



Department of Testing, Research and Evaluation

Research Guidelines for Employed Doctoral Students

July 2019

Office of Research and Evaluation areas of responsibility

- Research projects to inform district goals
- Program Evaluations of school and district initiatives
- Surveys of students, parents, employees
- Ad Hoc Data Analysis and Data Briefs
- **External Research Review**

Types of Research Eligible for Review

- Proposals for research activities within PGCPS offices, departments, and other units transmitted through their area offices and central office administrative channels.
- Unsolicited research proposals submitted by external third parties (universities, foundations, think-tanks, etc.)
- Proposals for master's theses and doctoral dissertation research from PGCPS employees.
- Proposals for dissertation research originating from persons other than PGCPS employees.

Beginning the Review Process

External research within PGCPS is governed by two official documents:

- Board of Education Policy No. 5125.4
- PGCPS Administrative Procedure 4131.34

To ensure that proposed research adheres to the requirements set forth in those documents, the Office of Research and Evaluation (ORE) is tasked with reviewing all eligible research proposals.

Submitting Your Proposal

The minimum requirements to begin the review process include submitting an application using our online tool. Please see our website (<https://www.pgcps.org/research-and-evaluation/cards/External-Research-Application-Review/>) for the link to the online application.

NECESSARY ATTACHMENTS:

1. **Proposal summary** – synopsis (2-5 pages) of the proposed research to include problem statement, research purpose, methods/procedures, and benefits to PGCPS;
2. **Complete proposal** – full/detail description of the proposed research to include problem statement, research purpose, literature review, methods/procedures, and limitations; for thesis/dissertation proposals this is typically the first three chapters;
3. **Consent/assent forms/letters** – if human subjects are involved in the proposed research;
4. **All data gathering instruments** – surveys, questionnaires, protocols for interviews, focus groups, and observations (if instruments are not developed by applicant, evidence that applicant can use them); and
5. **Applicant's IRB approval and evidence of thesis/dissertation committee's approval.**

Goals of the Review Process

1. Protect the rights, privacy, and welfare of students, parents, and staff that may be involved in external research
2. Ensure conformance with prevailing PGCBOD policy, PGCPS AP, state, and federal (e.g., FERPA) regulations governing research in educational settings
3. Ensure proposed research meets professional standards for research design and ethical practices, and additionally has significance/relevance for PGCPS or field of study

Proposal Review Timeline

ORE strives to review all proposals within SIX WEEKS of the receipt of *all required documents*.

- Research requiring review and/or consent from ‘impacted units’ may take longer.
- Applications that require clarification or are not complete will take longer to review.
- ORE workload may also impact review time.

Therefore, *applications should be submitted well in advance of the proposed start date for your research.*

Applications are NOT reviewed from May 1st through June 30th

Informed (Active) Consent and Assent Forms/Letters

- Informed consent is **required** for all research that involves human subjects. Parent consent is required if students are research subjects; students must also assent to participate.
- PGCPS specifically prohibits “passive” consent (opt-out).
- No personally identifiable data may be released without active consent from the subject (student, parent, or teacher)
- Subjects’ personal data to which you have access as part of your PGCPS employment may not be utilized for external research without the active consent of the subjects.

Restrictions

- PGCPS staff time and/or resources (such as PONY, e-mail, etc.) cannot be used to recruit research subjects. When e-mailing potential research subjects, you must use your University issued e-mail address or a personal e-mail address. Sending surveys, consent forms, etc. to research subjects to their PGCPS e-mail accounts is permitted.
- PGCPS staff cannot participate in data gathering.
- Research conducted by PGCPS employees must occur outside of official work hours.

Restrictions *(cont.)*

- PGCPS employees conducting personal research cannot use students and other employees in their schools/ departments (or other individuals in their line of authority or field of influence) as research subjects.
- Participation is completely voluntary; principals/unit heads cannot compel a subordinate to participate in any research project. Participants are free to withdraw at any time.
- Principals/unit heads are not allowed to provide contact information of potential research subjects.

Post-Approval Next Steps

- If you are conducting research in a school, you will be issued a '*Principal Permission to Conduct Research Study*' form, which must be signed and returned to the ORE prior to beginning research activities;
- Even though ORE approved the proposal, principals and/or unit heads of the research sites must also grant permission before research activities can commence.
 - Principals/unit heads are under no obligation to grant permission.
 - Principals/unit heads may place additional restrictions or conditions on external researchers' access to research subjects or on research activities.

Ongoing Approved Research

- Approval of external research is only valid in the school year in which the approval is granted; if the research activities were not completed during the school year, a formal request (in the form of a letter) must be submitted to through the online application tool.
 - ORE will not grant extensions to any researcher who did not comply with the conditions and terms of the approval granted
- Changes in the approved research methods/procedures and/or any of the data gathering instruments must be approved by ORE before being used in the research.
- Upon completion of the study, an abstract and one copy of the final report must be submitted to ORE within 30 days of public release of the findings.

Sources of Public Data

➤ If you'd like to avoid this process, you can access a wide variety of public datasets for quantitative research.

Here are some sources:

- [Data.gov -- Education Data Catalog](#)
- [U. of Michigan -- ICPSR](#)
- [USDOE -- ED Data Inventory](#)
- [Fresno State University -- External Links](#)
- [Maryland State Dept. of Ed. -- Data Download site](#)

Sources of Public Data *(cont.)*

- [Early Childhood Longitudinal Study – Public-use files](#)
- [UNC Dataverse -- The Odum Institute](#)
- [The Nation's Report Card \(NAEP\)](#)
- [MLDS Data Inventory](#)
- [University of Missouri Libraries -- External Links](#)

For questions, please contact:

Department of Testing, Research & Evaluation (DTRE)

301-780-6708

[PGCPS Office of Research and Evaluation website](#)

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