

Appendix A: Research assessment criteria

1. Value

The research adds to the evidence-base for school education with preference given to research that aligns with Department priorities.

Value will be evident when, for example, the research:

- directly or indirectly aligns with Department priorities
- offers direct or indirect benefit to the participating school(s) or site(s)
- contributes to supporting or improving student learning, wellbeing and/or engagement
- focuses on building the capacity of leaders, staff and parents to improve and support school education
- supports education jurisdictions, government agencies and community partners to better lead and support schools.

2. Quality

The research design and methodology are likely to achieve the stated research aims and/or address the research questions.

Quality will be evident when, for example, the research:

- questions are formulated from a review of existing evidence
- is logistically viable and appropriate to the context of the school(s)/site(s)
- acknowledges and mitigates any research bias
- data are reliable, valid, relevant and fit for purpose
- is conducted or supervised by researchers with the qualifications, training, experience and competencies required
- plans strategies for disseminating findings, in ways that increase the likelihood that findings will be applied, including the provision of a summary of the research findings to the Department and participating sites
- design is culturally appropriate
- proposes teaching and learning interventions that are age or developmentally appropriate and that align with the Western Australian Curriculum.

3. Impost

The operational impacts of the research have been considered and the research design seeks to prevent or minimise disruptions to student learning, additional workload for staff and disruptions to the normal operations of schools/sites.

The impost on schools/sites and individuals is acceptable when, for example, the research:

- benefits outweigh the impost on schools, sites and participants
- minimises the burden on staff caused by recruitment strategies, administrative tasks and data collection
- provides funding to compensate for staff time required for research activities
- clearly states and minimises the use of Department resources to support participants, including the Employee Assistance Program, student services staff and school psychologists
- clearly states and minimises the use of school or site spaces, facilities and physical resources
- minimises disruption to the school or site timetable
- proposes appropriate data collection and data collection methods
- limits the amount of data collected to those required to answer research questions and contribute to the findings
- limits the number of schools/sites and participants recruited to those required to answer research questions and contribute to the findings

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- does not compromise the relationship between the school(s)/site(s) and their community.

4. Ethical, legislative and policy requirements

The research meets the principles of the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2025)*, including fully informed opt-in consent, and complies with all relevant legislation and Department policies.

Ethical, legislative and policy compliance will be evident when, for example, the research:

- attains Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) or the WA Aboriginal Health Ethics Committee (WAAHEC) approval
- declares and addresses any actual, perceived or potential conflicts of interest or power imbalances
- meets the Department's intellectual property and copyright requirements for student and teacher work samples
- seeks fully informed consent for the publication and use of photographs, video recordings and work samples
- adheres to the Department's Students Online in Public Schools policy and Child Protection in Department of Education Sites policy
- adheres to the Department's Conflict of Interest policy for staff undertaking research for a tertiary qualification in their own school
- is in compliance with applicable regulatory requirements in relation to public liability, workers' compensation and professional indemnity insurance.

5. Duty of care

The research appropriately mitigates any actual, perceived or potential risk of harm to students, their parents/carers and Department staff.

Acknowledgement of the Department's duty of care will be evident when, for example, the research:

- identifies potential risks associated with participating in the research, including risk of physical or psychological harm, and proposes appropriate strategies to prevent, mitigate and manage these risks
- adheres to the Department's Duty of Care for Public School Students policy
- observes the requirements under the Department's Working with Children Checks in Department of Education Sites policy.

6. Privacy and confidentiality

At all stages of the research, individuals and schools/sites are not directly or indirectly identified and nor can disclosure be inferred or deduced.

Privacy and confidentiality will be evident when, for example, the research:

- complies with relevant privacy legislation concerning the collection, use and disclosure of personal information, including the Australian Privacy Principles and the Privacy and Responsible Information Sharing Act 2024 (WA)
- respects and protects the privacy of individuals participating in the research
- recognises that the disclosure of official information related to students, staff and schools is restricted under Section 242 of the School Education Act 1999 (WA).

7. Data security

At all stages of the research, collected data are kept secure, are used only for the purpose for which they were collected and are not shared with unauthorised third parties.

Data security will be evident when, for example, the research:

- restricts the use of cloud data storage services to only those with Australian-based servers

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- restricts access to collected data only to authorised researchers
- ensures that online survey platforms used as part of the research encrypt data and store it securely
- immediately advises the Department and research participants of any data breach.

8. Sensitivity

The research identifies and addresses sensitivities related to the research topic, research methodologies and/or vulnerable participants outlined in Appendix B: Sensitive Research.

This will be evident when, for example, the research:

- recognises sensitivities, including those specific to schools/sites, particular contexts and/or individuals and
- proposes strategies to prevent, mitigate or remedy the identified sensitivities.

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