studies:  ELSA, Understanding Society, and the 1958, 1970 and Millennium Birth Cohorts, Natsal and IMAGINE ID. Other studies are likely to be added in the future.

New applications must be submitted at least 10 working days in advance of the METADAC meeting. Deadlines are published online at [**METADAC-meeting-dates**](http://www.metadac.ac.uk/data-access-committee/metadac-meeting-dates/). The Technical Review Team will identify the basic technical and scientific questions and highlight any problems, if possible resolving them before the METADAC meets.  The METADAC committee will discuss all applications and decide whether to approve, seek further information, request revisions or to reject the application. Approval may be subject to conditions.

The METADAC asseses whether applications meet the following criteria:-

[All criteria must be met if research proposal is to be approved]

1. The application has been submitted by bona fide researchers with sufficient experience to carry out the work proposed.
2. The application meets the criteria on the application form for seniority of the principal applicant.
3. There is negligible risk that the application will produce information that may allow individual study participants to be identified.
4. The application does not violate (or potentially violate) any of the consent given by the participants or their guardians.
5. The application does not violate (or potentially violate) any of the ethical permissions granted to the study\* from which data or samples are requested.
6. The application addresses topics that fall within the acknowledged remit of the study, as understood by participants.
7. There is no substantive risk that the application might upset or alienate study members or of reducing their willingness to continue as participants.
8. There is no substantive risk that the application might harm individuals in the study, or the study as a whole.
9. Includes a good quality plain language summary – following the METADAC guidance.
10. The application does not require access to a depletable finite resource (whole blood extracted DNA, blood, saliva and urine).  
    OR  
    If the application does require access to samples, then the criteria in the METADAC biosample strategy guidelines have been met. Applications for finite bio-samples are seen as being in competition with other potential research projects\*\*, and the quality of the science is reviewed formally (if necessary using independent external reviewers). The METADAC biosample strategy guidelines contain more detail of the process.

\* ‘Study’ refers to one of the longitudinal studies under METADAC governance.  
\*\* ‘Project’ refers to projects proposed in data/samples applications to METADAC.