

Research in Durham

1.0 Objective

- 1.1 This procedure provides direction on processes and considerations to undertake research in the Durham District School Board (DDSB). Research that is approved and supported by the DDSB is expected to meet the Tri-Council Policy Statement 2.0 principles, uphold the District's commitment to Indigenous rights and human rights in all of its learning and working environments, and must not compromise or interfere with students' access to high quality academic programs, welfare or well-being.
- 1.2 This procedure is to be interpreted and applied in accordance with the District's commitment to promoting and upholding Indigenous rights and human rights in all of its learning and working environments. This includes anti-colonial, anti-discriminatory and anti-racist approaches and actions to provide services and employment that are safe, welcoming, respectful, inclusive, equitable, accessible and free from discrimination and harassment consistent with the DDSB's Indigenous Education Policy, the Human Rights, Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Racism Policy (the "Human Rights Policy"), the Safe and Respectful Workplace and Harassment Prevention Policy and related procedures.

2.0 Definitions

In this procedure,

- 2.1 **Research Review Committee (RRC):** a DDSB Committee with representation from Superintendents of Curriculum, DESA, DSAA, ETFO and OSSTF, that is responsible for reviewing applications to conduct research within the DDSB. This review process is consistent with article 8.3 of the Tri-Council Policy Statement 2.0 which identifies this established mechanism as a pre-condition to obtaining access.
- 2.2 **Tri-Council Policy Statement 2.0 (TCPS):** the most recent version of the Tri-Council Policy 2.0 was developed collaboratively in 2018 by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. The principles in this document outline the standards for the ethical conduct of research involving humans. Refer to section 4.0 for more information.
- 2.3 **The Ontario Anti-Racism Act and Data Standards (the Standards):** The Standards are comprised of 6 guiding principles and 43 standards that outline the requirements for the collection, use, disclosure, de-identification, management, publication and reporting of information, including personal information which are . Collection of identity data in Ontario are expected to adhere to these practices. Refer to section 4.0 for more information.
- 2.4 **External Research:** A request is considered to be external research when:
- The request is from a non-Board employee.
 - The request is from a Board employee that is collaborating with a non-Board agency.

A request is not considered to be external research when the data of interest is already published or sought through a Freedom Of Information (FOI) request.

2.5 Internal Project: A request is considered to be an internal project when:

- It is a school or classroom project related to local or regional initiatives.
- A teacher would like to conduct data collection in their own classroom.
- A teacher would like to conduct data collection beyond their own classroom, subject to the approval of the Principal and, when appropriate, other staff.
- An employee would like to conduct data collection in their own area of responsibility, subject to the approval of their supervisor.
- An employee conducting data collection that meets specific Board needs.

3.0 Procedure

3.1 Research Review Committee (RRC)

3.1.1 The RRC will consist of:

- The Manager of Research and Assessment,
- A Superintendent of Education with elementary curriculum responsibilities,
- A Superintendent of Education with secondary curriculum responsibilities,
- A representative from Durham Elementary School Administrators (DESA),
- A representative from Durham Secondary Administrators' Association (DSAA),
- A representative from The Durham Elementary Teachers' Federation, (ETFO),
- A representative from The Durham Secondary Teachers' Federation, (OSSTF).

The Manager of Research and Assessment will serve as the chairperson which includes the following responsibilities:

- Compiling the applications and distributing copies to members for review.
- Scheduling and calling the meetings.
- Serve as the external research applicant's point of contact for the RRC.
- Send messages to the system on approved research.
- Contact school administrators to advise them of approved research their community may be invited to participate in.

3.1.2 The role of the RRC is to:

- Screen external research requests and advise the system of research that has been approved for administration.
- Monitor the quantity and topics of research to ensure a fair distribution of research studies throughout Durham schools.
- Protect Durham schools and their staff and students from invasion of privacy and from unwarranted and excessive demands on their time.
- Approach schools on behalf of external research applicants that have been approved.

- 3.1.3 **Meetings:** The RRC will meet, as required, from September to the end of May. Each meeting will be scheduled in response to the volume of applications that are received (historically 4-5 meetings a year). Meetings may be virtual or in-person.

