

Start here

Contact us

If you have an idea for a research project that requires administrative data you can contact the Northern Ireland Longitudinal Study Research Support Unit (NILS-RSU) to discuss your initial ideas.

NILS Research Support Unit

Contact the NILS Research Support Team on rsu@nirsra.gov.uk or by phone on 02990 388488. Following an initial discussion, you will be allocated a NILS Research Officer who will discuss criteria, eligibility and the application process with you.

Developing your application

A dedicated NILS Research Officer will work with you throughout your application and potentially during the resulting research. Your Research Officer will advise that you will require ethics approval for your project application. They will carry out a feasibility report and privacy impact assessment report, which will be submitted along with your project application. You will then complete two forms; a project application form and a researcher application form.

To complete your project application form:

The Research Officer will help you to complete a project application once a clear idea of your research project has been developed. At this stage, NILS-RSU will begin discussions with the relevant data custodians. Your completed project application form will be submitted to the Approvals Panel along with:

- ▶ Feasibility report
- ▶ Privacy impact assessment report
- ▶ Completed ethics approval

To complete your researcher application form:

The Research Officer will ask you for information to ensure your eligibility and will provide you with the forms and guidelines for you to complete your researcher application form. You will need to complete the following information:

- ▶ Your research background
- ▶ Your training history in secure data access
- ▶ Your role within an approved project team
- ▶ Your acceptance of our terms of use and breaches policy
- ▶ Details of your institutional guarantor

Your institutional guarantor will verify your eligibility.



Accreditation Training

Once your application has been accepted by the Approvals Panel, all researchers involved in the project will need to undertake Network specific Accreditation Training. This will take place as close to the project start date as possible.



Accepted



Rejected

Postpone pending further information

Your Research Officer will assist you to further develop your application in line with the Approval Panel's feedback.

If your project is rejected the Research Officer will provide you with the information you need if you would like to appeal.

Approvals Panel

The Approvals Panel will check your project application against a number of criteria, and decide whether or not the research application will progress. They can decide to accept, postpone the decision pending further information, or reject your research application.



Negotiating data

NILS-RSU negotiate on your behalf to obtain data from the data custodian*. The data custodians may set restrictions or make additional requests to make sure the data collections remain safe.



Preparation of data

The data requested will be matched by a trusted third party to ensure thorough de-identification and protection of privacy. The NILS-RSU Data Manager will prepare the data for you so that it is ready for your research.

Starting your research

You can now carry out your research according to the terms and conditions set by the data custodians at our secure premises in Colby House, Belfast. Your Research Officer will be on hand to help you if needed.

Approval of outputs

Your Research Officer will check results before publication to ensure that they are in line with those specified in your project application and that privacy is always protected. Mandatory statistical disclosure checks will be undertaken to safeguard data security.

Findings

On completion of your project you will be asked to complete a short summary report in line with the conditions of your access. NILS Research Officers can support you throughout your project, including when you finalise your analysis and share the results.

