



Department of
Education

Research Conducted by External Parties policy

Effective date: 19 August 2025

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Table of contents

| | |
|---|----|
| 1. Policy statement | 3 |
| 2. Policy rules | 3 |
| 3. Responsibility for implementation and compliance | 4 |
| 4. Scope | 4 |
| 5. Supporting procedures | 4 |
| 6. Definitions | 4 |
| 7. Related documents | 5 |
| 8. Contact information | 8 |
| 9. History of changes | 8 |
| 10. More information | 10 |
| Policy review date | 10 |
| Policy last updated | 10 |

1. Policy statement

The Department of Education (the Department) supports high quality, ethical research where the findings have the potential to inform decision making and contribute to improvements in school education policy, staff competency, operational practices, student and staff wellbeing or student achievement and progress.

2. Policy rules

In accordance with the [Research Conducted by External Parties procedures](#):

- All research proposed by external parties to be conducted on or through Department of Education sites must be assessed and a decision made to approve or not approve the research by the following approving authorities:
 - the director of a business area commissioning research;
 - principals and site managers, only for low sensitivity research; or
 - the Director, System and School Performance, for all other research proposals.
- All approved research must be registered by the approving authority.
- Directors, principals and site managers, must determine whether their school/site will participate in proposed research.

Guidance

Low sensitivity research does not investigate sensitive research topics, adopt research methodologies that are sensitive in context or target participants who may be vulnerable. A comprehensive explanation of sensitive research is available in the [Research Conducted by External Parties procedures Appendix B: Sensitive research](#).

Principals or site managers may decline to participate in proposed research and are not required to give researchers reasons for their decision.

3. Responsibility for implementation and compliance

Principals, site managers and directors are responsible for implementing the policy.

Line managers are responsible for compliance monitoring.

4. Scope

This policy applies to all Department employees.

Guidance

Research Conducted by External Parties includes research commissioned by Department schools or business areas and research initiated by external parties which involves:

- participants (staff, students, parents) recruited on or through Department sites/schools; or
- staff recruited in their capacity as Department employees, other than through Department sites/schools.

5. Supporting procedures

Research Conducted by External Parties procedures

6. Definitions

External parties

Individuals not directly employed by the Department, organisations, agencies, corporations, incorporated bodies and government departments that are sponsoring or undertaking research on or through Department of Education sites.

For the purposes of this policy, external parties include employees of the Department who undertake research for a tertiary qualification or for an external party.

Research

A process of systematic inquiry that collects, documents, analyses and interprets data and other information. Research can include evaluations, reviews or trials that assess the effectiveness of specific programs or can be more general in nature.

For the purposes of this policy, the following are excluded:

- undergraduate student assignments confined to one site when the research activities are undertaken as part of normal teaching practice
- member-related research, for consultation purposes, commissioned or conducted by education-related professional associations, unions and parent bodies.

Schools/sites

For the purposes of this policy schools/sites is taken to include, in addition to public schools, all Department facilities, including central services, regional offices, Intensive English Centres, Instrumental Music School Services, Schools of Special Education Needs, Swimming and Water Safety programs, Language Development Centres, Camp Schools, Community Kindergartens, Child and Parent Centres and all off-site facilities.

Sensitive Research

Research is sensitive when it investigates sensitive topics, adopts research methodologies that are sensitive to the context or targets participants who may be vulnerable.

A comprehensive explanation of sensitive research is available in the [Research Conducted by External Parties procedures Appendix B: Sensitive research](#).

Site Manager

School principals and officers who have executive responsibility for overall management of any Department site.

7. Related documents

Relevant legislation or authority

Freedom of Information Act 1992 (WA)

Privacy and Responsible Information Sharing Act 2024 (WA)

Public Sector Management Act 1994 (WA)

School Education Act 1999 (WA)

Vocational Education and Training Act 1996 (WA)

Volunteers and Food and Other Donors (Protection from Liability) Act 2002 (WA)

2024 WA Government Cyber Security policy

Public Sector Code of Ethics (WA)

Work Health and Safety Act 2020 (WA)

Working with Children (Screening) Act 2004 (WA)

Related department policies

[Child Protection in Department of Education Sites policy](#)

[Criminal History Screening for Department of Education Sites policy](#)

[Conflict of Interest policy](#)

[Cyber Security policy](#)

[Duty of Care for Public School Students policy](#)

[Information Breach policy](#)

[Intellectual Property policy](#)

[Privacy and Responsible Information Sharing policy](#)

[Risk and Business Continuity Management policy](#)

[Students Online in Public Schools policy](#)

[Visitors and Dignitaries at Public Schools and Residential Facilities policy](#)

[Work Health and Safety policy](#)

[Working with Children Checks in Department of Education Sites policy](#)

Other documents

[External research application form](#)

8. Contact information

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9. History of changes

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|---------------------------|--|
| Effective date | 12 August 2025 |
| Last update date | 30 August 2025 |
| Policy version no. | 1.3 |
| Notes | Updated policy |
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| Effective date | 19 August 2025 |
| Last update date | 19 August 2025 |
| Policy version no. | 2.0 |
| Notes | Updated policy approved by the Director General on 1 November 2024 |
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| Effective date | 19 August 2025 |
| Last update date | 19 August 2025 |
| Policy version no. | 2.1 |
| Notes | Minor changes to update 'Related documents' and 'Related Department policies' - approved Director, System and School Performance D25/0682237 |
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10. More information

Supporting content

Procedure

[Research Conducted by External Parties procedures](#)

Guideline

[Support material for research conducted by external parties - information letter and consent form templates - effective 19 August 2025](#)

[Guidelines for external researchers - effective 19 August 2025](#)

Policy review date

19 August 2028

Policy last updated

19 August 2025
