



Research permit application instructions for the Helsinki City Executive Office

Helsinki

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Before applying for a research permit

These instructions apply to the research permit form of the Helsinki City Executive Office. The City's other divisions and enterprises each process their own applications. For more information on the research permits of the different City divisions, visit the City's website: [City of Helsinki research permits](#)

The Executive Office processes research permits concerning its own departments or materials. The Executive Office also receives and forwards applications that concern two or more divisions.

[The City Executive Office](#) has seven departments:

- Economic Development
- Administration
- Human Resources
- Strategy
- Economy and Planning
- Communications
- Digitalisation Department

The Helsinki City Executive Office requires a research permit for all research projects, theses and reports involving data on its clients or staff or other materials managed by the Executive Office. Please read these instructions carefully and provide all the information requested on the online application form. Referring to attachments is not a substitute for verbal answers.

In this context, **research** refers not only to scientific studies, but also to bachelor's theses and various reports, pilots and other projects subject to a research permit that involve collecting or processing data on staff or clients, or other materials provided by Helsinki. The **researcher** is the person who carries out the research and processes the data. The **thesis supervisor** must always be a representative of the research organisation, not a member of City of Helsinki staff.

An incomplete application will delay the processing of the research permit.

Research permit applications are processed in their order of arrival, typically within 4–6 weeks of receipt. If the research project involves processing personal data belonging to special categories of personal data, the processing time may be longer. If necessary, the person preparing the research permit will contact the applicant for further information.

Please define the research materials or target group as precisely as possible.

Before applying for a research permit, determine what materials of the City of Helsinki you want to use or what group you want to interview. Keep in mind that the research project and its data collection must be feasible without an excessive workload for the staff.

Please note that one of the most important obligatory details to be provided on the form is 'contact person of the City'. Before applying for a research permit, you should contact the unit or department of the City Executive Office where the research is to be carried out. Ask the staff whether your project is feasible. Find a contact person for your desired service or unit with whom you can agree in writing (e.g. in an email conversation) on the practicalities of the project, such as data collection, recruitment of research subjects and presentation of the final research report. If the project is to be carried out in several departments of the Executive Office, one contact person from the Executive Office will suffice. You can search for contact persons in the [City telephone directory](#).

Please find out whether your research permit application will require any attachments.

The research permit application may require attachments such as:

- a research plan (obligatory);
- an information letter to subjects (if required);
- materials related to data collection, such as a consent form, a questionnaire, an interview template, an observation description or a statistical data request form;
- a privacy statement if the project involves collecting and processing personal data;
- a data protection impact assessment (if required); and
- a statement from the Ethics Committee (if required).

More information on the aforementioned appendices can be found later in these instructions.

The approval of an application is not yet a decision to authorise the project; the applicant is always informed of the research permit decision separately. The recruitment of research subjects and data collection may not start before the permit has been granted.

It is also worth noting that if your research project is not completed within the period of validity of the research permit, you must apply for an extension of your research permit using the same form. The completed project or a link to it must be sent to the following address: kanslia.tutkimusluvat@hel.fi.

Online application form and application instructions

The electronic form must be **signed electronically** with strong authentication (online banking authentication). If you are unable to identify yourself with strong authentication, please request a research permit application form by sending an email to kanslia.tutkimusluvat@hel.fi.

PLEASE NOTE! The form cannot be saved while in progress, so please make sure that you have all the necessary information available before filling out and submitting the form. Furthermore, do not use your browser's 'forward/back' buttons; instead, use the 'Back' and 'Continue' buttons at the bottom of the pages!

By submitting your contact details via the online form, you agree that your information will be stored in the City's case management system and used as described in the Privacy Policy: [Case and document management](#)

Obligatory fields on the form are marked with an asterisk *.

If you encounter any problems, please contact us: kanslia.tutkimusluvat@hel.fi
The topics of these instructions follow the order of the online application form.

Research permit applicant and research group members (project leader or person responsible for the research)

As the main applicant of the research permit, you must provide your own details on the form. Please provide an email address through which the person preparing your research permit can reach you for further information or requests for supplementary information, if needed.

Other research group members: The data materials may only be processed by persons necessary for the research and for research purposes. If there are other members in the research group or the data materials will be also be processed by persons other than the main applicant, please provide their details under 'Other research group members'. The following details are required from all persons processing the research data: time, place, signature, name in block letters.

