

**UPPER CANADA DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
TEACHING AND LEARNING DEPARTMENT**

Research Steering Committee Guidelines

For Conducting Research

Upper Canada District School Board
225 Central Avenue West
Brockville, ON K6V 5X1

(Updated September 16, 2019)



GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCTING RESEARCH IN THE UPPER CANADA DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

These guidelines provide information to those who are interested in conducting research that involves UCDSB schools, staff, students or parents.

Educational research serves the needs of the UCDSB by providing evidence-based knowledge to further our capacity to educate students. This information should help the Board achieve its goal of a 90% graduation rate. Educational research will not undermine the public trust in our purpose of putting students first. It is expected that research results will assist the board with its educational objectives.

These guidelines apply to survey requests and research that will take place on school premises during the regular school day.

WHO MAY APPLY?

Applications are accepted from:

- Masters or doctoral theses candidates
- Local and community institutional partners (such as universities, hospitals, etc.)
- Externally funded organizations
- UCDSB staff

STEPS TOWARD APPROVAL

- Obtain approval from sponsoring agency.
- Obtain written approval from agencies; ERB – Ethics Review Board (valid for term of research).
- Obtain Police Vulnerable Sector Check(s) (valid for term of research).
- Complete UCDSB Research Application Form (to include entire research protocol, survey questions and all assessments).
- Submit **one paper copy** of the completed proposal package, with original signatures and relevant appendices, by mail **and** also forward the package electronically (in pdf format) to:
Bill Loshaw, Acting Superintendent of Schools
225 Central Avenue West, Brockville, ON K6V 5X1
bill.loshaw@ucdsb.on.ca
- Applicants will be contacted by email regarding the status of their application following review of proposals by the Committee. Proposals may be approved or declined, or clarification may be sought.
- Potential participants in the Board will be contacted by the Board’s Research Committee.
- Names of participating schools/principals who voluntarily express interest will be forwarded to researchers.
- Please direct questions to: bill.loshaw@ucdsb.on.ca

APPLICATION DEADLINES

The Upper Canada Research Steering Committee (RSC) meets five times per year. These meetings usually occur two to three weeks following the deadlines for applications below:

August 31 • October 31 • January 15 • February 28 • April 30

Members of the Upper Canada District School Board Research Steering Committee

Bill Loshaw
Acting Superintendent of Schools
613-342-0371 ext. 1328
bill.loshaw@ucdsb.on.ca

Alison Inglis
Chief Psychologist
613-275-2928 ext. 2233
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David Armstrong
Chief Psychologist
613-258-9393 ext. 2504
david.armstrong@ucdsb.on.ca

CRITERIA FOR RESEARCH PROPOSALS

- The research must not unduly disrupt the school schedule. Access during September, May and June may be limited.
- The research must demonstrate relevance: to education in general and to Eastern Ontario.
- The research must be consistent with board values and priorities. Feedback must be provided to participating schools and the research committee on behalf of the board.
- The confidentiality of data and the rights of the participants must be assured according to the conditions in the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. Proposals must indicate who will have access to the information gathered and how it will be used.
- The procedures for obtaining informed consent must be clear. A letter to parents should include a description of the purpose of the study, the nature of the student's participation, and how the information will be used. The consent form to parents/guardians requires written consent and pertains to all students under 18 years of age in the UCDSB.
- The approval period is one school year. In multi-year studies a new application is required as each phase continues.

THE APPROVAL PROCESS

Submit proposal to the Superintendent of District Alignment by the following timelines:
August 31 • October 31 • January 15 • February 28 • April 30

Research Steering Committee meetings will occur approximately two weeks after deadlines for submissions, following which Researchers will be notified of one of the following decisions, by email (approximately two weeks after a meeting):

Declined

**Approved with
minor revisions**

Approved

**To Revise and
Resubmit**

RSC invites principals to participate in approved projects by email.

Interested principals contact RSC by email.

RSC provides contact information to researchers.

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

The researcher seeks participants' cooperation in completing tasks.

The researcher collects the data as specified in the proposal.

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

The researcher sends either a final written report or a progress report after one year to the committee, to include an executive summary of the final report.

PROCESS/DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED

The **Research Application** must be completed using the UCDSB **on-line application form** which can be downloaded by visiting our UCDSB website at <http://www.ucdsb.on.ca/aboutus/Pages/ResearchGuidelinesandApplication.aspx>

Please save a copy of these documents to your hard drive so that you can complete the form, print and submit your package by mail as well as electronically (in pdf format).

