Checklist for students applying for a thesis research permit

This checklist is intended for students applying for a research permit to complete a thesis at an organisation in the Southern Finland collaborative area. In addition to this checklist, you must always consult the target organisation's own guidelines for conducting research. Data collection may begin only after the research permit has been granted.

Before applying for a research permit

Before applying for a research permit for your thesis, you must agree with the target organisation on the practical arrangements for conducting the study.

Task	**Completed**
Contact the unit, service or service area where you would like to conduct your thesis project. Present your thesis idea.	☐
If the organisation is interested in participating in your thesis project, ask the unit or service concerned to appoint **a contact person** at the target organisation.	☐
Agree with the contact person on how, where and when **data will be collected for the study**: Who will send the survey, interview or workshop invitations to the target group? What will be done in the workshops, or what topics will the survey or interviews cover? How long will they take? How many participants are you aiming to recruit?	☐

Together with the contact person, estimate **how much staff time the study will require**: How many workshops, surveys or interviews will be conducted? How long will each session take? Will assistance from the organisation's staff be needed, for example to recruit participants?	☐
Draw up a realistic **schedule for conducting the study**: Obtaining a research permit may take several weeks if you are asked to supplement your application, so do not schedule data collection to begin too soon. For surveys and interview studies, allow sufficient time for data collection so that minor delays do not result in the need to apply for an extension to the research permit.	☐
Agree with the contact person on **whether and to what extent the target unit may be identified**: May you identify the target organisation by name in your thesis, or should you refer to it only as "a wellbeing services county in Southern Finland"? How much information can you provide about the target unit without making individual participants identifiable?	☐
Determine whether **an ethical review** is required. Obtain the review before submitting your research permit application.	☐

Preparing the documents to accompany the application

Begin preparing the documents to accompany your permit application by reading and following the thesis guidelines of your educational institution or higher education institution. The documents required for a research permit application depend on the study design. However, a research plan must always be included.

Research plan	**Completed**
Explain why the topic is **important** and how the thesis may **benefit** the participants, the services, the target organisation or the development of the field.	☐
Clearly set out **the aim and purpose** of the study: What will be investigated, why is the topic being studied and how are the results intended to be used?	☐

Describe **the target group**: Who does the study concern, how many participants are you aiming to recruit and on what basis will they be selected? Avoid describing the target group in a way that could make an individual participant identifiable.	☐
Describe **the data collection process** step by step: Who will contact the participants, and when, how, where and by what means will the data be collected?	☐
Describe **the methods and materials** to be used: Methods may include interviews, surveys, observation, workshops or document analysis. Clearly describe what types of research data will be generated and how you will use them.	☐
Describe **how the research data will be managed**: In the research plan or a separate data management plan, explain how the data will be collected, for example using an electronic form or making audio recordings; where the data will be processed and stored; where they will be saved; and how they will be destroyed.	☐
Describe how the data will be **analysed** and how the results will be **reported**.	☐
Ensure that the research plan does not include the name of the contact person or the names of any other **members of staff at the target organisation**.	☐
Ensure that **the name of the target organisation**, unit or service has been **omitted or generalised** in the research plan as agreed with the contact person.	☐
Describe **the ethical considerations relating to the study**: Assess the ethical aspects of the study in practical terms. Address any potential risks and how they will be mitigated, the voluntary nature of participation, the information provided to participants and the protection of their privacy.	☐
Assess **your position as a researcher** if you are employed by the target organisation or otherwise have a close relationship with the participants, the research setting or the activities being studied:	☐

How will you ensure that participants are not placed in a difficult position and that the study is conducted objectively?	
Describe **how personal data will be processed**: Ensure that you collect only the personal data that are strictly necessary for conducting the study, in accordance with the principle of data minimisation.	☐
Ensure that all other documents submitted with the application correspond to the research plan and are **consistent with one another**.	☐
Ensure that the research plan has been **approved by your supervisor** and completed in accordance with your higher education institution's guidelines.	☐

Participant information sheet

A participant information sheet is required if clients, patients or members of the organisation's staff take part in or are invited to take part in the study.

Participant information sheet	**Completed**
Where possible, use your educational institution's or higher education institution's own **participant information sheet template**: Adapt the template to your research plan.	☐
Describe the **purpose and aim** of the study.	☐
Explain how the participant was selected for the study and state that participation in the thesis project is **voluntary**.	☐
Explain how the participant's **consent** will be obtained and documented. If necessary, prepare **a separate consent form** or explain how consent to participate in the thesis project and, where applicable, consent to the processing of personal data will be given and documented.	☐
Describe the main aspects of **the processing of personal data**: Explain how you will ensure that individuals cannot be identified at any stage of the study. More detailed information on the processing of personal data should be provided in a privacy notice, where applicable.	☐
Ensure that the participant information sheet states that **the target organisation has granted a research permit for the study**. Once the permit has been granted, add the date of the research permit and any reference number or other identifier to the information sheet.	☐
State **the duration of the study and the period during which it will be conducted**.	☐
Explain how the study results will be **reported and published**.	☐
Provide **your contact details** for further information: Include your email address and telephone number.	☐

Data collection materials

Data collection materials	**Completed**
Carefully prepare **the questionnaire, interview guide, workshop invitation, observation framework** or any other materials relating to data collection.	☐
Ensure that you collect only the information that is **necessary** for the purpose of the study.	☐
Ensure that your thesis supervisor has **reviewed and approved** all documents relating to data collection.	☐

Privacy notice

A privacy notice is required if personal data are processed as part of the thesis project.

Privacy notice	**Completed**
Determine whether your thesis will involve the processing of personal data. Please note that pseudonymised data are also personal data.	☐
Use your educational institution's or higher education institution's own **privacy notice template**, which should already include the information that must be provided to data subjects.	☐
Together with your thesis supervisor, determine who will act as the **controller**. For thesis projects, the controller is typically the educational institution or higher education institution, while the student acts as the contact person for matters concerning the processing of personal data.	☐
Determine **the lawful basis** for processing personal data. For thesis projects, the lawful basis is typically consent, except in register-based studies and studies requiring the long-term archiving of research data.	☐
Ask your **thesis supervisor** to review the privacy notice.	☐

Completing the research permit application

Task	Completed
Confirm with your **thesis supervisor** that the supporting documents for your application are in order and that you may submit your research permit application.	☐
Follow the **target organisation's own instructions** for completing the research permit application.	☐
Ensure that the research plan summary clearly explains **what** will be done in the thesis project, **why** it will be done and **what role the target organisation will play** in the project.	☐
Ensure that the application and its supporting documents are **consistent with one another** and do not contain contradictory information.	☐

After the research permit has been granted

Once the research permit has been granted, contact the target organisation's contact person to begin the study.

Task	Completed
Read the research permit decision and any permit conditions carefully before beginning data collection.	☐
Conduct the data collection in accordance with the approved research plan, the research permit decision and the supporting documents.	☐
If you encounter any **problems** with data collection or conducting the thesis project, contact your thesis supervisor and the target organisation's contact person. Advice is also available from the organisation's research permit advisory service.	☐
Ensure that the thesis data are processed securely and protected in accordance with data protection requirements throughout the study.	☐

Access to the data must be restricted to authorised persons, and the data must be appropriately protected, for example by using passwords.	
Ensure that no individual, family, unit or other party can be **identified** from the thesis report without appropriate justification and permission.	☐
Destroy, anonymise or archive the data in accordance with the research plan, the data protection documents and the permit conditions.	☐
Submit the completed thesis to the target organisation in accordance with the organisation's instructions.	☐