

Ottawa-Carleton Research Advisory Committee

Research Guidelines

For Conducting Non-Board-Initiated Research Projects

in the

Ottawa-Carleton District School Board

133 Greenbank Road • Nepean • Ontario • K2H 6L3

Ottawa Catholic School Board

570 Hunt Club Road West • Nepean • Ontario • K2G 3R4



2011-2012

(revised July 2011)

Dear Researcher:

Thank you very much for your interest in conducting research in the Ottawa-Carleton area. To facilitate the process, our two school boards have established the Ottawa-Carleton Research Advisory Committee (OCRAC). The role of the committee is to support and encourage research that contributes to educational knowledge by carefully reviewing proposals to conduct non-board initiated research.

Review Process

The criteria used for reviewing proposals include:

- judging the relevance of each request to the educational objectives and policies of the school board concerned;
- determining the impact of each request on the school systems (i.e., the amount of time required by students and staff and the number of students required to complete a project); and
- assessing the degree of involvement required by staff, students, and parents.

Please note that both school boards reserve the right to reject applications solely on the grounds of each board's priorities at the time.

Approved Research Projects

In the past, the following types of projects have been approved: those related to curriculum issues; decision-making and leadership; accountability and school improvement; mental/physical health and social issues; technology; teacher pedagogy; second language learning; assessment and evaluation; and special education. OCRAC will **not** approve proposals that include **market research**, have unreasonable timelines, or place unrealistic demands on the two school boards.

WHO MAY APPLY

Applications will be accepted from:

- Undergraduate thesis candidates
- Masters thesis candidates
- Doctoral dissertation candidates
- Institutionally funded projects
- Externally funded projects

APPLICATION DEADLINES

The Ottawa-Carleton Research Advisory Committee meets five times per year. These meetings usually occur two to three weeks following the deadlines for applications which are:

August 31 • October 31 • January 16 • February 28 • April 30

QUESTIONS?

Please call or e-mail:

Tsala Mosimakoko
Telephone: 613-596-8211 ext. 8571
email: Tsala.Mosimakoko@ocdsb.ca

Send your submission to:

Tsala.Mosimakoko, Research Officer
Quality Assurance, Ottawa-Carleton District School Board
133 Greenbank Road • Nepean • Ontario • K2H 6L3

Members of the Ottawa-Carleton Research Advisory Committee for 2011-2012

Ottawa-Carleton District School Board	Ottawa Catholic School Board
<p>Tsala Mosimakoko, Ph.D. (Chair) Research Officer, Quality Assurance telephone: 613-596-8211 ext. 8571 email: Tsala.Mosimakoko@ocdsb.ca</p>	<p>Lauren Figueredo, Ph.D. Research Officer, Student Success Department telephone: 613-224-4455 ext. 2341 email: lauren.figueredo@ottawacatholicschools.ca</p>
<p>Stephanie Pagan, Ph.D. Research Officer, Quality Assurance telephone: 613-596-8211 ext. 8669 email: Stephanie.Pagan@ocdsb.ca</p>	<p>Donna Mailloux, M.A. Research Officer, Student Success Department telephone: 613-224-4455 ext. 2347 email: donna.mailloux@ottawacatholicschools.ca</p>
<p>Joan Oracheski, M.A. Manager, Quality Assurance telephone: 613-596-8211 ext. 8285 email: Joan.Oracheski@ocdsb.ca</p>	<p>Marilyn Kasian, Ph.D. Research Officer, Student Success Department telephone: 613-224-4455 ext. 2274 email: marilyn.kasian@ottawacatholicschools.ca</p>
<p>Alan Johnson Principal Gloucester High School telephone: 613-745-7176 email: Alan.Johnson@ocdsb.ca</p>	<p>Stephen Gay Principal McMaster Catholic School telephone: 613-731-8841 e-mail: stephen.gay@ottawacatholicschools.ca</p>
<p>June Pimm Ph.D., C. Psych. ABPP School Psychology Coordinator Autism Initiative Special Education/Student Services Telephone 613-596-8211 ext. 8694 Email: June.Pimm@ocdsb.ca</p>	<p>Manon Seguin Superintendent, Intermediate/Secondary, Student Success Department telephone: 613-224-4455 ext. 2371 email: manon.seguin@ottawacatholicschools.ca</p>

GUIDELINES

These Guidelines apply to all individuals or agencies requesting permission to conduct non-board-initiated research projects or surveys involving students, parents/guardians or staff in the two boards.

