

Research Guidelines

These guidelines describe the research application, appraisal and approval processes

The Department of Education, Training and Employment aims to provide Queenslanders with high quality education, training and employment services that are informed by the best available evidence. Underpinning this focus is the department's responsibility for protecting school students and staff and maintaining the integrity of learning. The research approval process helps to ensure that the wellbeing of students and staff is protected and that research conducted on departmental sites is appropriate, worthwhile and provides educational benefits. By coordinating research in school sites, the department can also monitor the level of activity and types of research being undertaken and ensure that departmental staff are able to learn from research findings.

The department also supports the conduct of high quality research that may provide sound evidence to inform policy and practice, and to support continual improvement in the services we provide.

These research guidelines are intended to complement the department's online research application form and to assist prospective researchers to prepare their application. They must be read together with the [Terms and Conditions of Approval to Conduct Research](#).

The intended audience for the guidelines includes academic and research staff, tertiary students, independent research agencies, employees of the department and other members of the community wishing to conduct research within the department.

For the purpose of this document the term 'researcher' is used to describe persons seeking to undertake research in department sites, including research involving department personnel, data and/or records. The term 'department sites' is used to describe education-related facilities that are the responsibility of this department. This definition includes but is not limited to state schools, environmental education centres, early childhood education services, and central and regional offices.

In general, applications to undertake research in department sites for commercial gain, including those that involve primarily marketing activities or market research, will not be considered by the department.

1 Your application

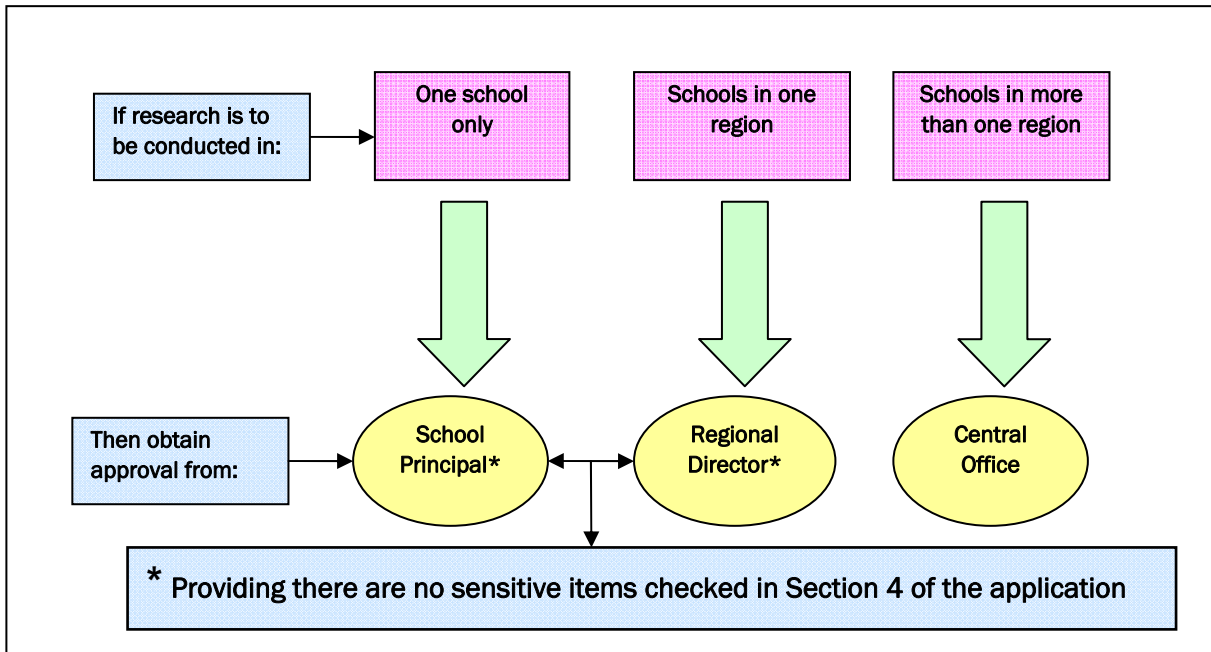
The nature and the scope of the research will determine the level of approval required for the research to proceed in department sites.

As the figure below illustrates, for all research of a sensitive or controversial nature (reflected in Section 4 of the online research application), researchers are required to submit their completed application to the [Senior Research Officer](#), Research Services in central office.

If the research is to be conducted in:

- one school only and providing there are no sensitive items checked in Section 4 of the application, researchers are required to submit the completed application and supporting documentation to the principal of that school

- more than one school in the same education region (see [Region Maps](#)), and providing there are no sensitive items checked in Section 4 of the application, researchers are to submit the completed application and supporting documents to the Regional Director in the relevant region (a list of Regional Directors and the relevant email address can be accessed via the [Contact details](#) page)
- schools in more than one education region, researchers are required to submit their completed application and supporting documents to the [Senior Research Officer](#), Strategic Policy and Portfolio Relations in central office.



All applications should be submitted via the [online application process](#). A hard-copy of your application, with original signatures and a hard copy of all attachments should also be mailed to the appropriate approval authority (school, region, central office).