Prior to each meeting, the chair will distribute the applications that will be reviewed at the meeting. Members must be provided sufficient time to adequately review the applications and supplemental research materials.

- 3.1.4 **Quorum:** Meeting quorum will consist of the chairperson and at least 3 other members of the committee

- 3.2 **External Research Applications:** External researchers interested in conducting research within the DDSB must complete the online “External Research Application” which is available on the DDSB website. All applications that are submitted must:

- Be complete.
- Include all supplemental materials referenced in the application.
- Include the Research Ethics Board approval from their organization (or affirm it is in review). Organizations without access to a Research Ethics Board may submit an application without this requirement.

If a standardized external research application form is developed provincially or regionally, the RRC may use their discretion to accept it as an valid alternative to the DDSB form for submission.

- 3.3 **Internal Project Form:** DDSB stakeholders interested in engaging in data collection, analysis and reporting within the DDSB are requested to complete a “DDSB Project Form” and submit it to the Chair of the RRC (the Manager of Research and Assessment). The purpose of this form is to raise awareness of the extent and nature of the project. A copy of the form is available in Appendix C.

- 3.3.1 **Indigenous Identity Data Collection:** Internal projects that include the collection of Indigenous identity must first seek approval for the collection of Indigenous Identity data through the Indigenous Education Department and the Accountability and Assessment Department, prior to the submission of the internal project form. The Manager of Research and Assessment and/or Indigenous Education Department may also engage the Human Rights and Equity Advisor.

- 3.3.2 **Identity Data Collection:** Internal projects that include the collection of identity data must adhere to the practices outlined in the Standards. Internal project leads must first coordinate this work through the Equity Department and the Accountability and Assessment Department, prior to the submission of the internal research project form. The Manager of Research and Assessment and/or Equity Department may also engage the Human Rights and Equity Advisor.

- 3.3.3 **Systems Collections:** Prior to the administration of system-wide surveys, Forms, Thoughtexchanges, etc, the Accountability and Assessment Department must be consulted to coordinate and align the schedule for data collection. This is intended to reduce duplication and avoid overlap of data collections for the purpose of easing the burden it places on stakeholders.

- 3.3.4 **Supports:** Staff from the Accountability and Assessment Department are available to provide support on internal projects in the areas of research design, data collection, analysis, interpretation, and knowledge mobilization.

- 3.4 **Collecting Data:**

- 3.4.1 **Identity Data:** The collection of identity data must adhere to the Standards, privacy considerations as outlined by the Ontario Privacy and Information Commissioner, and align with the DDSB's Indigenous Education policy and Human Rights policy.

Based on the Ministry of Education, and informed by the Standards, the collection of personal information may include the following categories:

- Indigenous Identity
- Ethnic/Cultural Origins
- Racial Background
- Religion
- Age
- Gender Identity or Gender Expression
- Sexual Orientation
- Languages
- (Dis)abilities

- 3.4.2 **Knowledge Mobilization:** Upon completion of an external research project, researchers are expected to share reports highlighting the work and the findings.

Internal project leads may be invited, where appropriate, to share their findings with Durham educators. Where appropriate all internal research results should be shared/communicated with all participants in the study.

- 3.4.3 **Data Governance:** The protection of participant privacy and confidentiality is of utmost importance, and all data handling procedures must be in compliance with relevant laws and regulations. A brief paragraph outlining the data governance components of your project must be included in the application. This should include details on how data will be stored, secured, accessed, retained, and eventually disposed of.

- 3.5 **Review Criteria:** Both "External Research Applications" and "Internal Project Form" submissions will be reviewed with the following considerations:

- 3.5.1 **Alignment with System Priorities:**

- The study must have a high degree of educational relevance and be consistent with DDSB goals.
- It should be a valuable experience for participants considering time lost from other activities.
- There must be direct research benefits to the system through, for example, the provision of feedback, workshops, materials and/or summary data.
- A priority will be placed on research projects which are designed to inform the decision making process. Marketing research for product development and/or advertisement will not be included for review.

