

HAMILTON-WENTWORTH CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD



**ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTRUCTIONAL
SERVICES**

**Guidelines for the Review, Approval and Implementation of
Internal and External Research Proposals**

Revised September 2007

Guidelines for the Review, Approval and Implementation of Internal and External Research Proposals

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Scientific research that is carefully planned and implemented is a highly valued activity within our society. Research efforts utilizing the scientific method are responsible for countless discoveries which have benefited individuals throughout the world. Of particular importance to the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board's mission of educating children, adolescents and adults are research studies in education and the social sciences, as they have the potential to lead to the development of evidence-based, best practice guidelines for Board staff. For these reasons the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board is pleased to collaborate with the research community in conducting ethical, relevant and well-designed studies.
- 1.2 In order to facilitate the implementation of research initiatives within the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board, the following procedural guidelines have been developed which describe:
- the process that researchers are expected to follow when making application to conduct research studies with staff and/or students of the Board;
 - the criteria and procedures employed by the Research Advisory Committee of the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board when reviewing research proposals;
 - the steps which are taken once approval of the research proposal has been granted by the Research Advisory Committee and the Director of Education.

2.0 Application Process

- 2.1 Individuals, institutions and/or organizations wishing to conduct a research, evaluation, survey and/or test development project involving students or staff of the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board shall submit an application package of information to:

Dr. Clinton Davis
Chair, Research Advisory Committee
Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board
90 Mulberry Street, P.O. Box 2012
Hamilton, Ontario
L8N 3R9

2.2 The application package shall include:

- seven (7) copies of the full research proposal;
- one (1) copy of a typed and signed “Research Application” form (Appendix 1);
- a copy of the Ethics Committee Approval form of the institution or funding agency with which the researcher is affiliated;
- a copy of the final form of all instruments to be used in the study;
- a copy of the letter and form to be used to obtain the informed consent of the participants in the study or the parent/guardian;
- a copy of a current criminal background check (within the last 12 months) for anyone involved in collecting data from students/staff.

2.3 Completed application packages shall be submitted on or before:

- January 31st ;
- May 31st ; or
- September 30th .

Please note: Research projects shall not be initiated in schools after May 1st of any school year and during the month of January in secondary schools.

2.4 Research applicants shall abide by the following conditions of access:

- responsibility for the preparation of all materials related to a study lies with the researcher;
- there will be no monetary costs incurred by the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board or any participating school as a result of their involvement in a study;
- when working in a school, the researcher will recognize the legal authority of the Principal and adhere to the organizational structures and routines of the school.

3.0 Review and Recommendation Process

3.1 The Research Advisory Committee is responsible for receiving, examining and either recommending or rejecting proposals submitted by those who wish to conduct research projects in the schools of the Board.

3.2 The Research Advisory Committee is comprised of:

- a representative of the Board of Trustees;
- a Superintendent of Education;
- the Chief Psychologist (Chairperson);
- a Curriculum Services representative;
- a Student Services representative;
- an Elementary Principal/Vice-Principal representative;
- a Secondary Principal/Vice Principal representative;
- other administrative staff in the area most relevant to proposed research (dependent on the nature of submissions).

3.3 The Research Advisory Committee meets three (3) times per year:

- March;
- June;
- October.

Only in exceptional cases will the Committee consider a research proposal at times other than these.

3.4 The functions of the Research Advisory Committee are to:

- support and encourage research that contributes to educational improvement;
- review and analyze all requests for research to be conducted in the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board;
- evaluate each research application in relation to the educational mission, vision and policies of the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board;
- recommend approval of those research proposals which adhere to the decision criteria authorized by the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board;
- monitor the quantity of approved research projects and their distribution throughout the schools of the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board;
- approach schools on behalf of researchers when approval has been granted.

3.5 The Research Advisory Committee considers the following questions in deciding whether or not to recommend approval of an application:

- *Relevance to Education:*
 - ▶ is the study relevant to education in general?
 - ▶ is the study consistent with Board policies and priorities?
 - ▶ is there value and/or benefit to the school system?
 - ▶ is there a clearly articulated process for providing feedback of results to the Board?

- *Research Methodology:*
 - ▶ is the study well-designed?
 - ▶ is the methodology appropriate given the purpose of the study?
 - ▶ are there specific and clear procedures for sample selection?
 - ▶ are the research instruments adequate and appropriate?
 - ▶ is the research design feasible within a school context?