Provide the signatures of the other research group members [on a separate attachment for the signatures of the research group members](#). The attachment can be joint (all signatures in the same attachment), or each member can submit their signature on a separate attachment. By signing the attachment, each member of the research group agrees to the terms of the research permit application.

The research supervisor's signature must be submitted in a separate signature attachment, see 'Research supervisor'.

All signatures must be handwritten or genuine electronic signatures. For example, a name typed in a cursive font is not acceptable as a signature.

Research supervisor

Provide the details of the research supervisor or the person who approved the research plan if the project is a thesis included in a qualification or degree. The supervisor's signature is obligatory.

The supervisor's signature must be added to the application [with a separate signature attachment](#) indicating the supervisor's name, date, place, signature, and initials, and the terms and conditions of the research permit application. By signing the attachment, the supervisor agrees to the terms and conditions.

The signature must be handwritten or a genuine electronic signature. For example, a name typed in a cursive font is not acceptable as a signature.

Research project

Title and subject of the research project (short description): Provide the full title of the research project and briefly describe the subject and key objectives of the research project.

Research plan as an attachment (obligatory): Provide a research plan as an attachment to your application, indicating the target group, research questions, purpose and objectives of the research, research methods, data collection and analysis methods, and how the data will be stored during the research and how it will be disposed of or archived.

The research plan must be completed when you apply for a research permit, which means that applying for a research permit is usually the last step before starting data collection.

Research level: Select the level of your research.

The research will concern the following departments of the City Executive Office:

Select the department(s) that your research will concern. The research project must have a designated contact person at the Executive Office before the research permit application is submitted. If the project involves more than one department at the Executive Office, one contact person at the Executive Office will suffice. Enter the same contact person details in the fields for the selected departments where the

contact person's details are requested. You can read more about the organisation on the [City of Helsinki website](#).

Specify the units of the research subject departments that are participating in the project: If the research project concerns several units, name all of the subject units here.

In addition to the City Executive Office, the research project concerns the following divisions: If the research project concerns other City divisions in addition to the Executive Office, select them and enter the names and email addresses of the contact persons for the divisions.

I have agreed upon the practical implementation of the research (e.g. interviews or material delivery) with the contact person: By answering 'Yes' here, you confirm that you have agreed in writing (e.g. in an email conversation) with the contact person on the practical implementation of the research, such as data collection, recruitment of subjects and presentation of the completed research report.

Has a research permit been previously granted for the project? Select 'Yes/No'.

Data collection method(s): Select all the methods that will be used to collect data.

Recording: Select the recording methods to be used in your research project. If a recording contains an interviewee's voice or image, this means that your research data contains personal data. Please fill out page 5 of the application and attach a privacy statement to the application.

Describe in detail the materials to be used in the research project and covered by your research permit application (documents, statistics, registers, interviews, etc.): Describe the data materials needed for the research project. Describe, as precisely as possible, what data you want to retrieve from which systems. Check with the contact person whether it is possible to collect said data.

Planned period of data collection and storage: Indicate the estimated period of time over which data will be collected. When selecting your starting date, please note that data collection may not start until a research permit has been granted. Note also that if your research project is not completed within the period of validity of the research permit, you must apply for an extension of your research permit using the same form.

Types of data in the research register and data protection impact assessment

Will the research project involve the processing of personal data? In accordance with the research plan, indicate whether personal data will be processed in the research project. If so, a privacy statement will be required as an attachment. Personal data means any information that can be used to identify a person.

Examples of common types of personal data include:

- Voice, photo/video of the person, name, email address, phone number and personal identity code. Examples of other types of personal data include car registration numbers, location information, network identifiers such as IP addresses and property IDs. Personal data also includes information that can be used to identify a person by combining said information with another information source.

Specific personal data includes:

- Personal data indicating a person's race or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs or trade union membership. Other types of specific personal data include the processing of genetic or biometric data for the purpose of unambiguously identifying a person, data concerning health and data concerning the sexual behaviour and orientation of a natural person.

You can obtain a privacy statement template from your educational institution or organisation.

The privacy statement must indicate the following information:

- the name and contact details of the data controller (usually the researcher or their organisation);
- the title of the research project;
- the party responsible for the research and their contact details;
- the basis for processing personal data, such as consent;
- the purpose, duration and implementation of the research project;
- what personal data will be collected and why;
- how personal data will be protected;
- what rights the research subjects have;
- whether personal data will be disclosed to third parties; and
- how personal data will be stored, whether it will be disposed of at the end of the project and how.

