

APPLYING FOR RESEARCH ACCESS TO REGISTER DATA OF THE FINNISH CENTRE FOR PENSIONS

The data compiled by the Finnish Centre for Pensions in its Pensions Register and Earnings Register – data on pensions and data on pension-insured employment, respectively – are available for research use. Individual-level data are confidential but can be accessed for research purposes under freedom of information and protection of privacy legislation. The research must be scientifically grounded and have a detailed research plan. As a rule, the register data are not made available for commercial purposes.

Description of data content

The Pensions Register contains information about old-age pensions, disability pensions, part-time pensions and other pension benefits paid in the form of earnings-related pensions. The Earnings Register contains information about the individual's work career that gives entitlement to an earnings-related pension: periods of employment and self-employment, and unpaid periods due to unemployment, training and education, parenthood, etc.

The [privacy notices](#) (in Finnish) of Finnish Centre for Pensions register data are posted on the website www.etk.fi.

Further information and advice

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Research permit application

Applications for a research permit shall include a research plan which describes the need for individual-level personal data and explains why the research cannot be conducted without these data. If individual-level data are not required, the necessary information will be provided in the form of aggregate-level statistical data, and no permit application procedure will be needed. Privacy protection is also ensured for statistical datasets.

Free-format research permit applications submitted to the Finnish Centre for Pensions shall include the following information:

- the title of the research, name of research organisation, principal investigator and PI's signature, up-to-date list of research team, research plan,
- name of registrar (university, research institute or individual researcher),
- description of the register data required,
- description of how the data will be linked with other datasets,
- how the data will be protected against unauthorised use (data protection),
- where the research or research articles will be published, and
- how and when the research data will be destroyed or archived.

It is recommended that permits granted by other registrars are attached to the application if they are required to conduct the research. These include permits and authorisations issued by an ethics committee, the Social Insurance Institution of Finland (Kela), the National Institute for Health and Welfare (THL), Statistics Finland as well as a privacy notice for scientific research [tietosuojailmoitus](#) (Annex 4 is in Finnish).

Address for application submission

Applications for a permit to use the register data of the Finnish Centre for Pensions for research purposes shall be submitted to the Planning Department:

Finnish Centre for Pensions
Planning Department
Statistics Manager
00065 ELÄKETURVAKESKUS
(Finland)

Applications shall be signed and e-mailed in pdf format to tutkimusaineistot@etk.fi or sent to the postal address above. The Finnish Centre for Pensions does not have a registrar's office for application submissions.

Research permits granted by the Finnish Centre for Pensions

Research permits for the use of Pensions Register and Earnings Register data compiled from private and public sector pension providers are granted by the Finnish Centre for Pensions. Permits are granted for a fixed term and pertain to data that are necessary for implementing the research plan.

The permit decision is sent to the applicant by e-mail (pdf). The permit conditions specify the period of validity of the permit and any restrictions concerning data use. The researchers are required to sign a non-disclosure agreement before the data is made available.

Findata to issue data permit decisions from 1 April 2020

If the research combines social and health data from several different authorities, or if the data required are held by private social and health care service providers or stored in the Kanta service, permits to access the register data of the Finnish Centre for Pensions for research purposes are issued by Findata. In such cases, data requests and permit applications shall be compiled in accordance with Findata's guidelines.

[Findata](#) will be rolled out in phases:

- a help desk will be launched on 1 Nov 2019,
- data permits for development and innovation purposes will be issued from 1 Jan 2020, and
- for purposes of scientific research from 1 April 2020.

If the permit application is processed by Findata, the same authority will also provide an estimate of the costs of the permit decision and data extraction. The advisory services of the Finnish Centre for Pensions are generally free of charge unless they involve extensive configuration of data extraction.

Costs

The Finnish Centre for Pensions will charge the direct professional staff and IT costs for the permit decision and for register data extraction. Both the clerical costs associated with processing the application and the costs of data extraction are usually included in the same invoice. An estimate is given in advance of the work.

The cost of a new research permit is based on FTE pricing when the estimated professional staff input is a full FTE day (in 2020 the

cost of a research permit is €700 and a decision to extend data access €350). Prices for an extension of an earlier decision or a decision to expand the research team are determined on a case-by-case basis, depending on other associated manpower costs.

The costs of research services, research data configuration, finalising the data record descriptions and data extraction are based on actual working hours and invoicing is based on the costs of FTEs. IT costs are added to professional staff costs. The estimated cost of an individual dataset in 2020 is around €1,000 (€700/7.5 h).

If the dataset is small and only includes statistical data (no individual-level personal data), it may be provided free of charge.

Handling times

Permit applications are processed at the Finnish Centre for Pensions without delay. As a rule, the permit process takes one month on average. Careful preparation of the application documents prior to submission will help to ensure timely processing.

Once the permit decision has been issued, delivery of the research data will take one month on average. Data extraction from the Pensions Register and Earnings Register will be undertaken by the Planning Department of the Finnish Centre for Pensions in accordance with the provisions of the permit.

However, if documents are missing or if the research requires decisions and data extractions by several registrars, the whole process may take from one month to a full year.

Legislation

[Regulation \(EU\) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC \(General Data Protection Regulation\)](#)

[Data Protection Act \(1050/2018\)](#)

[Act on the Openness of Government Activities \(621/1999\)](#)

[Laki sosiaali- ja terveystietojen toissijaisesta käytöstä \[Act on the Secondary Use of Social and Health Data\] \(552/2019\)](#)