- 3.5.2 **Adherence to Proper Procedures and Guidelines:**

- The researcher must have adequate safeguards to ensure confidentiality of individuals and schools.
- Researchers must ensure that the anonymity of students, teachers, and schools is preserved in subsequent publications and inform and discuss any such publication plans with the Chair of the RRC.
- Where appropriate and subject to section 1.2, the researcher must obtain parental/guardian consent and student permission.
- The researcher must explain to participants all features that might be expected to

influence their willingness to participate.

- Research involving student participation may not include personal incentives (e.g. gifts or raffles). However, a donation to the school at the conclusion of the study may be offered.
- Research involving staff and parents may consider the use of incentives provided that they
 - Do not negate the voluntary nature of the participant's consent (see Article 3.1, TCPS 2).
 - Are not contingent upon the number of consent forms returned or the number of participants/participating classrooms at a school.
 - Are proposed for a staff member's own participation in research provided that the participation takes place outside of work hours.
- The research methods used should enable valid conclusions to be drawn and should use appropriate data analysis procedures.

3.5.3 **Equity:**

- Equitable access, experiences and opportunities of all groups must be ensured. The researcher should ensure that processes, materials used and analyses are consistent with section 1.2 and do not pose discriminatory barriers or reinforce discriminatory (including and not limited to racist, sexist, ableist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, religious faithist and classist) stereotypes.

3.5.4 **Account for System Contexts:**

- Research activities must not substantively disturb the work of schools; the amount of time involved should be minimal.
- The researcher must minimize stress on the part of participants and use trauma informed approaches and practices.
- The researcher must take into account the appropriateness of the time of year for data collection. As a general rule, research may not be conducted in schools during the months of May, June or the first half of September.
- The researcher should appreciate that their application may be similar to other research that may have already been approved or planned. Applications may not be approved where the focus is similar to, or overlapping with other work.
- Any cost to the Board or school must be clearly stated and appropriately accounted for and/or arranged.

3.6 **Outcomes of Application Reviews:** Following the RRC review of applications, a letter will be sent by the Chair to the researchers with the status of their application. Any activities related to a research project may NOT commence without prior review and approval by the RRC.

3.6.1 **Unapproved Research:** An application that has not been approved may be submitted again at a later date. Applications that are re-submitted will be expected to have addressed issues identified by the RRC that contributed to the research not being approved. If those issues or conditions are not addressed in the re-submission, the RRC reserves the right to exclude the research from review.

3.6.2 **Approved Research:** Research applications may receive an "Approval" or "Conditional Approval". Where conditional approval is provided, the researcher is expected to offer clarification or address concerns raised by the RRC. If the requested clarification or modification is provided to the RRC, the research may then be updated to an "Approval".

No research designated as a “Conditional Approval” may proceed until the issues identified by the RRC have been addressed.

Once an application has been approved, the RRC Chair will contact the school principals and/or department managers identified in the application to let them know that the research has been approved and that the researcher will be in contact to invite them to participate in the research.

The approval of an application does not mandate participation in the research. All individuals invited to participate in a research project are under no obligation to participate in part or in whole.

3.6.3 Researcher Responsibilities for Approved Research:

Once approved, Researchers are expected to:

- Gather and handle data and research materials 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 result in immediate revocation of permission to conduct research).
- Notify the RRC of the schools/departments involved in the study (if not already mentioned in the application).
- Notify the RRC of any changes to the research protocol.
- Notify the RRC of any issues that may impact schools, students and staff.
- Submit a copy of research findings (copies are to be made available to the RRC and participating schools/staff and parents). Future requests to conduct research at DDSB will not be reviewed until final reports of completed studies have been received.

4.0 Reference Documents

4.1 Policies and Procedures

[DDSB Indigenous Education Policy and Procedure](#)
[DDSB Human Rights, Anti-Discrimination, and Anti-Racism Policy](#)
[DDSB Human Rights, Anti Discrimination and Anti-Racism Procedure](#)
[DDSB Safe and Respectful Workplace and Harassment Prevention policy and procedures](#)

4.2 Other Documents

[Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans, December 2018](#)
[Ontario Anti-Racism Data Standards, 2018](#)

Appendix:

Appendix A.1: Guardian Consent Form
Appendix A.2: Sample Letter and Consent Form
Appendix B: External Research Application
Appendix C: Internal Project Form

Effective Date

1993-09-14

Amended

2000-12-04
2006-08-08
2012-08-15
2023-03-02

DURHAM DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Guardian CONSENT FORMS

A single page in clear, plain language should include the following information.

