
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. A committee, named the *Research Review Committee*, will consist of the following members:
 - 1.1. Associate Superintendent of Learning
 - 1.2. Representative from Schools Department
 - 1.3. Representative from Human Resources
 - 1.4. Other member(s) from time to time as determined by the committee. This may include teachers where the research is conducted in the classroom.

The committee will assign the position of Committee Chair, as needed, depending on the expertise and research familiarity of its members.
2. Other individuals will be asked to attend in order to inform the committee concerning:
 - 2.1. Research methodology,
 - 2.2. Ethics considerations,
 - 2.3. Legal Counsel, and/or
 - 2.4. Content expertise.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. Below is a summary of possible research/evaluation initiatives that could take place within the Division:

5.1. Individual Research

5.2. 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.

5.3. Division initiated research

Division initiated research will be reviewed four months prior to the desired commencement date of the research.

5.4. 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*.

6. 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.

7. 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.

8. The Associate Superintendent of Business and Operations shall be responsible for the financial arrangements for research projects (if applicable).

Criteria

9. Research studies will be approved and conducted according to the following procedures.

9.1. All applications shall be submitted to the Associate Superintendent of Learning at least one (1) month in advance of the study and no later than March 1. Applications submitted after March 1 may be considered for approval to commence in the following school year.

9.2. Applications to conduct research in the teacher's current school will not be approved. Extenuating circumstances may be considered.

9.3. The following criteria will be used by the Research Review Committee in considering research studies:

9.3.1. The study shall have recognizable value to the Division and/or to education in general;

-
- 9.3.2. The content of any proposed questionnaire or survey instrument must not be objectionable to staff, students or parents;
 - 9.3.3. The involvement of students or teachers does not require an unreasonable amount of time;
 - 9.3.4. The willingness of schools or individuals to participate;
 - 9.3.5. The number of research studies planned or underway in the Division;
 - 9.3.6. 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; and
 - 9.3.7. Preference for approval will be given to Division staff.
10. If the research has FOIP compliance issues or contains confidential information, the Research Review Committee shall request the FOIP Coordinator's review.
 - 10.1. After review, if the FOIP Coordinator determines there are no compliance issues, the Research Review Committee can determine if other criteria are met and if appropriate, provide approval for the applicant to proceed.
 - 10.2. If the FOIP Coordinator determines that there are compliance issues, the Research Review Committee will request the applicant to provide further information as needed.
 11. The Research Review Committee shall, when necessary, ensure that the contents of a study are held in confidence.
 12. The Research Review Committee requests that a final copy of the research report be provided which may be shared internally within the Division.
 13. All original signed documentation is filed at the Division Education Centre.

Reference:

- Section 11, 33, 52, 53, 68, 196, 197, 204, 222, 225 Education Act
- RVS AF290-A Engage in Research/Evaluation Application
- Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act