1. In general, researchers will not have access to students or school staff in **May, June or September** due to the large number of activities in schools. Exceptions will be made for those proposals that demonstrate the necessity of access to schools during these months, and are approved sufficiently in advance to allow the schools to plan for the research activity.
2. The design of the study should neither disrupt the school schedule **unduly** nor be detrimental to the subjects involved.
3. Studies that require an exceptionally large number of students will **not** be approved.
4. If your study involves collecting data in the schools, please note that all research personnel entering a school are required to submit a copy of their **police clearance** prior to beginning the research project.
5. **Confidentiality** of participating students, schools and others must be assured. Conditions as outlined in Bill 49, Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 1989, must be adhered to, where applicable. Personal information may only be obtained as authorized in the Act and used only for the specific purposes for which it is gathered. This will include informing study participants when personal information is being collected. Personal information is defined in Bill 49 as: information related to race, religion, age, sex, marital or family status, psychiatric, criminal or employment history, any identifying number assigned to an individual, the address, telephone number and personal views of the individual relating to another individual. Researchers must inform the participants as to who will have access to the information, how the information will be used, and who to contact for more information about the data collected. It is the researcher's responsibility to retain, on file for a minimum of one year, evidence of written consent of all subjects participating in a study.
6. All researchers are required to use **active consent** (written permission) when seeking participation of students, teachers, etc.
7. The approval period is for **one school year**. Researchers who are unable to complete their project within the time frame specified must resubmit their application including a project update and a list of participating schools. *Granting of extensions is conditional upon availability of schools and interest.* In the case of multi-year studies, in order to continue, researchers must submit a new application outlining the next phase of the study.
8. If you are a staff member of either board and are submitting an application to conduct research that falls outside of your regular duties, please ensure that your methodology distinguishes your role as "staff member" vs. "researcher" (e.g., other than reflective inquiry/action research, teachers would not typically conduct research with their own students).
9. In the case of certain tests, applicants will have to demonstrate that **qualified personnel** will be administering the test.
10. At the request of the school's principal, the researcher agrees to **translate** into the appropriate heritage language all material designated to parents/guardians.
11. Researchers must send **two copies** of the final written report upon completion of the project (or a yearly progress report for multi-year projects) to the Chair of OCRAC. Failure to submit a report will result in the refusal of future applications to this committee. The final report should outline the purpose, method and results of the research, and contain a 100 to 200 word abstract. All reports shall respect the anonymity of all participants. Further, the researcher agrees to allow the report to be circulated within the two boards.
12. Though researchers are not required to give full reports to participants, school staff or parents, they are required to provide a **one-page summary or presentation**. Any such reports should contain aggregate data (where appropriate) only; in no circumstance shall a researcher reveal individual data to participants, school staff or parents without express written consent of the participant(s).
13. Researchers under no circumstances will **identify the boards or individual schools** in any presentation of results without prior permission from the boards.

THE APPLICATION PROCESS

In most cases, submissions to the Ottawa-Carleton Research Advisory Committee must include **ten (10) copies** of the following documents sorted **into 10 complete packages**. It is suggested that, where possible, copies of submissions be single-spaced and printed on both sides of the page to minimize the amount of paper used.

The *Research Application* must be completed electronically using the templates provided. To download a copy of the **Research Application**, go to the website at http://www.ocdsb.ca/au_hi_research_guides.asp
Please save a copy of these documents to your hard drive.

1. A completed **Research Application** form which, in the case of a student, must be countersigned by a professor, preferably the student's thesis advisor.
2. **Approval of the Ethics Committee of the researcher's institution, if applicable.** Only those proposals that have been reviewed by the appropriate ethics committee, and that have been approved or are pending approval will be considered. Please note that a letter from the appropriate REB either indicating approval or indicating the study is under review must accompany the application.
3. Copies of **all tests, questionnaires, and other data-gathering devices** which students, staff, and/or parents/guardians will be asked to complete must be submitted in **final form** as drafts will not be considered. Please note that careful attention must be given to ensure that questionnaires and surveys contain appropriate information.

