
Purpose/Background

Due to the many initiatives underway to enhance individual learning, develop innovative and best practices, and determine program/initiative effectiveness, there are numerous requests annually to Division administration from a variety of sources to authorize research and evaluation projects.

In order to ensure a fit with Division priorities and mandate, as well as to maximize positive benefit to schools and the Division while minimizing overall negative impact to our school communities, the following required processes are to be undertaken prior to approval being granted on behalf of the Division to undertake research. These processes also apply to partnerships that require evaluation to be incorporated into the program design of joint initiatives.

Procedures

1. Below is a summary of possible research/evaluation initiatives that could take place within the Division:
 - 1.1 Individual Research
 - 1.1.1 Masters and Ph.D. Thesis

Masters and Ph.D. Thesis proposals will be reviewed, after acceptance by the *University Ethics Committee*, four months prior to the desired commencement date of the research.
 - 1.1.2 Division initiated research

Division initiated research will be reviewed four months prior to the desired commencement date of the research.
 - 1.1.3 Course-based Assignments

For course-based assignments, after permission is granted by the Principal(s), a submission is made by the researcher in writing directly to the Associate Superintendent of Learning, who will render a decision or call a special meeting of the *Research Review Committee*.
 - 1.2 Alberta Education Grants

In order to enhance a Division perspective, the committee, through the Associate Superintendent of Learning, shall be informed of the receipt of the grant.
 - 1.3 Research Partnerships

The establishment of Division research partnerships for the Division is the responsibility of the Research Review Committee Chair or designate. When these partnerships span either Education Centre departments or involve research in the schools, then the Committee Chair or designate will bring the research proposal to the *Research Review Committee* where a decision will be rendered.

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2. A sub-committee, named the *Research Review Committee*, will consist of the following members:
 - 2.1 Associate Superintendent of Learning
 - 2.2 Director of Schools
 - 2.3 Director of Learning Supports
 - 2.4 Other member(s) from time to time as determined by the committee

The committee will assign the position of Committee Chair, as needed, depending on the expertise and research familiarity of its members.
 3. Other individuals will be asked to attend in order to inform the committee concerning:
 - 3.1. Research methodology
 - 3.2. Ethics considerations, and/or
 - 3.3. Content expertise.
 4. All applications to undertake research projects or surveys within the school system or to obtain assistance from the system with respect to studies or research projects shall be submitted to the Associate Superintendent of Learning.
 5. After due consideration and applying the criteria identified in this Administrative Procedure, an application will, depending upon its nature, be approved or denied by the Research Review Committee.
 6. The Associate Superintendent, Business and Operations shall be responsible for the financial arrangements for research projects (if applicable).
 7. Research studies will be approved and conducted according to the following procedures.
 - 7.1 All applications shall be satisfactorily completed at least one (1) month in advance of the study and must be submitted to the Associate Superintendent of Learning. Timelines shorter than one (1) month will be considered if extenuating circumstances exist.
 - 7.2 The following criteria will be used by the Research Review Committee in considering research studies:
 - 7.2.1 The study shall have recognizable value to the Division and/or to education in general;
 - 7.2.2 The content of any proposed questionnaire or survey instrument must not be objectionable to staff, students or parents;
 - 7.2.3 The involvement of students or teachers does not require an unreasonable amount of time;
 - 7.2.4 The willingness of schools or individuals to participate;
 - 7.2.5 The number of research studies planned or underway in the Division; and

7.2.6 Preference for approval will be given to Division staff.

7.3 If the research has no relevance to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act and is not of a confidential nature, the Research Review Committee shall review and if appropriate, provide approval for the applicant to proceed.

7.4 If the research has FOIP compliance issues or contains confidential information, the Research Review Committee shall review and if appropriate, provide written approval to the FOIP Coordinator to review the research proposed on the following basis:

7.4.1 FOIP Coordinator provides Division FOIP forms to the applicant:

- “Proposal to Access Personal Information for Research or Statistical Purposes” (Form 290-1)
- “Agreement for Access to Personal Information for Research or Statistical Purposes” (Form 290-2)

7.4.2 Applicant signs and returns forms to the FOIP Coordinator.

7.4.3 Applicant provides signed original approval letter from their organization’s Ethical Review Committee. The approval letter shall include the name of the project and the researcher(s).

7.4.4 FOIP Coordinator provides completed forms (Form 290-1, Form 290-2) and applicant’s Ethical Review Committee approval letter to the Research Review Committee for final review.

7.4.5 Research Review Committee provides FOIP Coordinator with sign off for final approval to proceed.

7.4.6 FOIP Coordinator provides “approval to proceed” letter to applicant (cc to the Associate Superintendent of Learning) indicating:

7.4.6.1 The Division requires a list of schools (prior to study starting) in order to make the initial contact with the Principal.

7.4.6.2 Principals may choose not to take part in the study.

7.4.6.3 The Division requires a copy of the finished report.

8. The Research Review Committee shall, when necessary, ensure that the contents of a study are held in confidence.

9. All original signed documentation as well as a final copy of the research report is filed in Central Records at the Division Education Centre.

Reference:

- RVS AF290-A Engage in Research/Evaluation Application
- School Act
- Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act