Researchers are not required to submit a research application if they are only seeking to advertise their study on school noticeboards or in newsletters to recruit voluntary participants for research that is not to be conducted in state schools. These researchers may obtain approval to advertise research through the school principal(s) using the departmental [application form](#). To provide approval for an advertisement for recruitment, the school principal must be satisfied that the research project meets the department's standards of ethical conduct.

2 Ethical considerations for research

Researchers have ethical and legal responsibilities towards research participants, and must protect the welfare and rights of participants in research at all times.

Research conducted in department sites must be administered in accordance with the department's [Terms and Conditions](#) and comply with the National Health and Medical Research Council's (NHMRC) National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research. Research involving Indigenous participants will need to comply with the Guidelines for Ethical Conduct in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research.

These requirements for ethical conduct must be clearly addressed in your application and associated documentation. They include:

- [Informed consent](#)
- [Privacy and confidentiality](#)
- [Data management](#)
- [Intellectual property](#)

- [Moral rights](#)
- [Indemnity and insurance issues](#)
- [Working with children check \(blue card\) †](#)
- [Disclosure of harm or criminal activity](#)
- [Publication and public release of research findings](#)
- [Government legislation and policies](#)

3 Appraisal and approval process

The department requires detailed information in order to appraise the application.

The following must be submitted by researchers when applying to conduct research in department sites:

- a completed research application form (signed by the researcher and his/her supervisor) submitted electronically and in hard copy
- evidence of approval from a Human Research Ethics Committee
- evidence of having undergone a Queensland Working with Children Check (Blue Card) or exemption
- copies of all data collection instruments (e.g. surveys, questionnaires)
- information statements and consent forms for all participant categories such as principals, parents/caregivers, teachers and students
- a list of state schools or department sites that will be invited to participate if the application is approved
- a copy of any results (or summary or report) of research conducted previously by the applicant in Queensland state schools or other department sites.

Once a research application is submitted, the appraisal process will commence, and researchers may be contacted by the department to provide more information to support the decision-making process.

Information received in applications may be circulated to other areas of the department or other government or non-government agencies, as part of a collaborative review and appraisal process. The department does not guarantee confidentiality of applications but is guided by the [Queensland Public Sector Intellectual Property Guidelines](#) in matters of intellectual property and moral rights of authorship.

The department receives a high volume of complex research applications. When submitting an application please be mindful that the review and assessment of your application is likely to take at least six weeks and this should be reflected in the proposed timing of your research.

Due to the voluntary nature of participation in research and the large number of applications to conduct research in department sites each year, the department cannot approve all research applications.

In reviewing research to be conducted in department sites, consideration is given to a range of factors, including:

- the overall suitability of the research, particularly in terms of its alignment with the priorities of the department and the Queensland Government
- the likely impact and demands of the research on participants and/or departmental operations
- the potential benefits of the research, in terms of knowledge and outcomes for teaching, learning and informing policy
- the extent to which the research contributes uniquely to the existing knowledge base, avoiding duplication
- the extent of participation, funding and/or support of other government and non-government bodies in the research
- the extent to which the research methodology aligns with the stated aims and objectives of the research
- the suitability of the data collection instruments
- the extent to which the research protocol contains necessary safeguards to protect the safety, privacy, anonymity and confidentiality of participants and their data (i.e. conforms to the NHMRC's National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans)

- the costs of the research, in terms of in-kind support, resources, teacher, staff, parent/caregiver, or student time or commitment, and the potential risks for the department of the proposed research.

Department approval of a research application permits the researcher to invite the participation of schools and other sites in the research project.

Upon approval, researchers will need to provide school principals or department site managers with:

- a summary of their research proposal
- the information statements and consent forms for all categories of participants, including a consent form for the school principal or site manager
- written confirmation of human research ethics approval
- a copy of the letter from the department providing approval for research to be conducted on department sites.

Researchers should note that participation in research is voluntary, and the decision to participate in a research project is at the discretion of the school principal or site manager. Additionally, principals or site managers will monitor research activities conducted within their facilities and may withdraw support at any time.

Approval to conduct research is not to be interpreted as official departmental support or endorsement of any aspect of the project or its outcomes or recommendations.

If the research requires students or staff to access the internet, researchers are responsible for ensuring that the URLs are checked for compliance with the department's allowed Internet sites and [Internet access policies](#).

Once approval has been granted by the principal or site manager, researchers are then permitted to invite the participation of students, staff or parents/caregivers in their research. Information statements must be provided to participants, and signed informed consent must be obtained. In the case of children and young people, the signed informed consent of parents/caregivers must also be obtained.

The department must be notified in writing and approval sought for any proposed changes to an approved research project (including changes in schools or department sites to be approached, anticipated timeframes and completion dates). The department may withdraw its approval of a project at any time; for example, if the research diverges from the approved methodology, or is conducted in a manner that is not consistent with the department's requirements for the conduct of research in its facilities.

At the conclusion of the study, the researcher must provide one copy of an executive summary and a full report of the research results to the approving authority. If the approving authority is other than Strategic Policy and Portfolio Relations (SPPR), one copy of the executive summary must also be sent to SPPR.