

Conducting External Research in Montgomery County Public Schools

Frequently Asked Questions

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS), Board of Education, require external research studies conducted in MCPS to be reviewed by the Office of Shared Accountability (OSA) and approved by the deputy superintendent of schools. Approval of external research studies must be obtained prior to the initiation of any research activities.

For more detailed information, see Regulation AFA-RA, *Conducting Research in Montgomery County Public Schools* <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/policy/pdf/afara.pdf>

Which proposals are eligible for review?

- ◆ Unsolicited research proposals from individuals or organizations independent of MCPS.
- ◆ Proposals from MCPS employees that are required for the completion of a master degree or a doctorate (e.g., Ph.D, Ed.D).
- ◆ Proposals from individuals other than MCPS employees for the completion of a doctorate (e.g., Ph.D, Ed.D).
- ◆ Evaluations from individuals or organizations external to MCPS which may be required for grants received by MCPS.

Which proposals will not be considered for approval or support?

- ◆ Proposals designed to meet the requirements for receiving course credit in high school, undergraduate or graduate courses, seminars, practicums, or training workshops.
- ◆ Proposals for studies for master's theses from individuals who are not MCPS employees.

What are the requirements for proposals submitted for review?

- ◆ All proposals must be reviewed by an Institutional Review Board (IRB). A copy of the signed and officially stamped decision letter from the IRB indicating the duration and year of the approval must accompany submitted proposals. Renewal of the IRB for studies that span several years is the responsibility of the researcher. A renewal should be sent to OSA as soon as it becomes available.
- ◆ All proposals must include a letter or e-mail of support from the appropriate MCPS central office or school(s).
- ◆ All proposals that request participation of MCPS staff, parents, or students over the age of 18 years require active adult consent. Proposals must include a copy of the active adult consent that has been approved by the IRB.

- ◆ All proposals that request participation of MCPS students under the age of 18 years require active parent consent. Proposals must include a copy of the active parent consent that has been approved by the IRB.
- ◆ All proposals that request staff or students to participate as subjects must specify that participation occurs after the school day and not impact the on-going instructional program. Requests to conduct data collection activities during school hours will be considered on a case by case basis.
- ◆ All proposals must include a copy of data collection instrument(s), if applicable.
- ◆ Proposals submitted for master's theses or doctoral dissertations must have the written approval of the candidate's graduate advisor(s) or committee(s) prior to submission to MCPS.

What forms do I need to submit to request to conduct research?

- ◆ MCPS form #495-1 and MCPS form #226-17.

How do I access the forms?

The required forms can be accessed on the MCPS Website.

- ◆ MCPS form #495-1:
<http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/forms/pdf/495-1.pdf>
- ◆ MCPS form #226-17:
<http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/forms/pdf/226-17.pdf>
- ◆ Paper copies of the forms are available upon request. Please contact or Mrs. Cynthia Loeb, logistics support specialist, Applied Research Unit by e-mail at Cynthia.Loeb@mcpsmd.org, or at 301-279-3848.

What do I need to do?

1. Complete and submit to OSA the following forms and documents: MCPS form # 495-1, MCPS form #226-17, a description of the research proposal (see pages 5 and 6 of MCPS form # 495-1), an IRB decision letter with the official IRB stamp, and the following as applicable to the proposal:
 - a. Copies of all data collection instruments
 - b. Copies of recruitment letters and consent forms for data collection activities
 - c. Letter or e-mail of support from appropriate MCPS central office staff or school principal(s)

2. Mail the above materials to: Office of Shared Accountability, Montgomery County Public Schools, Room 11, 850 Hungerford Drive, Rockville, Maryland 20850 (Attention: Mrs. Cynthia Loeb).
3. Proposals should be submitted to the OSA at least two months in advance of the proposed implementation date.

What is the review process?

1. After the proposal and required documentation have been received, the request is reviewed by at least three researchers with expertise in research methodology. Depending on the size, scope, and timeline of the research activities, some proposals may be reviewed by staff in other MCPS offices.
2. A recommendation is made to the associate superintendent for OSA. A recommendation from the associate superintendent for OSA is sent to the deputy superintendent of schools.
3. The deputy superintendent of schools makes the final decision. A copy of the decision is sent to the researcher and impacted offices or schools.

How long is the review process?

The review process for proposals submitted with complete documentation takes approximately 4–6 weeks.

Who can I contact if I have questions?

Please contact Mrs. Cynthia Loeb, logistics support specialist, Applied Research Unit by e-mail, at Cynthia.Loeb@mcpsmd.org or by telephone, at 301-279-3848.