1. An introduction which includes specific and detailed information about the researcher and the research, and a clear description of both the purpose of the research and how the information collected will be used.
2. Information about the nature of the involvement of the student (e.g., 1/2 hour of class time to complete a questionnaire).
3. When the testing or data collection will take place.
4. Assurance that the study has been approved by the Durham District School Board and the school's Principal.
5. A statement assuming responsibility for the storage and safety of the data, a guarantee of confidentiality of individual results, and an indication of the retention/destruction procedure.
6. That the Principal has the telephone number of the researcher should parents wish further information.
7. An appreciation extended to parents for consideration of the request.
8. A statement about the researcher's commitment to upholding rights and responsibilities under United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), the Human Rights Code and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).
9. A tear-off portion to be signed by a parent/guardian and returned to the researcher through the school by a specific date (or, should space be limited, a second page to be returned).

On the reverse side is a sample of a parental consent letter which may provide a model for researchers as they design parental consent forms.

DURHAM DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

**SAMPLE LETTER AND CONSENT
FORM**

Dear Parents:

I am a graduate student at the University of _____ and I am conducting a study that looks at children's problem solving in academic and social situations. A child's approach to solving problems affects all aspects of their life both in and outside of school. The information that your child will provide will be used to help us better understand how children solve problems, and how solving problems in school-like tasks relates to solving problems with friends. I would like to include your child in the study.

In three half hour sessions during April, I will ask children to arrange short stories into similar categories, and to describe their reasons for doing this. This is a fun activity that is also a thinking and learning experience. I am interested in the information children use to do this task. Your child's responses will not be identified by name and I will not use information from school records.

This study has been officially approved by your child's school Principal and the Durham District School Board's Research Advisory Committee. When the study is complete a report on the findings will be available to interested parents in the school library. The identity of individuals will be protected against through the anonymization of data and the use of data suppression rules. The University of _____ assumes responsibility for the storage and safety of the data that is collected. All information is stored securely at the University with access limited to myself and two other project members. Once the study is complete, the data will be stored for 1 year and then disposed of.

I am committed to upholding rights and responsibilities under the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), the Human Rights Code and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). If you require accommodation under the Human Rights Code to access this information or to participate in the research, please contact me at <researcher's contact information>.

Please complete the form at the bottom of this letter and return it to your child's teacher by March 23. I sincerely appreciate your co-operation. If you would like to receive more information about the study, please contact me through the school Principal.

Thank you,

Jane Brown
Graduate
Student

Department of Psychology University of _____

School Name _____

Child's Name _____

Check Here

☐

I give permission for my child to participate in the University of _____ study
conducted by Jane Brown.

☐

I or my child requires accommodation under UNDRIP or the Human Rights Code. Please contact me at
_____ for more information.

☐

I do NOT give permission for my child to participate in the University of _____
study conducted by Jane Brown.

Signature of parent/guardian _____ Date _____

DURHAM DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

--- EXTERNAL RESEARCH APPLICATION ---

Link: <https://forms.ddsb.ca/Accountability-and-Assessment/External-Research-Application>

Screen shots of the online form for review:

External Research Application

Required fields are marked with asterisks (*)

External research involves agencies outside of DDSB and our personnel. It must be approved through an External Research Committee.

Date:



CONTACT INFORMATION:

First Name: *

Last Name: *

Address: *

City: *

Postal Code: *

Postal Code

Email Address: *

Email Address

Telephone:

Position/Title: *

Position/Title

Institution or Agency: *

Institution or Agency:

Telephone: *

Telephone

RESEARCH OVERVIEW:

Please check one: *

- ☐ Undergraduate Thesis
- ☐ Master's Thesis
- ☐ Doctoral Thesis
- ☐ Externally-Sponsored Project
- ☐ Other: please provide information below

Other?

