

## Statistics consultancy service – Preparatory questions

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Hi,

*You are interested in meeting us at the statistics consultancy service. To prepare for our (first) meeting we have put together a number of questions that we want you to think through, in order for our meeting to be as efficient as possible. Note that perhaps not all of the questions are relevant for you and your study.*

*We would prefer to get the answers to these questions and some background information about your thesis/project presented; a mini presentation of 2-4 minutes in the beginning of the meeting. You are welcome to bring a laptop. If you already have data, please bring these in a file to show us.*

### **General questions:**

Which question do you want answered with your study or your data material?

Can you formulate one main question or hypotheses without using the words "and" or "or"?

Is it really several questions that you want answered?

Which type of question is your main question? Do you want to know more about a possible relationship? Or do you want to compare different groups? Or do you wish to describe a change over time?

Can you formulate a possible result or conclusion for your study in one sentence?

Which is your population/target group? Once your thesis is finished: Who do you want to be able to draw conclusions about?

What is your sample? Who are included in the investigated group?

How do you plan to collect data? / How did you collect data? Are there any sources of error that you can identify regarding data collection?

Do you have any special statistical method in mind that you wish to use? Which one? Why?

Are there any recommendations/requirements regarding the statistical analysis at your department/course? Which? What does your department/course description require from your analyses? (Often there are no specific requirements, sometimes descriptive statistics are enough, sometimes specific methods like regression analysis or non-parametric methods are required, etc.)

Which variables are included in your data material? Alternatively: which questions do you have an intention to ask? Which response alternatives do the different questions have? Are the alternatives given or can the respondent answer freely? Are the response alternatives numbers that have a meaning in themselves (e.g. *income in kronor, or age in years*)? Or can the responses best be expressed in words (e.g. *"I agree"* to a given statement)?

Which variable is the most interesting one?

If you are to investigate relationships between different variables: Which is the response variable? Which are the most important explanatory variables? And perhaps: Why are the remaining variables included in your data/planned to be included in your data?

***If you are planning a study:***

Most important if your questions are about sample size: Which conclusions do you wish to make? Can you formulate a possible conclusion from your study? How large effect do you wish to be able to interpret as statistically significant?

***If you are evaluating a data material that you already have:***

What have you tried to do yourself with your data? What was the result? And perhaps: Which problems have arisen?

How many rows does your data file contain? How many columns? Usually individuals are represented in rows and variables in columns (where individuals can be persons, companies, countries, etc.). Is this the case in your data file? If your data contain measurements over time it is extra important to be able to describe how the data file is organized.

***If your question is about anything else than study planning or evaluation of a data material:***

Carefully explain to us why this question is important to you. In which context has your question arisen?

**Welcome to the Statistics consultancy service “Statistikhjälpen”**