



Administrative Procedures

AP-401	Date of implementation: September 2021
	Date of update:
RESEARCH	Related Administrative Procedures: AP-412 Access to Schools AP-519 Privacy

Purpose: The Division recognizes the role of valid research and other projects in the development of educational theories and practices and acknowledges the need of researchers to work with school divisions and within schools. This procedure is intended to guide and organize the practice of research within the Division.

Research is the systematic examination of phenomena through collection, analysis and reporting of qualitative and/or quantitative data. Research has a variety of purposes including, academic, program evaluation (internal or external), and professional growth.

For the purpose of this procedure, “research” does not include day-to-day aspects of formative assessment or data collection for the purpose of Professional Learning Communities and/or improved teaching and learning within a school setting. Nor does it include informal processes used to monitor programs or initiatives set out by the Division.

Procedures:

- 1) All proposals to undertake research within the Division shall be submitted to the Learning Superintendent/Director Designate responsible for research using the appropriate internal or external format at least four (4) weeks prior to the proposed start date.
- 2) Before research projects initiated by external organizations or partners are considered for approval, they must be sponsored and supervised by:
 - a) A recognized post-secondary institution;
 - b) A recognized research institute; or
 - c) Co-sponsored by the Division and/or partner organizations.
- 3) Before research projects initiated by internal organizations or partners are considered for approval, they must be:
 - a) Supported by the Learning Superintendent responsible for the school conducting the research.
 - b) Supported by the Learning Superintendent responsible for the area or topic being researched (area of responsibility).
 - c) Supported outside of assigned time unless otherwise agreed to.

- d) In compliance with PSSD Internal Research Ethics as per the applications.
- 4) All external and internal research projects will be reviewed according to the following criteria.
 - a) All research applications must adhere to the policies of the [Tri-Council Policy Statement Regarding Research Involving Humans](#) and/or will provide a letter of Ethics Approval from the institution sponsoring the research project.
 - b) The research will have recognizable value to the Division and/or education in general.
 - c) Participation in the research will be voluntary with the opportunity for participants to withdrawal at any time.
 - d) The content of any part of the research project must not be considered objectional, contentious, or related to the topics that have a personal, rather than an academic, purpose.
 - e) The involvement of students or staff shall not require an unreasonable amount of time or be disruptive to the learning environment or process.
 - f) The number and nature of any other research studies planned or underway in the Division at the time of the request.
 - g) The project will follow all legislation and administrative procedures related to privacy and access to schools.
 - h) Research results and findings will be shared with the Division and/or participants.
 - 5) All external and internal researchers will complete an application to conduct research within the Division. Research projects seeking distribution to either Prairie Spirit staff and/or families will be subject to review/approval by the Director Designate and committee according to the criteria listed above.
 - 6) Research projects may be terminated at any time if the guidelines established for the study have been violated.
 - 7) Upon completion of the study, the researcher shall submit to the Learning Superintendent or Designate responsible for research a report describing the project and the findings.
 - 8) The Learning Superintendent or Designate responsible for research shall establish a committee to review research proposals that will be comprised of:
 - a) Learning Superintendent or Designate responsible for research (chair)
 - b) One coordinator
 - c) One in-school administrator (optional)
 - d) One Division employee appropriate to the subject and/or methodology of the proposed research (optional).



Application to Conduct Research in Prairie Spirit School Division

Appendix A
AP-401 Research

1) Contact Information:

- Researcher(s) name(s) and contact information
- Name of sponsoring/supervising Institution (external research) *OR* name of PSSD school (internal research)

2) Research Summary:

Please outline clearly and concisely:

- Research question(s) to be addressed
- Purpose and objectives of the study
- Background and relevance of the research to teaching and learning
- Research plans and methods including gathering and analyzing data or observations

Attach any documentation that will be useful in acquiring a complete understanding of the proposal.

3) Tentative Timelines:

Please outline the expected timelines for your research, including data/observation gathering and submission of final report.

4) Ethical Considerations:

Researchers are expected to understand ethical processes and guidelines that apply to their projects and to have ethical approval for their study by the applicable authorities (e.g., university ethics committee, Learning Superintendent/Director Designate) before proceeding with the research.

The welfare of students (and their families), teachers and the school community must always be at the forefront of all research activities. It is important to reflect on, and be informed by, guiding principles of both the *Saskatchewan Teachers' Code of Professional Ethics* (Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation; STF, 2020) and *ethical research practice*:

- **Code of Professional Ethics:** The research must be in alignment to pledges made by assuming the duties of a professional teacher within Saskatchewan: Commitments to the profession, to teaching and learning, and to the community (STF, 2017).

- **Duty of Care:** “A researcher’s duty of care for participants and their environments goes beyond just trying to prevent participants or their environment from coming to harm in the same way that caring for people means more than just keeping them safe. It also involves nurturing participants’ development and well-being” (Busher, 2019, p. 2).
- **Tri-Council Policy Statement - Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans:** All research must adhere to the policies of the Government of Canada’s (2018) panel on research ethics regarding research involving humans.
- **5 R’s (Respect, Relevance, Reciprocity, Responsibility, Relationship):** The Aboriginal Capacity and Research Development Environment programs established within many Canadian provinces proposed the incorporation of Kirkness and Barnhardt’s (1991) four ‘R’s – Respect, Relevance, Reciprocity, and Responsibility – for developing academic initiatives in educational contexts with Indigenous people. The emphasis is on the need for research that, “*respects* them for who they are, that is *relevant* to their view of the world, that offers *reciprocity* in their relationships with others, and that helps them exercise *responsibility* over their own lives” (Kirkness & Barhardt, 1991, p. 1).
 - Adapting these principles for research contexts, Styres and Zinga (2013) included an additional ‘R’, that of ‘Relationship’; “Relationships are fundamental because respect, relevance, reciprocity, and responsibility are grounded in an understanding and acknowledgment of interconnected relationships and are expressed through those relationships” (p. 293).

