

Human Cell Atlas Policy on Use of Unpublished Data in Atlas Assembly

HCA's [Data Release Policy](#) encourages the release of data as soon as possible after generation, while requiring downstream users of HCA data to refrain from publishing “global” analyses of unpublished data until the original contributor has done so first, in accordance with the 2003 [Fort Lauderdale Agreement](#).

The HCA Data Release Policy also recognizes that researchers may have concerns about releasing their unpublished data prior to publication. Yet the principles of usability, transparency, and reproducibility of scientific data could be compromised if the source datasets for any HCA Atlas are not publicly available. The HCA Organizing Committee has thus issued the following guidance for the use of unpublished data for the assembly of HCA Atlases:

- Contributors of unpublished data are encouraged to make their data publicly available immediately via the HCA Data Repository, in accordance with the HCA Data Release Policy;
- If the data contributors decline to do so, they must, at minimum, agree to make their data publicly available via the HCA Data Repository (for raw sequence data and detailed biological metadata) and Chan Zuckerberg CELLxGENE (for gene expression matrices, technical/sample metadata, and high-level biological metadata) as soon as the Atlas that incorporates it is published in a peer-reviewed scientific journal.
- If you are contributing unpublished data, you may request that your data be “embargoed” in a private HCA data repository until the organ/tissue/system atlas you have contributed to is published. At that point, your data will be made available publicly via the HCA Data Explorer and linked to the corresponding Atlas page on the HCA Data Portal. Data contributors will be notified before their data is made public.
- Access to embargoed data will be restricted to HCA Data Wranglers, the corresponding Atlas integration team, and anyone else specified by the data contributor (e.g., group members, collaborators).