Eesti Teadusagentuur

Verification of a Research Ethics Committee Opinion

August 2026

The following explains how the Research Ethics Committee issues its opinion and how the information relating to that opinion can be verified.

The Research Ethics Committee assesses whether the proposed research and development activity complies with the principles of research ethics, complies with them subject to certain conditions, or does not comply with them. Where the Committee issues a favourable or conditional opinion, the Estonian Research Council makes a summary of the opinion publicly available in the Estonian Research Information System (ETIS). The published information includes, among other details, the title and a brief description of the research and development activity, the persons and institutions conducting it, a brief description of the methodology and the data to be processed, the Committee's opinion, and the date of the opinion. Therefore, the information published in ETIS is the primary source for verifying the existence, content and scope of a Research Ethics Committee opinion (subsections 4 (9) and 4 (16) of the Regulation on the Research Ethics Committee).

No separate digitally signed decision or confirmation is issued solely for the purpose of presenting an ETIS-published opinion as a document. Where the necessary information is publicly available in ETIS, the existence and content of the opinion can be verified from the relevant ETIS record. Reproducing and signing the same information as a separate document would not add substantive value to the opinion published in ETIS and would result in unnecessary duplication of documents and work. This approach is also consistent with the principles of purposefulness and efficiency in administrative procedure, according to which administrative proceedings are to be conducted as simply as possible and unnecessary costs and inconvenience are to be avoided (subsection 5 (2) of the Administrative Procedure Act).

Where the information needed to verify a particular application, opinion or the scope of an opinion cannot be determined from the information published in ETIS, the Estonian Research Council may issue an extract of the relevant information or documents held in ETIS and confirm its authenticity by digital signature. Such confirmation does not constitute a new or separate Research Ethics Committee opinion. It certifies that the extract corresponds to the information held in ETIS. The official certification of the correctness of an extract or a printout from an automated database is provided for in § 24 of the Administrative Procedure Act.