- *Protection of Students, Staff & Parents/Guardians:*
 - ▶ has the proposal been approved by the Ethics Committee of the institution or funding agency with which the researcher is affiliated?
 - ▶ can the research be carried out without excessive interference with the teaching-learning process?
 - ▶ can school time be reasonably devoted to the research study?
 - ▶ is there full disclosure of the study's procedures and instrumentation?
 - ▶ are the study's procedures/instrumentation free from sensitive or intrusive activities/items?
 - ▶ are the confidentiality of data and the rights and well-being of participants fully protected?
 - ▶ are there acceptable procedures for obtaining informed consent? (See sample Parent Consent Form in Appendix 1. – Please note decline consent forms are not acceptable)
 - ▶ is there an appropriate protocol for dealing with sensitive issues which may arise during the research (e.g. students who wish to withdraw from the study, the disclosure of sensitive information by participants, the need to debrief participants)?

3.6 If the proposed study passes the initial review of the Research Advisory Committee, the Chairperson will prepare a report for the Director of Education outlining the Committee's recommendation.

4.0 Approval and Monitoring Process

- 4.1 Upon approval by the Director of Education, the Chairperson of the Committee will:
- contact the Principal(s) in the school(s) where the study may be conducted;
 - send a written description of the project and other supporting materials to the Principal(s) for review;
 - send a letter to the research applicant giving approval to conduct the proposed research project in the designated schools contingent upon the agreement of the Principal(s);
 - send a copy of the approval letter to the Principal of each of the designated schools.

- 4.2 If the proposed study is accepted by a Principal, the research applicant shall:
- contact the Principal to schedule a meeting at which time the implementation of the study may be discussed further. (In the case of surveys, this meeting may not be necessary.);
 - inform the Chairperson of the Research Advisory Committee as to which Principal(s) have given the final approval to the study and submit a final timeline or schedule for data collection;
 - conduct the research study in accordance with the procedures as outlined in the approved proposal and keep the Principal(s) and the Chairperson of the Research Advisory Committee updated on the progress of data collection.
- 4.3 Once the research study is completed, the researcher shall:
- submit a copy of the written report, including an Executive Summary to the Chairperson of the Research Advisory Committee upon completion of the report;
 - provide a summary of the project and offer feedback to participating schools, students and parents/guardians.

If there are any questions or concerns about these guidelines, please contact Dr. Clinton Davis, Chairperson of the Research Advisory Committee at 905-525-2930 ext. 2841.

APPENDIX 1



RESEARCH APPLICATION

Application for Permission to Conduct a Research Study

Instructions

1. Complete and assemble the application package:
 - signed application form
 - copy of Ethics Approval form
 - copy of all instruments
 - copy of parent/guardian letter and consent form
 - copy of current criminal background check (non-Board employees only) for each person involved in data collection with student/staff
 - seven (7) copies of full proposal

2. Obtain the signature of the contact person at the sponsoring institution or agency. If H.W.C.D.S.B. employee, obtain approval of principal.

3. Forward package to:

Dr. Clinton Davis
Chair
Research Advisory Committee
Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board
90 Mulberry Street, P.O. Box 2012
Hamilton, Ontario
L8N 3R9

Please do not contact schools until the Research Advisory Committee notifies you of its decision.

4. STUDY DESIGN

- *Data Collection*

- ▶ Describe the key variables being measured and the data collection procedures that will be used:

- ▶ List all interviews, measures, questionnaires and tests to be used and attach to application form:

- ▶ Describe the procedure to be used for sample collection:

- ▶ Number of participants required for the study:

	Grades	Number	Time Required
Students			
Teachers			
Other			

- ▶ Describe how participants will be prepared for and debriefed from involvement in the study:

- ▶ Number of schools required: _____
- ▶ Preferred school(s) (if any): _____
- ▶ School facilities required: _____
- ▶ Approximate date for commencement of data collection: _____
- ▶ Approximate date for completion of data collection: _____

- *Data Analysis*

- ▶ Describe the proposed methods of data analysis:

6. PROTECTION OF PRIVACY

List any personal information required from school board:

- Describe procedures to ensure confidentiality:

- Describe the method to be used to obtain informed parent/guardian consent (attach copy):

- Describe procedures and time frame for retention and disposal of data:

7. PROCEDURES FOR PROVISION OF FEEDBACK

- Describe procedures for providing feedback to participating schools:

- **It is expected that a complete report be submitted to the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board.**

▶ Expected date for submission of report: _____

8. RESEARCHER'S AGREEMENT

I, _____
(Name of principal investigator)

of _____
(Name of Institution/Organization)

attest that:

- the information provided in the research application with respect to the study entitled:

_____ (Title of Research Study)

constitutes full disclosure of all procedures in which the students/staff will participate as part of the study;

- there are no other procedures or studies subsequent to this study in which the students/staff will be expected to participate as part of their involvement in the study under consideration;
- any personal information on students/staff obtained through this research study will be maintained with complete confidentiality; and
- there will be no disclosure of the names of the students/staff who participate in the study, the names of the schools or the name of the school board in any report of the results of the study.

(Signature of principal investigator)

(Signature of Advisor – if applicable)

Date

SAMPLE PARENT/GUARDIAN LETTER AND CONSENT FORM

(Letterhead of the institution which you represent)

(Date)

Dear Parent or Guardian:

I am a graduate student at _____ University and I am conducting a study that examines children's reading comprehension. A child's ability to understand what he/she reads is a crucial skill which affects almost every aspect of life in our society. In my study I am seeking to understand how children develop their reading comprehension skills and how best to help those children who find reading comprehension difficult. I would like to include your child in my study.

The study will take place in October 2004 and will be comprised of one 60 minute session with your child at his/her school. During this 60 minute session I will have your child read a variety of short stories of increasing difficulty. I will then ask him/her questions about the stories to determine how well they were understood. Your child's name will not be identified in any part of the study and all of his/her responses will be kept confidential.

The Research Advisory Committee of the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board as well as the Principal of your child's school have officially approved this study. When the study is completed a report on the findings will be available in the school library for interested parents and guardians.

Please complete the form at the bottom of this letter and return it to your child's teacher by _____ (Date). If, on the research day your child is unwilling or unable to participate, his/her wishes will be respected.

If you would like to receive more information about the study, please contact me at 905-
_____ at your convenience.

Thank you for your consideration and cooperation.

Sincerely,

John Doe
Doctoral Student
Department of Psychology
_____ University

.....
Child's Name: _____

Indicate your choice by checking the appropriate box:

- I give permission for my child to participate in the _____ University study conducted by John Doe.
- I do NOT give permission for my child to participate in the _____ University study conducted by John Doe.

Signature of parent/guardian: _____

PLEASE RETURN TO YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER BY: _____ (Date)

HAMILTON-WENTWORTH CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

STUDENT RESEARCH APPLICATION

Instructions

- This form is to be used by undergraduate college and university students who wish to undertake a research project to fulfill a course requirement.
- Please attach a copy of the course assignment for which the research project is being completed.
- Please attach a copy of any surveys or questionnaires to be used as part of the research project.
- If students are to be involved in the study, please attach a copy of the parent/guardian letter and consent form.
- The deadline dates for submission of research proposals are January 31st , May 31st and September 30th .
- Forward Student Research Application form, copy of survey or questionnaire, copy of course assignment and copy of parent/guardian letter and consent form to:

Dr. Clinton Davis
Chair, Research Advisory Committee
Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board
90 Mulberry Street, P.O. Box 2012
Hamilton, ON L8N 3R9

1. RESEARCHER INFORMATION

- Name of Student: _____
- Institution/Agency: _____
- Mailing Address: _____
- Telephone – Home: _____ Bus.: _____
- E-mail: _____ Fax: _____
- Name of Supervising Professor: _____
- Course Name and Code#: _____

2. TITLE OF STUDY: _____

3. DESCRIPTION OF STUDY: _____

4. NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS REQUIRED FOR THE STUDY:

	GRADES	NUMBER	TIME REQUIRED
• Students			
• Teachers			
• Other			

5. DESCRIPTION OF PROCEDURES TO ENSURE CONFIDENTIALITY:

6. DATE OF COMMENCEMENT OF STUDY: _____

7. DATE OF COMPLETION OF STUDY: _____

Student's Signature

Professor's Signature

Date: _____