

1003.5 Conducting Research

Research Review Guidelines

1. Studies that have direct relevance to education and demonstrable benefits for participants and Lethbridge School Division will be considered. This includes alignment with the District Three-Year Education Plan.
2. Due to a high volume of applications received, any research application that is incomplete or unclear will not be considered for review. Proposals involving market research or for-profit endeavours will not be considered.
3. Any study considered to be research by the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2) must have Research Ethics Board (REB) approval in place prior to submission to the Lethbridge School Division Research application process. Any research involving students in Lethbridge School Division or gathering of student data must have REB approval.
4. Lethbridge School Division staff who are collecting data from students and/or staff and who need to clarify whether or not their activities constitute research may send an inquiry to the Associate Superintendent-Instructional Services.
5. Active, signed parent/guardian informed consent is required for any research with or about students under the age of 18. Students under the age of 18 must also provide assent to their participation in research.
6. Principals in Lethbridge School Division schools will make the final decision about their school's involvement in research projects.
7. No research may impede on instructional time. If research is to occur during instructional time, evidence of a direct link between the time spent participating in research and the Alberta Program of Studies must be clearly described.
8. The study should be minimally intrusive in terms of time and numbers. The demands on schools and study participants should not be excessive or in conflict with students' academic program.
9. The research must ensure that the confidentiality of information about Lethbridge School Division schools, teachers and administration, parent/guardian and students is protected and that no school, staff or student is identified in any report without permission from the relevant party. Individual participants may provide consent to be identified through the informed consent process (for participants under the age of 18, the parent/guardian would provide this permission).
10. All research proposals must use language and methodology that aligns with the Alberta Education Guidelines for Best Practices: Creating Learning

Environments that Respect Diverse Sexual Orientations, Gender Identities, and Gender Expressions.

11. All collected data must be stored in Canada. Digital data must be stored on Canadian servers.
12. Under Alberta's Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP Act), personal information or identifiable individual records are not disclosed to independent researchers by Lethbridge School Division. Individual records are not disclosed to independent researchers by Lethbridge School Division. Individual participants who are above the age of 18 must provide consent to the provision of their own personally identifying information. Parent(s)/guardian(s) of participants under 18 must provide consent for the collection of personally identifying data for their child.
13. Lethbridge School Division does not identify potential participants for researchers.
14. Lethbridge School Division does not allow for the provision of incentives or token compensation for participation in research.
15. As a condition of approval, it is the researcher's responsibility to provide Lethbridge School Division with a report of the study upon completion. The researcher shall also arrange feedback of the results to participating schools.
16. Approval of research studies will be granted for one full year. After one year's time, the study team must submit a progress report and request for continuation or extension of the studies. Any changes to the research team, scope of the project, or methodology will require a re-submission to the application process.

Special Considerations for Researchers Who Are Lethbridge School Division Employees:

1. Proposals must consider how employment with the Division may create the appearance of power over potential participants and result in coercion, even if unintended (e.g. parent/guardian may feel their child may be penalized or miss out if they do not provide consent for their child to participate in their teacher's research project). Proposals must also consider perceived conflict of interest by potential participants. Clear evidence of consideration and mitigation of these issues must be described in the application.
2. The research must not impede on the duties of the employee. Proposals must clearly demonstrate that the research does not receive priority over employee duties.
Employees must not use their job-related access to sensitive information and resources as a benefit to their research. Consideration of ethical and fair access to potential research participants and information for research is necessary.

Without an approved Research Application an employee may not use, for example, student work, information from PowerSchool, information found in official school records. As well, an employee may not use the internal mail distribution lists to email prospective participants. If clarity is required on this issue, please send an inquiry to the Associate Superintendent – Instructional Services.