



Administrative Procedures Memorandum

#: APC031

Research at the Waterloo Catholic District School Board

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November 2013, September 2016, September 2019

Memo To: All Staff

From: Director of Education

ACCESSIBILITY:

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PURPOSE:

The purpose of this document is to outline the procedures for conducting educational research within the Waterloo Catholic District School Board (WCDSB).

REFERENCES:

- The Education Act
- Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

FORMS:

- APC031-03F: [Research Application](#) (Online Form)
- APC031-04F: [Research Annual Summary](#) (Online Form)

REPORTS:

- N/A

APPENDICES:

- N/A

COMMENTS AND GUIDELINES:

Research in the Waterloo Catholic District School Board

The WCDSB supports research activities in its schools and departments. Individuals interested in conducting research involving WCDSB schools, staff, students or parents must follow the processes detailed in this memo. These processes apply to all research requests/activities related to:

- All research activities that take place on school premises during the school day.

- Recruitment of any study participants from WCDSB school communities (e.g., teachers, students, staff) for research activities that occur off WCDSB sites.
- All data requested from WCDSB for research activities occurring off WCDSB sites.

Although WCDSB is proud to collaborate with and support both internal and external researchers, it is also mindful that its priority is to students' education. Research activities must not compromise or interfere with students' access to high quality academic programs.

We will be accepting proposals for research projects pertaining to the following areas of focus for the 2019-2020 school year:

1. Mathematics and Literacy Pedagogy
2. Assessment and Evaluation to support student learning
3. Student Health and Well-being
4. Early Years Education (Kindergarten to Grade 2) related to self-regulation
5. Innovation and Experiential Learning Environments, including those accelerated by technology and digital resources
6. Engagement of students who are non-attenders or early leavers
7. Parent Engagement in relation to student achievement and well-being
8. Another focus with alignment to a goal within our [Multi-year Strategic Plan](#) (MYSP) and/or [Board Improvement Plan](#) (BIPSA)

Application Guidelines

Individuals interested in conducting research involving WCDSB schools, staff, students, parents, or board data are asked to carefully read over these guidelines and apply to conduct research through the [Research Application](#) (Online Form APC031-03F)

As you prepare to submit an application to conduct your research with the WCDSB, you should keep the following guidelines in mind:

1. All research conducted with the WCDSB is reviewed and approved by the WCDSB Research & Advisory Committee.
2. All applications must be submitted by the designated submission dates for consideration. Incomplete applications and late submissions will not be considered for review. As a general rule, research may not be conducted in schools during the months of May, June, or the first half of the month of September.

NOTE: there is an approximate six- to twelve-week start date from submission:

Final Submission Date	Earliest approximate start date
August 30, 2019	Mid-October 2019
October 25, 2019	Elementary – Beginning of January 2020 Secondary – Beginning of February 2020 (due to exams)
January 10, 2020	Beginning of March 2020
March 27, 2020	Mid-September 2020

3. Research-related activities (including contacting schools for expressions of interest) may not commence until your research has been approved by the WCDSB Research & Advisory Committee. Researchers who do not follow this protocol may have their access to schools restricted.
4. Receiving approval from the committee does not guarantee that your research will be accommodated by WCDSB schools/departments. The final decision for any WCDSB school to participate in research rests with the school principal/manager. When requesting participation for your research, you must always present a copy of your approval letter as proof that your research has been approved.
5. A current Police Vulnerable Sector Check (within the past six months) is required for all researchers and assistants who will be conducting research in-person with WCDSB students, staff, and/or families on school

property. This includes any research personnel who join your research team after you have received approval from the WCDSB Research & Advisory committee to conduct your research.

6. Active, informed consent (i.e., written permission) must be sought when conducting research with WCDSB students, staff, and/or families. Researchers should note that:
 - Parental consent is required for all students 18 years of age and younger.
 - Additional consent, beyond consent to participate, must be sought when audiotaping, videotaping, or photographing participants is a component of your research methodology.
 - The collection of personal information that is extraneous to the provision of consent (e.g., birth date, telephone number, email address) is not permitted on consent forms.
7. The privacy and confidentiality of WCDSB students, staff, or families participating in your research must be assured. Neither individual participants nor participating schools may be identified in the presentation or reporting of your research results. Researchers must inform participants about:
 - What information will be collected and how it will be used.
 - Who will have access to their information.
 - The protections in place to ensure their privacy and confidentiality.
 - Any circumstances where their privacy and confidentiality cannot be assured.
8. Where your research methodology involves only partial disclosure of the true purpose of your research or deception, participants must be debriefed. Participant debriefing must include: an explanation about the true purpose of your research, why this research approach was used, and an explicitly stated opportunity for the participant to withdraw their consent for you to use their data in your research.
9. The Principal Investigator is expected to notify the WCDSB Research Coordinator of the schools/departments involved in the study and to contact the Research Coordinator if any changes to the research protocol are made or if any problems arise.
10. Data and research materials must be gathered and handled in a manner consistent with the highest standards of ethical and scholarly practice. Fraud, falsification of data, or other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated, and will cause immediate revocation of the permission to conduct research.

Outline of the Review and Approval Process

1. Applications are received through the [Research Application](#) (Online Form APC031-03F) by one of the application deadlines. The WCDSB Research & Advisory Committee will meet and review all applications.
2. The committee considers the following questions in reviewing each research application. Does the proposed research:
 - a. Adhere to the ethical guidelines set out by the most recent Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans?
 - b. Align with the strategic priorities and operational goals of the WCDSB MYSP and/or BIPSA and have educational value for students, staff, parents/guardians, or the field of education in general?
 - c. Place realistic demands on participants (e.g., amount of time required for participation) with minimal disruption to normal school programming and student learning?
 - d. Require a reasonable number of participating schools/students, based on the goals of the research?
 - e. Provide sufficient detail about the specific study or series of studies to be conducted?
 - f. Compliance to the [Research at the WCDSB](#) APC031 Policy and WCDSB research application guidelines?

3. After the committee meets, the applicants are notified, via email, of one of the following decision outcomes:
 - Rejected
 - On hold – The researcher makes suggested revisions to bring application to the point of approval.
 - Approved – Upon receipt of the approval letter the researcher may contact school administrators directly to request their participation.

NOTE: The final decision to participate is up to the school principal. School principals and/or department managers must be willing to accommodate the study in their setting. Approval does not guarantee that a study will be accommodated by principals and/or department managers. Likewise, approval by Principals and/or department managers does not represent board approval.

4. For approved projects, the Research Coordinator will provide the Principal Investigator with a letter of approval and will post approved research projects to all board staff and/or stakeholders (e.g., principals, trustees, students, parents, etc.). This letter of approval should be used when engaged in any research-related activities (including contacting schools for expressions of interest).
5. For approved projects, the Research Coordinator will provide all Principal Investigators with the [Research Annual Summary](#) (Online Form APC031-4F) to complete at the end of their research.

Contact Information

Please contact the WCDSB Research Coordinator for any questions or concerns regarding these guidelines and the application process.

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