Submission to the Upper Canada District School Board Research Steering Committee must include copies of the following documents:

1. A completed **Research Application** (UCDSB on-line form) which, in the case of a student, must be countersigned by a professor, preferably the student's thesis advisor.
2. A complete **Research Proposal**, which is the primary document used to review your application.
3. **Sponsor Agency information and approval from the Ethics Review Board** (*if applicable*).
4. **Police Vulnerable Sector Check** form(s) (*where necessary*).
5. Copies of **all assessments, questionnaires and tools of measurement** which students, staff, and/or parents/guardians will be asked to complete. These must be submitted in **final form** (no drafts). Please ensure that questionnaires and surveys contain appropriate information.
6. An **information letter** for participants (administrators, teachers, parents/guardians, students) explaining the purpose of the research and the nature of their participation. (*See information and sample letter on pages 6 and 7.*)
7. A **consent form** for anyone participating in the project. Separate consent forms are required for each participant group. (*See information and sample letter / consent form on pages 6 and 7.*)
8. Researchers must provide **feedback** to *all* participants, as well as submit a **completed final report** to the Upper Canada District School Board, to **include an executive summary of the report**.

Applicants will be notified approximately two weeks following the UCDSB Research Steering Committee meeting of the decision regarding their project. Following notification, a member of the RSC will contact principals to invite them to participate in the study. The names of those who agree will be forwarded to the researcher, who may then contact the principals to make any necessary arrangements.

INFORMATION LETTER

Information letters (on institution/agency letterhead) must clearly state:

- the purpose of the study
- granted approval by the Upper Canada DSB RSC and the principal of the school
- what the participant will be asked to do
- nature and extent of all participation required, and that it is at the discretion of the teacher
- provision that participation is voluntary, and at the discretion of the individuals at any time in the research
- 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
- contact information and access to researchers if needed
- what information will be collected from student files/records
- that study results will not appear in any school records

GUIDELINES FOR PARENTAL/GUARDIAN INFORMATION LETTERS & CONSENT FORMS

Information letters and consent forms should be written in clear and plain language, and should include the following information. *A sample is provided on the following page.*

- An introduction that provides specific information about the researcher and the research.
- Information about the nature of a student's involvement (i.e. time needed to perform tests)
- Timelines about when data collection will take place.
- Samples of questions similar to what will be used, to ensure that consent is informed.
- Assurance that the research study has been approved by the UCDSB and the principal.
- Guarantee of confidentiality of individual results.
- Researcher's contact information for parents who require further information or have questions about the study.
- An appreciation to the parents for considering the request.
- A clear statement about what is being agreed to with space indicated for a signature. Consent may be requested for the study as a whole, or options may be provided for separate consent of multiple components.

Note:

- A signed **Parent consent** is required for students under 18 years of age.
- Children under 18 years of age are not required to provide written consent; they can give verbal assent to participate if given a full description of the project and the expectations on their part.
- Video/digital recording or photographing of subjects may require a second level of consent.

SAMPLE PARENT/GUARDIAN INFORMATION LETTER & CONSENT FORM
(Letterhead of the institution you represent)

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

(Date)

Dear Parent/Guardian:

I am a researcher studying the factors that influence the career plans of youths. I am interested in determining when such plans are made, who may have helped in the making of the plans, and the relationship between career plans and attitudes regarding the world of work. Such information will be useful to schools in designing better programs to prepare youths for future employment.

The Research Steering Committee of the UCDSB has granted approval for this study. The school Principal has also given permission for this study to be carried out in your son/daughter's school.

Your child will be asked to complete a survey in January 2009 which will take 30 minutes. The survey will include questions about his/her career plans, interests, school achievement, background information and opinions about entering the work world. Participation in the survey is completely voluntary, and your child may withdraw from the research at any time. The research will have no impact on your child's attendance in class or on his/her grades. All collected information will remain confidential, and students will not be identified individually after the data has been collected.

Please indicate on the attached form whether you permit your son/daughter to participate in this study. Your cooperation will be greatly appreciated. Please do not hesitate to contact me at (phone #/email) if you have further questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

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

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 my child to participate.
- I give permission for my child to be audio taped/videotaped, etc.
- 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): \_\_\_\_\_