# Template for information letter in research projects

This template can be used as an invitation to participate in a research project where participation is **voluntary**.

The data protection legislation requires that the information is **concise and easy to understand**. Use clear and simple language, which is tailored to the people who will read the information. Use headings, bullet points and avoid using complex words and concepts.

The template uses **layered information**, where the most important information is in the first part of the letter, and the rest comes in the second part. You can move information between the two parts if it works better for your project.

**Text in the template:**

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| --- | --- |
| Blue text | Guidance for what to include, the text must be removed or adjusted.  |
| Black text | Mandatory information, can be formulated differently, but not deleted. |

Do you want to participate in

[insert project title]?

 **Purpose of the project**You are invited to participate in a project where the aim is to

* Briefly describe the purpose of the project, outline the research questions/objectives
* Say whether it is a research project, a doctoral thesis, a bachelor’s/master’s thesis, other student project, etc.
* If you or others will use the collected personal data for other purposes (e.g. teaching, other research projects or archiving for future use), describe these other purposes.

**Why are you being asked to participate?**You are being invited to participate because

* Briefly describe why you are contacting these people, how you have selected them and, if possible, how many others are being invited to participate, so that they understand why they are receiving the information letter.
* If applicable, explain that you have received the person's contact information from others (and any permissions you have obtained to do this), or that others have sent out the information on your behalf.

 **Who is responsible for the research project?**

[Institution] is responsible for the personal data processed in the project.

* Write which institution is responsible for the processing of personal data (the data controller(s)). It is often the institution you are employed at/where you are studying. NB: this is the institution you have registered under "Data Controller" in the Notification Form.
* If applicable, name other collaborating institutions, or an institution that has commissioned the research.

**Participation is voluntary**
There will be no negative consequences if you do not want to participate or if you later request to have your personal data deleted.

**What does your participation entail?**

Describe:

* Which method(s) you will use for data collection (e.g., questionnaire, interview, observation) and what the scope of data collection is,
* Which personal data will be collected (e.g. name and contact information, background information, any special (sensitive) categories of personal data)
* How the data is registered (e.g. electronically, notes, audio/video recording)
* Describe whether you are going to collect data from other sources, such as data registries, medical records, student records, or from other people,
* If you are going to collect data from children: explain that parents can request to see the questionnaire/interview guide in advance

**Brief information about data protection**We will only use data about you for the purposes described in this letter. We will process personal data confidentially and in accordance with data protection legislation. You can read more about privacy below\*.
Sincerely,

Project Leader Student (if applicable)

(Researcher/supervisor)

\*If electronic information:

You can read more about privacy by clicking the button below.

\*If information on paper:

You can read more about data protection on the next page/below.

**READ MORE (additional information that must also be included in the letter):**

**Data protection - how we store and use your personal data**

* Describe who will have access to the personal data (e.g., the project group at the data controller(s), student and supervisor, only employees of the data controller, also external researchers at collaborating institutions, etc.).
* Describe the measures you will take to ensure that no unauthorized persons gain access to the personal data, e.g. "Your name and contact details will be replaced with a code that is stored on a list of names separate from other data", your store the collected data on a research server, locked/encrypted, etc.)
* Describe whether the participants will be recognisable in the publications or not, and, if applicable, which types of personal data will be published (e.g. name, age, occupation etc.).

If relevant, add:

* The name of any data processor that you will use to collect, work with, store personal data, e.g. transcription service or online survey provider,
* That people at other institutions will be given access to the collected personal data; name the institutions, outline the number of people, specify the type of data they will have access to,
* That personal data will be processed outside the EU (e.g. fieldwork, analysis, cloud service); name the institution and country, and describe security measures.

 **What gives us the right to process data about you?**

Here, you must choose the relevant legal basis for your project.

EITHER: We process your information based on your consent.

OR: We process your information for research purposes in the public interest.

Our recommendation is to use consent as the legal basis in student projects and public interest as the legal basis in research projects. You can read more about this on our website.

**Ensure that what you write here is the same as what you have checked off in the notification form.**

On behalf of [insert institution responsible (data controller)], the Data Protection Services at the Norwegian Agency for Shared Services in Education and Research (Sikt) have assessed that the processing of personal data in this project meets requirements in data protection legislation.

**What happens to your personal data when the project ends?**
The project is expected to end [approximate end date of the project]. NB: This should be the same date provided under "End of project" in your Notification Form.

The collected data will then be [anonymised/deleted/stored for future use]. Please describe what will happen to the personal data when the project ends. Note that “personal data” is all data that can be linked back to individual people.

If the personal data will be stored after the end of the project, you must describe:

* Why the personal data will be stored for future use (for example, for further research purposes (within the same field), educational purposes, replication purposes, verifiability (requirements from REK or NFR and EU)).

Note that if you are going to store personal data for teaching purposes, it may be necessary to use consent as a legal basis for this. Please contact your institution for advice.

* Which data will be stored (entire data set, with names and contact details, or only indirectly identifiable data, sound recordings/video recordings, etc.).
* Where the personal data will be stored (e.g. at the same institution, or at a research archive) and which institution will then be responsible for the data.
* Who can access the personal data (e.g. students and other researchers) and which data they can access
* How long the personal data will be stored (provide an approximate date for anonymisation, or, if applicable, specify that the personal data will be stored indefinitely).

**Your rights**
As long as you can be identified in the collected data, you have the right to request access to the data we are processing about you, to request that the data is corrected or deleted, and to object to the processing (NB. The right to object only apllies if the legal basis is Public interest). If you contact us regarding your rights, you will hear from us within a month. We will provide an explanation if we cannot identify you or if your rights cannot be exercised. You also have the right to lodge a complaint with the Data Protection Authority about how we are processing your data.

If you have questions or want to exercise your rights, please contact:

* [Insert name and contact details of project leader]. In student projects you must include the contact details for your supervisor/person responsible for the project.
* Our Data Protection Officer: [insert contact details for the Data Protection Officer for the data controller].

If you have questions about how Data Protection Services have assessed the project, you can contact them by email: personverntjenester@sikt.no, or by phone: 73 98 40 40.

**Consent form** (NOTE - should only be filled out if the project uses consent as the legal basis)

The text below is guidance for choosing the relevant check-marks and making other adjustments in the declaration. Delete this before you send out the document.

Consent can be obtained in writing (including electronically) or orally. NB! You must be able to document that you have provided information and obtained consent from the individuals whose data you are collecting if you use consent as legal basis. We recommend written information and written consent as a general rule.

* For written consent on paper, you can use the template provided here.
* For written consent obtained electronically, you must choose a method that allows you to document that you have received consent from the correct person.
* If the context makes it more appropriate to provide oral information and obtain oral consent (e.g. in research within oral cultures or among illiterate individuals), we recommend making an audio recording of the information and consent.

If parents/guardians are consenting on behalf of children or others without the capacity to consent, you must adapt the wording accordingly. Remember that the child’s/participant's name must be included.

Adapt the checkboxes according to what is relevant in your project. It is also possible to use bullet points instead of checkboxes, depending on what is a necessary part of participation for all and what is optional.

I have received and understood information about the project [insert project title] and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give consent:

* to participate in (insert method(s) for participation, e.g. online survey, interview)
* to participate in (insert other methods that are optional, e.g. follow-up interview) – if applicable
* for [indicate who] to provide information about me to this project – if applicable
* for information about me to be published in a way that I can be recognised (describe in more detail)– if applicable
* for my personal data to be stored after the end of the project for (describe purpose(s) for future storage and duration) – if applicable

I give consent for my personal data to be processed in this project.

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(Signed by participant, date)