Approval will not be granted for questionnaires that require students to report any of the following:

- ❖ illegal activities without parents/guardians being informed of the specific questions that will be asked
 - ❖ life-threatening behaviour or their level of depression without detailing to the students and their parents/guardians the specific supports that are available for those who self-identify
 - ❖ behaviour of others (e.g, students, teachers, other staff)
 - ❖ information about ethnic or racial background without a relevant link to the research
4. An **information letter** for participants (e.g., parents/guardians, students, teachers, administrators) explaining the purpose of the research and the nature of their participation. (*See draft information letter on page 6*).
 5. A **consent form** for anyone (e.g., students, teachers, administrators) participating in the project. Separate consent forms are required for each participant group. (*See draft of consent form on page 6.*)
 6. Researchers must provide a **debriefing** document to *all* participants. In cases where the debriefing will be verbal (e.g., with child participants), a copy of the **transcript** must be included.
 7. A **curriculum vitae** if this is your *first submission* to the Committee.
 8. An up-to-date copy of the **police clearance** for *all* research personnel entering schools.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Applicants will be notified approximately two weeks after the OCRAC meeting, by regular mail, of the committee's decision regarding their project. One of the following outcomes is possible: reject, approve, approve with minor revisions or revise and resubmit. *Please note that all decisions by the committee are final.* Once this has been done, the Research Officer in each board sends out a memo of all approved projects (including a brief description) to principals inviting them to participate in the various studies. If principals agree to participate, the researcher will then be given their names and contact information in order to make the necessary arrangements to conduct their study in the school. However, researchers should not contact schools directly without the prior approval of the Research Officer. Failure to do so must result in the research being cancelled in the board(s) involved. *Approval by the Ottawa-Carleton Research Advisory Committee does not obligate any board, department, or school to participate in a study. The decision to participate in a research project is always the prerogative of the school board and participating school principal and/or teacher.*

The stages of the approval process are set out in the chart on the next page.

THE APPROVAL PROCESS

Submit proposal to the Committee by one of the application deadlines:
August 31 • October 31 • January 16 • February 28 • April 30

Meetings are held approximately *two* weeks after each *deadline* and researchers are notified of one of the following decisions, in writing, approximately *two* weeks after the *meeting*:

Reject

**Approve with
minor revisions**

Approve

**Revise and
resubmit**

Research Officers in individual Boards notify principals of projects that have been approved and invite them to participate.

The researcher is contacted if principal(s) is interested in a particular project.
Principal(s) and/or teachers may either *agree* or *refuse* to participate.

AGREEMENT

REFUSAL

In consultation with schools, the researcher:
sends out information letters and consent forms
collects completed consent forms and arranges times to collect data

The researcher collects the data as specified in the proposal.

The researcher provides a written summary of the project to the school(s).

The researcher sends either a final written report or a progress report after one year to the Committee.

The Committee includes a summary of the project in its annual
Directory of Non-Board Initiated Research.

Following, are a draft information letter and consent form. Clear, easy-to-read language must be used when preparing information letters and consent forms for parents/guardians and other potential participants (e.g., students, teachers, administrators).

Draft Information Letter

Information letters must be printed on institution/agency letterhead and include the following information, as appropriate.

All participants:

- The purpose of the study
- That the project has been approved by the Ottawa-Carleton Research Advisory Committee and the principal of the school
- What the participant will be asked to do
- Whether participation is by individual or group
- Whether participation will be during school time or spare time
- The duration of participation (i.e., number of sessions and time required)
- That participation is voluntary and that individuals may withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason and with no adverse consequences.
- How the information collected will be used
- When and how the information will be disposed of
- That study results will be reported in ways that ensure complete confidentiality
- A separate line for audio/video taped consent (see Draft Consent Form below)
- A letter signed by the researcher(s) indicating name and telephone number for answering questions about the project

Student participants:

- That scheduling will be at the teacher's convenience to minimize interference with daily routines
- What information is to be collected from files or records for individual students
- That study results will not appear in any school records

Please note that only students with written permission (*active consent*) may participate. Also, permission must be obtained for video or audio taping procedures as provided in the example below.

Draft Consent Form (Active Consent)*

The information collected for this project is confidential and protected under the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 1989.

I have read and understood the request for my child to participate in the study of (*give title*). I have discussed it with my child and ...

- I give permission for him/her to participate.
- I give permission for him/her to be audiotaped, etc. (**You must include this if you are audiotaping/videotaping participants**)
- I do not give permission for my child to participate.

Name of Student: (*please print*) _____ Date: _____

Name of Parent/Guardian: (*please print*) _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____

or

Signature of Student (if 18 or older): _____

*The style of this draft may be modified for consent forms for other participants (e.g., teachers, administrators).