Researchers must also take into consideration the legal requirements regarding the privacy rights of those who may be involved or affected by the research, particularly the students and families (outlined in the *Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act of Saskatchewan*). Therefore, researchers will need to gain parental/guardian permission for student participation in the project. The following serves as a guide for writing a letter seeking parental/guardian permission:

- Why the information is being collected (e.g., overarching research question, possible benefits, etc.)
- What information will be collected
- How the information will be used
- Who the audience for the information will be (i.e., how, and with whom, will it be shared)
- A disclosure that no harm/penalty will come to the student as a result of collecting the information, or from choosing to not participate in the research
- A statement of anonymity and confidentiality (e.g., to protect identity pseudonyms will be used when sharing any information, if photos/video used there will be no identifying personal information used in conjunction with the images, etc.)

For an **Application to Conduct Research (*External*)**:

- Please append:
 - Ethics approval from a recognized post-secondary or research institution (e.g., university ethics committee)
 - Copy of proposed parental/guardian permission letter

For an **Application to Conduct Research (*Internal*)**:

- Please append:
 - A statement of Ethical Considerations relevant to your research plan.
 - Copy of proposed parental/guardian permission letter if relevant.

5) Communication (*Internal*):

- Please attach a communication plan and draft of communication statement to target audience (email, ALT Essentials, Exchange), that includes the question, the time frame, etc.

6) Research Findings:

- **Application to Conduct Research (*External*):** A copy of the results of the research will be shared with Prairie Spirit School Division.
- **Application to Conduct Research (*Internal*):** Research conducted by Prairie Spirit School Division employees is the property of Prairie Spirit School Division. Please include a plan for the dissemination of findings.

References:

Busher, H. (2019). Ethical research practice in educational institutions: Engaging with vulnerable

participants. In H. Busher & A. Fox (Eds.), *Implementing Ethics in Educational Ethnography: Regulation and Practice*. London: Routledge.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/331382776_Ethical_research_practice_in_educational_institutions_Engaging_with_vulnerable_participants

Government of Canada. (2018). *Tri-Council policy statement: Ethical conduct for research*

involving humans – TCPS 2. https://ethics.gc.ca/eng/policy-politique_tcps2-eptc2_2018.html

Kirkness, V. J., & Barnhardt, R. (1991). First Nations and higher education: The

four R's – respect, relevance, reciprocity, responsibility. *Journal of American Indian Education*, 30(3), 1-15. <https://www.afn.ca/uploads/files/education2/the4rs.pdf>

Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation (STF). (2017). *Code of Professional Ethics*. Retrieved from

<https://www.stf.sk.ca/resource/code-professional-ethics>

Styres, S. & Zinga, D. (2013). The community-first Land-centred theoretical framework:

Bringing a 'good mind' to Indigenous education research? *Canadian Journal of Education*, 36(2), 284-313. <https://journals.sfu.ca/cje/index.php/cje-rce/article/view/1315>

Useful document for planning/conducting action research within a school setting:

The Alberta Teachers' Association. (2019). *Engaging in action research: A practical guide for*

Alberta teachers and school leaders.

<https://www.teachers.ab.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/ATA/Publications/Research/COOR-101-25%20Action%20Research%20Guide-PDF%202019%2012-WORKBOOK.pdf>



Prairie Spirit School Division Ethical Considerations for Research

Appendix B AP-401 Research

Spectrum of Risk	Examples	Safeguards
Unacceptable Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blind trials • Deception that may cause harm • Research “on” rather than “with” identifiable groups 	Rethink the research methodology/research
High Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensitive research in collaboration with a particular group • Research with potential to identify the participants • Research that includes deception 	Collaboration at the University level
Medium Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviewing a group of students about a particular issue • Classroom wide research involving a “sensitive” topic • Research focusing on an identifiable group 	Mentorship at the University level
Low Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action research with your students in your classroom where the entire class participates • Meeting with other teachers in a focus group setting to discuss/design the implementation of an initiative • Reasonable assurance of anonymity 	School division project approval/support process

Please answer the following questions with regards to the proposed research:

- Review the matrix above. Where does the research fall on the spectrum of risk?
- Will the research identify individual students accidentally or to those that know the student well? Are there ways confidentiality or anonymity can be built into the research plan? (If confidentiality and anonymity cannot be maintained, it is best to have the students and parent/guardian informed and consent to the research knowing confidentiality and anonymity cannot be guaranteed).

- Is there any risk to the student participating in the research? Is there any possibility the student's academic opportunities may be detrimentally impacted?
- Will the teacher/student relationship be in any way negatively impacted?
- How will the parents/guardians of underage students be informed of the research and how will consent be sought?

I/We agree to conduct research according to the ethical guidelines as set out by Prairie Spirit School Division's ethical considerations for research.

Name

Signature