

HOW TO BECOME AN APPROVED RESEARCHER

Step 1 You may wish to discuss your request with the relevant team in the Research Support Unit who produce the dataset you require.

Step 2 Each individual researcher who wishes to access sensitive data must complete the Approved Researcher form and MUST sign the declaration. This should be sent to [rsu.nisra@finance-ni.gov.uk](mailto:rsu.nisra@finance-ni.gov.uk)

Step 3 Once RSU have received your completed form and signed declaration a decision will be made on whether you satisfy the published criteria to obtain Approved Researcher Status.

Step 4 RSU will notify you of the outcome of the decision. If it is necessary to refuse your application then the reasons will be included in a letter.

NISRA aims to process applications to be accredited as an Approved Researcher as quickly as possible and, usually, within three weeks.

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**NISRARSU020 - Application for Accreditation as an Approved Researcher**

The information you provide on this form will be used to consider whether you meet the criteria needed to be accredited as an Approved Researcher. A researcher is deemed 'Fit and Proper' when:

* They have demonstrated the appropriate knowledge and experience necessary for handling potentially disclosive personal information;
* They have provided satisfactory evidence supporting their application that illustrates their professionalism and technical competence to carry out research on potentially disclosive personal information;
* They have demonstrated a commitment to protecting and maintaining the confidentiality of data during the creation of outputs and publications.

**Your Details:**

*These details will be used to enable RSU to contact you. To meet the criteria needed to be accredited as an Approved Researcher you must be affiliated with an academic, public sector organisation or a research organisation on the Research Councils UK list of eligible independent research organisations (*<http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/funding/eligibilityforrcs/>).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Title |  |
| Name |  |
| Position |  |
| Organisation |  |
| Address |  |
| Telephone |  |
| Email Address |  |

**Your Experience :**

Outline your experience of research that has involved handling potentially disclosive personal information. *Any details you provide should focus on relevant experience and should illustrate your suitability to use personal information.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Information and its source |  |
| Research title and date |  |
| Your specific involvement |  |
| Statistical use of the information |  |
| Measures used for disclosure control and information security |  |
| Other relevant information  Include any other information you feel would help to demonstrate your experience in handling potentially disclosive personal information) |  |

**Your Professionalism:**

Provide membership details of professional bodies.

*Membership of professional bodies can include associations or societies. Current details are of more interest but you may provide details of past memberships where you consider them appropriate.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1 |  |
| 2 |  |
| 3 |  |

Provide examples of your contribution towards public policy or journal publications

*Include details of publications that provide evidence of your meeting the published criteria. Electronic links would be helpful.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1 |  |
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| 3 |  |

Include any other information you feel would help to demonstrate your professional competence.

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**Any other information for consideration:**

*If you feel that your application is insufficient when matched against one or more criteria then use this space to add any extra evidence you feel is relevant. If you have only limited evidence you should provide the name of a suitable referee. You must include any evidence which is relevant in any way.*

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**RESEARCHER DECLARATION:**

Access to personal information as an Approved Researcher is conditional upon signing this Declaration.

By signing this Declaration, you are confirming

* the accuracy of any information you provide to support your application,
* your understanding of the conditions specified below,
* you will abide by any other requirements communicated to you by NISRA relating to this use of potentially disclosive personal information.

I declare that the personal information provided to me shall be kept secure and confidential according to the terms of any agreements with the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA).

I understand that:

* Personal information means information which relates to and identifies a particular person (including a body corporate). Information identifies a particular person if the identity of that person is specified in the information; can be deduced from the information itself; or can be deduced from the information taken with any other published information;
* NISRA reserves the right to scrutinise any products or publications for disclosure control purposes before publication;
* I will be required to sign the Census Confidentiality Undertaking and may be liable to criminal prosecution under the Census (Confidentiality) (Northern Ireland) Order 1991 if I disclose this personal information to any other person;
* My lawful use of this information is only for the purposes of statistical research approved by the appropriate Approvals Group;
* I am required to bring directly to the attention of the NISRA assessment panel any matters or events that may affect my obligations under this declaration, my Approved Researcher accreditation, or any other matter in the written agreements relating to this use of personal information;
* I am authorised to access this personal information only when I receive from NISRA a written and signed confirmation, and only until the end date in that written confirmation;
* I understand that Approved Researcher status will be granted for a period of three years and reviewed thereafter. In the case of provisional Approved Researcher status I understand that this will be granted for a period of one year and reviewed thereafter.

Signed:

Print Name:

Date:

**INSTITUTIONAL GUARANTOR DECLARATION:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Title |  |
| Name |  |
| Position |  |
| Organisation |  |
| Address |  |
| Telephone |  |
| Email Address |  |

I hereby declare that:

* I am in a position to represent the researcher’s institution/organisation;
* I can, to the best of my knowledge, guarantee the accuracy and truthfulness of the information supplied on this form;
* I accept that myself and my institution may be liable to penalties in the event the researcher discloses data or breaches RSU policies or procedures;
* I authorise RSU to check the authenticity of the information I have provided including my identity, title/role and contact details;
* I authorise RSU to contact me if further information is required regarding this guarantee;
* I may be liable to criminal prosecution under the Census (Confidentiality) (Northern Ireland) Order 1991 if I disclose personal information to any other person;
* The researcher’s lawful use of this information is only for the purposes of statistical research approved by the appropriate Approvals Group;
* I will inform RSU immediately of any relevant changes in my circumstances;
* I will inform RSU immediately of any relevant changes related to the researcher application and the project.

Signed:

Print Name:

Date:

***Office Use Only*** Researcher Number: Application Number:

Decision made by:

Decision date:

✓🗶 grant ‘Approved Researcher’ status

✓🗶 grant provisional ‘Approved Researcher’ status

✓🗶 request further information

✓🗶 deny ‘Approved Researcher’ status

Researcher notified of decision:

Records Reference:

**Glossary of Terms**

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| --- | --- |
| Personal information | 'Personal information' is defined as 'information which relates to and identifies a particular person (including a body corporate) |
| Fit and proper person | A fit and proper person is one who is able to demonstrate, to the satisfaction of NISRA, that he/she:   * has the appropriate knowledge and experience necessary for handling confidential personal information. * has provided satisfactory evidence to support their application that adequately illustrates their professionalism and technical competence to use the data requested in the research proposal * is committed to protecting and maintaining the confidentiality of the data and their technical and physical security, during their use of the data and the creation of outputs and publications arising from their analyses. |
| Confidential | Confidential ‘personal information’ is information   * that specifies the identity of a particular person (including a body corporate) * From which the identity of a particular person can be deduced, or * From which the identity of a particular person can be deduced when taken together with other published information |