Title of Research Proposal *

Objectives of Research: *

Practical benefits of research and/or contribution to Durham District School Board:

Practical benefits of research and/or contribution to educational knowledge:

DATA COLLECTION:

Students (please provide grade(s), number and time required)

Teachers:

Other Staff:

Facilities required:

Equipment required:

Assistance required:

Other resources required:

Other Boards involved:

Instruments (list all tests, questionnaires and measures to be used and attach copies):

Particular schools preferred (if applicable):

Description of how data will be stored, secured, accessed, retained, and eventually disposed of:

Other special arrangements, facilities or circumstances:

METHOD OF INVESTIGATION/STUDY:

Method/Process:

Information required from school records:

Obtaining parental consent (describe):

Provisions for preparing subjects:

Type of analysis:

TIMELINE:

Commence Data Collection:

End Data Collection:

Expected Date of Report to External Research Committee:

PROVISION FOR FEEDBACK:

To participants and/or participating schools:

To parents (if applicable):

To educational officials and/or school system:

Publication plans:

Criminal Background Check: *

☐ Attached Criminal Background Checks and Vulnerable Sector Screening for researchers having direct contact with pupils

☐ Attached Criminal Background Checks for researchers having limited or indirect contact with pupils

☐ Not applicable

I have received and read the Durham District School Board's Research Procedure and agree to follow its requirements if my application is accepted. *

Clear

Indigenous Rights and Human Rights

Describe how you will uphold Indigenous rights, human rights and equity and prevent discrimination and discriminatory barriers throughout all stages of the proposed research, data collection, methodology and analyses, where applicable:

The DDSB is committed to meeting its responsibilities under the Human Rights Code and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). If you require accommodation under the Human Rights Code (for example, an alternative format) to complete this form, please contact <DDSB contact name> at <contact information>.

Legislation and Regulations related to research within the DDSB for review:

Legislation:

- [Ontario Human Rights Code](#)
- [Anti-Racism Act](#)
- [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act](#)
- [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#)

Ontario Ministry of Education: Provincial Code of Conduct

- [Policy/Program Memorandum 128: Provincial Code of Conduct and School Board Codes of Conduct](#)

Indigenous Education Policy and Procedure:

- [Indigenous Education Policy](#)
- [Indigenous Education Procedure on Classroom Practices – Teaching and Learning](#)

Human Rights Policy and Procedures:

- [Human Rights, Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Racism Policy](#)
- [Human Rights Roles, Responsibilities and Accountability Framework](#)
- [Human Rights, Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Racism Procedure](#)
- [Human Rights Inclusive Design and Accommodation Procedure](#)
- [Student/Family Human Rights Issue, Incident and Complaint Resolution Procedure](#)
- [Or link to full [Human Rights Policy and procedures package](#)]

Safe and Respectful Workplace Policy and Procedure

- [Safe and Respectful Workplace and Harassment Prevention Policy](#)
- [Complaints Procedure – Human Rights, Safe and Respectful Workplace and Workplace Harassment](#)

I affirm that I have read and understand the requirements of the legislation and regulations, Provincial Code of Conduct, and DDSB Indigenous Education, Human Rights and Respectful Workplace Policies and Procedures listed above. All _____ (researcher's organization/company name) Representatives will comply with these requirements.

I understand that compliance with these requirements is a condition of performing research-related activities involving DDSB community members, and further understand that non-compliance will result in appropriate corrective action up to and including termination of the research without notice.

I/we also understand that
non-compliance will result in appropriate corrective action.

Name of Researcher/Organization/Company/Business:

Signature: _____

Name: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____

Email: _____

This is to certify that the above-described research proposal has been vetted for its academic soundness.
I have given consideration to ethical, legal and moral questions arising from the proposal.

Contact Person (e.g. sponsoring professor, director of organization) *

Contact Person

Name of Organization: *

Organization

PLEASE PROVIDE ALL SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Browse...

Allowed extensions pdf, doc, docx, xls, xlsx, jpg, jpeg, gif, png, tif

Submit

DURHAM DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
--- INTERNAL PROJECT FORM ---

Project Lead(s) _____

Location _____

Title of Project _____

Objectives _____

Process _____

**Description of how
the data will be used:** _____

Please Check :

____ I/We have read Durham's *Research Procedure* and will make every attempt to follow it.

____ I/We will send a copy of this *Internal Project Form* to the Research Advisory Committee.

Principal/Supervisor _____ Date _____

RETURN TO: Research Department
Durham District School Board