Data protection impact assessment: You must carry out a data protection impact assessment if the personal data to be processed includes personal data belonging to special categories of personal data and the research project seeks to derogate from the rights of data subjects set out in articles 5, 16, 18 and 21 of the GDPR.

The purpose of the impact assessment is to help identify, assess the severity of and manage the risks associated with the processing of personal data. The impact assessment is intended to be an ongoing process of identifying and managing risks. It describes the processing of personal data and assesses the necessity and proportionality of the processing and the risks arising from the processing of personal data, as well as the measures necessary to address said risks.

The aim of the impact assessment is to assess whether the residual risk is justified and acceptable under the prevalent circumstances. The impact assessment will help the controller comply with, document and demonstrate compliance with data protection legislation (tietosuojafi.fi/en/impact-assessments).

As a rule, the controller is the researcher/applicant for the research permit. Read more about the impact assessment on the [website of the Data Protection Ombudsman](#). If the conditions for carrying out an impact assessment mentioned in section 31 of the Data Protection Act are not met, the person preparing the research permit may, if necessary, ask the applicant to complete a data protection checklist for the research permit.

Storage of research data

Describe how you will store the research data securely during the research project: Describe the secure storage of the research data.

Describe how the research data will be disposed of or archived at the end of the research project: Describe the secure disposal of or archiving of the research data.

Attachments

Add any other necessary attachments that you have not included in previous sections of the application: In addition to a research plan, the research permit application must be accompanied by attachments such as all the materials needed for data collection. Please check that all the necessary attachments are included before submitting your application.

Ethical consideration or statement of the Ethics Committee (if needed)

Consider whether your research project requires a statement from the Ethics Committee or other ethical assessment. If the research requires an advance ethical assessment, this must be requested before applying for a research permit and starting the research, and the assessment must be attached to the application.

Templates for information letters and consent documents (obligatory if the research is based on questionnaires or interviews)

Information letter

The information letter is a bulletin for research subjects that must indicate, in plain language and in a way that the target group can understand, details such as:

- a brief description of the research project, its purpose and how the participant was selected for the project;
- protection of the participant's data and ensuring that it is processed and presented at all stages in a way that does not reveal individual details (data protection is explained in more detail in the privacy statement);
- duration of the research project;
- how the results will be reported and published.

Consent document

Conducting a questionnaire or interview survey at the Executive Office is based on the person's consent. This means that participants must always be asked for their consent to taking part in the project.

Voluntary consent must be requested from participants after obtaining a research permit, prior to data collection. Consent must be requested in writing when data is collected through methods such as interviews, workshops or observation. It must be signed by both the participant, i.e. the person who gives consent, and the recipient, who is usually the researcher. A copy must be provided to the person giving their consent.

Please note that only written consent yields personal data, in which case a privacy statement on the processing of personal data must be drawn up and attached to the application. Consent may not be requested from participants before a research permit has been granted. In a questionnaire survey, consent can be requested at the beginning of the survey through a section that confirms the participant's active consent, such as a checkbox. This makes it possible to verify the participant's consent afterwards. The consent must indicate that the participant has had an opportunity to familiarise themselves with documents such as the information letter and the privacy statements, as well as matters such as:

- how the participant's contact details were obtained;
- what information will be collected from the research subjects;
- who will process the data;
- what will happen to the research register after the project;
- the right of the participant to refuse and withdraw from the research project at any stage without any adverse effects on matters such as their client relationship or access to services. The participant must also know where to report their refusal.

Questionnaire form or interview template (obligatory in the case of a questionnaire or interview survey)

- Questionnaire form: Include the questions you plan to ask the participants.
- Interview template: Include the planned interview questions or themes of a thematic interview.

Other attachments (if needed)

- For example, a description of the observation process: how will it be carried out, who and what will be observed, how will the voluntariness of participation be ensured and what kind of data will be collected?

Commitment and electronic signature of the main applicant for the research permit

All persons who will process data contained in confidential documents or personal data registers must give their consent to confidentiality.

The main applicant must sign the application and the confidentiality commitment through strong authentication (online banking authentication).

The confidentiality commitments of the other members of the research group must be signed and submitted as an identical [separate attachment](#). The confidentiality commitment means an obligation of secrecy and confidentiality regarding the information obtained in the research project.

Contact details

If you have any questions about the research permit application process or the form, please contact us: kanslia.tutkimusluvat@hel.fi.

The logo consists of the word "Helsinki" in a blue, sans-serif font, enclosed within a blue speech bubble shape that has a small tail pointing downwards.

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