

Terms of participation in the ICAER community

By joining ICAER as a community collaborator, you agree to the following:

1. Voluntary, unpaid participation: ICAER is a volunteer-driven project. We are not able to offer payment, salary, or financial reimbursement for your time or for any costs associated with participation (e.g. travel, printing, translation, or data collection expenses). All contributions are made on a voluntary basis.

2. Who can join: You do not need to be a NAEC to participate in ICAER; the project is open to any astronomy educator or researcher who wants to contribute. That said, we especially invite our NAECs to take part, given their local networks and experience. If you step down as a NAEC, you are welcome to continue your involvement in ICAER. If you don't continue, we simply hope that another member of your national NAEC team will be able to take over the coordination role in your country.

3. No AER expertise required: You do not need prior experience in astronomy education research to join. ICAER is a capacity-building project as much as a research project – we provide training resources, a seminar series, and support to make participation as easy and accessible as possible.

4. Local ethical approval is your responsibility: Before any data collection can begin in your country, you are responsible for obtaining the appropriate ethical and/or legal approval in your local context (e.g. from an institutional review board, national ethics committee, or school authority). No one outside your country can obtain this approval on your behalf. The OAE provides templates and guidance to support this process, but please plan for this to take time.

5. Data ownership and joint authorship: ICAER follows a collaborative data model: local collectors retain ownership of their national data and are free to publish from it locally (with appropriate credit to ICAER), while also contributing a copy of their dataset to the central, international comparative repository. Anonymised datasets will be published openly, so they remain a long-term resource for the AER community. Publications arising from the international dataset will credit contributing researchers, with authorship intended to meaningfully reflect each team's contribution. We will share clear authorship guidelines early on in the project to keep this process transparent.

6. Data protection and cross-border transfer: As currently planned, ICAER will use a two-tier design. The central comparative dataset is anonymous by design to allow the core data to be openly published and to keep cross-border sharing straightforward. National teams may choose to collect more data locally (e.g. richer demographics, locally relevant items, or data for their own follow-up work), including data that is not fully anonymous. Any such data stays with the local team; only the anonymous core is shared to the central repository. In the exceptional case that data shared with the OAE is not fully anonymous, a formal data transfer agreement between your institution and the OAE must be in place before any data is shared. Templates for consent, data management, and data sharing are provided by the OAE.

7. Time commitment and expectations: While participation is flexible, we ask collaborators to engage in good faith: responding to key communications, attending seminars or meetings where possible, and keeping the OAE team informed of your progress and any changes in your capacity to contribute. There is no minimum required time commitment, but we ask that you let us know if your circumstances change and you can no longer continue.

8. Right to withdraw: You may withdraw from ICAER at any time, without needing to give a reason. If you withdraw after contributing data, we will discuss with you what happens to that data going forward (e.g. whether it can remain part of the international dataset).

9. Use of the ICAER name and project materials: Materials, templates, and resources provided by the OAE (e.g. instruments, guides, consent form templates) may be adapted for your local context but should not be redistributed or used outside ICAER-related activities without checking with the OAE team first. When presenting or publishing work connected to this project, please credit ICAER and the OAE appropriately.

10. Expression of interest: To join, please submit a short expression of interest (a few sentences are enough) telling us:

- Why you would like to be part of ICAER, and
- What opportunities and resources you have for collecting data locally (e.g. access to schools, networks, language capacity).

Send your expression of interest to oae@astro4edu.org. We will follow up with next steps shortly.