



## **Research at the Waterloo Catholic District School Board**

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**Memo To:** All Staff

**From:** Director of Education

### **ACCESSIBILITY:**

To request this file in large print, please email [aoda@wcdsb.ca](mailto:aoda@wcdsb.ca) or call (519) 578-3660.

### **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
- Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans – TCPS 2 (2022)

### **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 within its schools and departments. Individuals interested in conducting research involving WCDSB schools, staff, students or parents must adhere to the procedures outlined 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 where information is being collected from student, staff, and or parent/guardians.



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

While WCDSB values its collaboration with and support for internal and external researchers, its primary focus remains on students' education. Research endeavors must not compromise or disrupt students' access to high-quality academic programs and consideration should be made to reduce the impact (i.e., participation time) when participation.

We will be accepting proposals for research projects pertaining directly to the following areas of focus.

Focus with alignment within our WCDSB Strategic Plans found on our [webpage](#) (e.g., MYSP, SAP, Well-Being, MAAP, LAAP, etc.)

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

## 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. Depending on the Research topic and/or methodology proposed, the review may involve the following staff: the Superintendent of Research, the Research Team, Learning Services Team, Privacy Team, and/or IT Department.
2. All sections (Part 1 & Part 2) of the application must be completed in full by the timeline listed below before your proposed research will be considered by the WCDSB Research & Advisory Committee. Incomplete applications and late submissions will not be considered for review.

**Part 1:** Initial details about research application (note: allocate up to 2 weeks for review)

**Part 2:** Full details about research application (i.e., upload documents, full details descriptions, etc.) (note: allocate up to 6-12 weeks for review)

3. Research may not be conducted in schools during the months of May, June, or the first half of the month of September.

**NOTE:** The time from the start date of first submission (Part 1) and approximate start dates of research typically ranges from six to twelve weeks.

Final Submission Date (Part 2)	Earliest approximate start date
August 31	Mid-November
October 31	Beginning of February
March 31	Mid-September

4. 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.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. 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 16 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.
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. 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.
12. All research applications must comply with the [Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans – TCPS 2 \(2022\)](#)

## **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. All sections of the application must be completed in full by the timeline listed below before your proposed research will be considered by the WCDSB Research & Advisory Committee. Please note there are 2 parts to our application form: Please note there are 2 parts to our application form:

**Part 1:** Initial details about research application (note: allocate up to 2 weeks for review)

**Part 2:** Full details about research application (i.e., upload documents, full details descriptions, etc.) (note: allocate up to 6-8 weeks for review)

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. Adhere to the [Education Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. E.2](#), [Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. M.56](#), [Anti-Racism Data Standards - Order in Council 897/2018](#), and/or other relevant legislative and regulatory frameworks applicable to education?
  - c. Align with the strategic priorities and operational goals of the WCDSB Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP) and/or Student Achievement Plan (SAP) and/or other Board Priorities found on our [website](#)?
  - d. Have direct educational value for students, staff, parents/guardians, or the field of education in general?
  - e. Methodology suitable for a school or educational context?
  - f. Place realistic demands on participants (e.g., amount of time required for participation) with minimal disruption to normal school programming and student learning?
  - g. Require a reasonable number of participating schools/students, based on the goals of the research?
  - h. Provide sufficient detail about the specific study or series of studies to be conducted?
  - i. Compliance to the [Research at the WCDSB](#) APC031 Policy and WCDSB research application guidelines?
  
3. After the committee has reviewed your application (i.e., Part 1 first, then Part 2 if applicable), they will meet and notify the applicant of their decision, via email, of one of the following decision outcomes:
  - **Rejected**
  - **Revise & Resubmit (Part 1 and/or Part 2)**
  - **Approve with Conditions** – 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 the school year.
  
6. If research activities extend across multiple school years, an application must be submitted for each school year to obtain a letter of approval.
  
7. Be aware that external research can be temporarily paused within a school year after receiving a letter of approval due to evolving contexts and priorities.

## Contact Information

Please contact the WCDSB Research Coordinator for any questions or concerns regarding these guidelines and the application process at [research@wcdsb.ca](mailto:research@wcdsb.ca).