Guidelines for the use of data processor agreements with researchers for access to register data at Statistics Denmark

Department of Political Science, Aarhus University

21 May 2021

Introduction

The Department of Political Science provides access to data from Statistics Denmark hosted on servers at Statistics Denmark to a number of researchers. The Department of Political Science at Aarhus University is the data controller.

The Department operates with several types of agreements that can provide the necessary legal framework for data access. The aim of the data processor agreements is to ensure that important research collaborations with key external researchers can be established.

This document outlines the guidelines and criteria for use of data processor agreements between the department and the external researcher's institution, which should be accompanied by a cooperation agreement that determines and details the research contents of the collaboration.

Data processor agreements: types of external researchers and criteria

Type A: Previous employees at the department.

Criteria:

    i.   Duration of full-time employment must be 1½ years or more.

    ii.   The access is necessary to finish an ongoing research project that is strongly connected to the department (e.g., a major part of the project has been conducted during employment). The publication(s) must be fully or partially credited the Department of Political Science, Aarhus University. Moreover, it must be impossible to transfer data and data responsibility to another institution – or doing so must involve huge efforts.

    iii.   Extensive experience working with data hosted on servers at Statistics Denmark and/or The Danish Health Data Authority.

Type B: Researchers who are closely connected to the department through their research-related activities.

Criteria (i.-iv. must apply, but not necessarily v.-vi.):

    i.   Active research collaboration with members at the department on the project in question. This usually implies that any publication from the project has at least one co-author employed at the department.

    ii.   Any publication partly or fully based on the data access must be fully or partially credited the department. This usually implies that at least one co-author is listed as affiliated with the department on the publication.

    iii.   At least one employee from the department with extensive experience working with data hosted on servers at Statistics Denmark and/or The Danish Health Data Authority is willing to be responsible for the external researcher's data access.

    iv.   The department in general has an interest in collaboration with the researcher.

    v.   Several previous or planned visits to the department.

    vi.   Previous or planned contribution to the research environment at the department (e.g., through the teaching of PhD courses, participation in workshops, participation in seminars, etc.).

The data processor agreements are limited to the duration of the purpose of data access and typically entered for a period of no longer than two years. Hereafter, the agreement may be renewed if the head of department approves a renewal.

The relevant research projects should be clearly defined in the cooperation agreement, and new projects are not to be initiated unless they are covered by the data processor agreement.

Under very extraordinary circumstances, the head of department can – on recommendation by the Committee on Data Security and GDPR Compliance – enter a data processor agreement with a researcher that does not fully meet the above criteria for type A or Type B if the head of the department deems the affiliation to be of substantial value to the department.

Application process

To apply for a data processor agreement, the researcher must submit an application to the head of department, including the following:

i. Motivation for the application (brief).

ii. Arguments for the applicant's qualification for an affiliation agreement based on the criteria mentioned above (along with any relevant documentation).

iii. In the case of applications based on connection, the application must come from both the external applicant and an employee at the department.

A list of the relevant projects (including titles of connected papers, co-authors, and the current status and timeline for completion of the single project) must be included in the application. The latest draft(s) of the relevant paper(s) should also be attached. Based on the application, the Committee on Data Security and GDPR Compliance will submit a recommendation to the head of department, who will decide whether the researcher should be offered a data processor agreement.