Accelerated Cure Project for MS Data Challenge 2026 Application

The Accelerated Cure Project for Multiple Sclerosis (ACP) Data Challenge 2026 brings together researchers, trainees, clinicians, data scientists, and patient-scientists to explore one of the most comprehensive MS research resources available. Participants will have access to REAL-MS longitudinal patient-reported outcomes (PRO) data, returned multi-omics datasets (including RNA-seq, miRNA, genomics, and proteomics) hosted within the DNAnexus Titan Trusted Research Environment, and extensive clinician-reported and patient-reported clinical data linked to repository specimens. Through this challenge, teams will apply innovative analytical approaches to address important questions in MS biology, disease progression, symptom management, and clinical care. Multidisciplinary teams and early career researchers are encouraged to apply.

Applications are due **July 20th, 2026**. Application can be downloaded here.

Benefits to Data Challenge Participants
The ACP Data Challenge is designed to create meaningful value for researchers, trainees, and patient-scientists:

- **Access to high-value MS datasets**
  Secure access to REAL-MS longitudinal clinical and PRO data and ACP returned multi-omic datasets within a Trusted Research Environment.
- **Funding to support your work**
  Accepted teams will receive a $5,000 stipend to support execution of their project and participation in challenge activities.
- **Be recognized for contributions to MS science**
  Opportunity to present at the final showcase and be highlighted in a post-event white paper, webinar, and ACP newsletter.
- **Open doors to collaboration and career opportunities**
  Networking opportunities with sponsors, academic leaders, and patient-researchers for future research and career opportunities.
- **Contribute to people-powered research**
  Directly advance a patient-governed, FAIR, multi-omics research ecosystem in MS

Example Project Themes
Applicants are welcome to propose any scientifically sound project. Example themes that align with ACP's mission include:

1. **Multi-omic Integration**
   Integrate genomic, transcriptomic, proteomic, and clinical data to uncover novel biological mechanisms and disease pathways in MS.
2. **Demographic & Clinical Sub-Phenotypes**
   Investigate how disease biology, progression, symptoms, and treatment experiences vary across populations, including differences by sex, age, race/ethnicity, and other clinically relevant factors.
3. **Clinical Translation & Patient-Centered Outcomes**
   Connect biological signals with clinician-reported outcomes, patient-reported outcomes, disability measures, and quality of life.

Accelerated Cure Project for MS
Data Challenge 2026 Application

4. **Predictive Modeling & Data Science**
   Develop models of disease progression, symptom trajectories, treatment response, patient stratification, or biological clustering using advanced analytics and machine learning approaches.

Detailed dataset descriptions, data dictionaries, and supporting documentation are available in the ACP Data Challenge Data Catalog. Please contact sbuxhoeveden@acceleratedcure.org if you have difficulty accessing the documents or have any questions.

Applications will be evaluated based on:

- Scientific merit & novelty
- Feasibility of proposed analysis within the datathon timeframe
- Qualifications of the study team
- Potential impact on MS science and alignment with the ACP mission
- Inclusion and meaningful participation of early-career researchers
- Evidence of multidisciplinary expertise

Data Challenge Timeline:

July 20th, 2026	Application Submission Deadline
August, 2026	Final team selection, kickoff, and team onboarding
September-November 2026	Active project period
November-December 2026	Final symposium and presentations, synthesis of results

Data Challenge Deliverables:

- Lay and scientific summaries of research question, methods, and key insights
- Oral presentation at the virtual final event showcase
- Reproducible code, notebooks, workflows, or methodological documentation sufficient to support interpretation of the work
- A description of any derived datasets, features, models, or annotations generated through analysis of ACP data

Please send your completed application to sbuxhoeveden@acceleratedcure.org

Accelerated Cure Project for MS
Data Challenge 2026 Application

Thank you for your interest in the ACP Data Challenge!

Please Note:

1. Time-limited access to the data sets will be granted for the duration of the Data Challenge.
2. The research project title and participant's name and institution may be posted on the Accelerated Cure Project's website and other marketing materials for event visibility.
3. As part of ACP's commitment to open science and participant-powered research, teams will be asked to return derived research products (e.g., code, analytical workflows, annotations, derived variables, and summary results) generated from ACP data. These materials help ensure that knowledge created from participant-contributed data can continue to benefit the broader MS research community and accelerate future discoveries.
4. The ACP team is available to provide feedback and assistance with shaping your proposal. To schedule a consultation please contact: **sbuxhoeveden@acceleratedcure.org**

Section A – Applicant / Collaborative Group Details

Principal Applicant

- **Name:**
- **Qualifications (PhD, MD, etc.):**
- **Title & Position:**
- **Institution & Address:**
- **Email:**
- **Phone:**

Co-Investigators and Team Members
(Please add sections for additional team members, if applicable)

Name:
Qualifications:
Title & Position:
Institution & Address:
Email:
Phone:
Role in the Project / Expertise Contributed:

Team Expertise Summary
Provide a brief description of relevant expertise, including computational, clinical, statistical, or domain experience. Include early-career researchers and their roles

Section B – Project Proposal

Project Title:

Accelerated Cure Project for MS
Data Challenge 2026 Application

Project Synopsis:

Please use the subheadings below

1. Background (≤ 200 words):
2. Research Question(s) / Objectives:
3. Methods / Analytic Plan:
4. Expected Outcomes:
5. Anticipated insights, metrics, or visualizations
6. Potential scientific or clinical impact

Section C – Lay Summary

Provide a clear, jargon-free summary (≤ 500 words) describing the purpose, approach, and potential contribution to MS research.

Section D – Early-Career Involvement (if applicable)

Describe:

- Names and roles of early-career researchers
- Skills they will gain
- How the datathon will support their development

Section E – Dataset Access

Please select all datasets you intend to use:

☐ REAL-MS longitudinal clinical & PRO data

☐ Multi-omics data (RNA-seq, miRNA-seq, genomics, proteomics) via DNAnexus

☐ ACP Repository Clinical Data (Case Report Forms, longitudinal clinical data, and specimen metadata)

Summary of Data Required & Planned Analyses

Describe data elements needed, preprocessing expectations, and analytic tools/platforms you plan to use.

Accelerated Cure Project for MS
Data Challenge 2026 Application

Section F – Compliance, IP, and Event Policies

By signing below, you acknowledge and agree that:

Intellectual Property

- You/your team **own the analyses, methods, models, and deliverables** you produce.
- ACP retains ownership of all underlying ACP datasets.
- You grant ACP a **broad, perpetual, non-commercial licence** to use summaries of your deliverables for:
    - Research reporting
    - Educational content
    - Promotion/visibility of ACP resources
- ACP will not reproduce figures or visuals that may be used in future manuscripts without your explicit permission.

AI/ML Compliance

- Classical ML methods are allowed.
- LLMs and generative AI systems are **not** permitted.
- Pre-trained classical models may be imported into Titan for evaluation with advanced permission by ACP.

Data Use & Conduct

- No raw data may be exported, downloaded, or re-identified.
- DNAnexus access is limited to event duration.
- All results must adhere to ACP data privacy and IRB requirements.

Deliverables

- Participants must submit code notebooks/scripts (if applicable), a brief description of methods used, and a lay summary.

Disclaimer and Signature

I certify that my statements are accurate to the best of my knowledge. I understand that false or misleading information may result in revocation of access.
I agree to follow all ACP Datathon 2026 rules, data-use requirements, and IP terms.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Please send completed application to **sbuxhoeveden@acceleratedcure.org**