



## **A GUIDE FOR CONDUCTING RESEARCH IN GDE INSTITUTIONS**

### **1. PREAMBLE**

1.1. The Education Research (ER) Sub-directorate is committed to providing an environment that supports the research activities that will promote the vision and mission of Gauteng Department of Education. ER wishes to encourage all research institutions, employees who are conducting research as well as individual researchers to provide high quality, internationally competitive research and dissemination of ground breaking knowledge in pursuit of excellence.

### **2. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this document is to:

- 2.1. Inform potential researchers of how to lodge applications to conduct research at schools, districts and head office;
- 2.2. Set out criteria for the approval of research request; and
- 2.3. Inform potential researchers of restrictions when conducting research at schools district offices and head office.

### **3. LEGAL FRAMEWORK**

- 3.1. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act No 108 of 1996), as amended);
- 3.2. National Education Policy Act, 1996 (Act No 27 of 1996), as amended;
- 3.3. South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act No 84 of 1996), as amended;
- 3.4. Employment of Educators Act, 1998 (Act No 76 of 1998), as amended;
- 3.5. South African Council for Educators, 2000 (Act No 31 of 2000);
- 3.6. Public Service Act, 1994 (Proclamation 103 of 1994), as amended;
- 3.7. Promotion of Just Administrative Act, 2000 (Act No 3 of 2000); and
- 3.8. Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000 (Act No 2 of 2000), as amended.
- 3.9. Child Justice Act 75 Of 2008

#### **4. APPROVAL PROCESS FOR CONDUCTING RESEARCH WITHIN THE GDE INSTITUTIONS**

4.1. For any undergraduate and postgraduate students (including GDE employees), academics, organisations, NGOs, universities, services provider, agencies and research teams etc. that seek to conduct research in the Institutions and/or offices of the department, the prescribed GDE Research Request form must be completed. This applies to the service providers also that have been commissioned by the GDE to conduct research. The GDE Research Request form (Annexure A) is designed to ensure that all applicants provide the GDE with all relevant details pertaining to the research study to be undertaken not all sections of the form may be relevant to all applicants, and those sections that are deemed irrelevant may, unless otherwise advised, be omitted.

4.2. All research applicants must provide the GDE with all relevant details pertaining to the research study to be undertaken, failing which permission may not be granted to undertake any research within GDE, its schools and districts. The prescribed Research Request form requires sets of information to be completed by the researcher/researchers (see the attached GDE research request form):

4.3. No Research project must be started prior to the approval by the Department.

#### **5. SPECIFIC PROVISIONS**

5.1. Educators, learners and officials are not to be involved in any research activity at the beginning of the academic year in January nor during the last quarter of the year. All research processes may only commence from the beginning of the second week of February and must be concluded by the end of the third quarter of the academic year. This provision may be waived for all research commissioned and paid for by the Gauteng Department of Education itself.

5.2. Permission to conduct research in GDE institutions i.e. school/s, district/s office or Head Office must be sought from the Department using the prescribed Research Request Form as stated in 5.2 of this policy.

5.3. A maximum of **30 days** from the date of receipt has been allocated for the Research Coordination entity to collect input from within the department before making a decision around granting approval. Applicants are therefore encouraged to apply for permission to conduct research at least **two months** prior to the start of the actual undertaking. This provision may however be waived for all research commissioned and paid for by the Gauteng Department of Education itself.

5.4. The test/questionnaire/structured interview schedules/frameworks for interviews or other materials which are intended to be used must accompany the Research Request application form. Where more than one language is to be used, the translated version/s must also be submitted.

5.5. Should any modifications from the original approved proposal be made, the researcher should resubmit the modified proposal to the Head Office, indicating that it is a modified proposal and the reasons for the modification. The researcher may only continue subject to the approval of the Department.

5.6. Failure to adhere to the procedures described in the proposal will lead to prosecution.

## **6. EXCEPTIONS TO THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE SUBMISSION OF RELEVANT DOCUMENTS:**

6.1. In the case of standardised tests (where it is sufficient to supply only the name(s) of the instruments on the form).

## **7. CRITERIA IN RESPECT OF RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS**

7.1. The questionnaires / structured interview schedules / interview frameworks / tests should meet the following criteria:

- a) Education accountability;
- b) Proper research design;
- c) Sensitivity towards participants/ethical considerations;
- d) Correct content and terminology;
- e) Acceptable grammar; and
- f) Absence of non-essential / superfluous items.

7.2. In the case of postgraduate or undergraduate students embarking on research or projects, the supervisor/promoter must confirm in writing that the proposed research meets all the above requirements. This statement has to be attached to the application. If different languages are to be used in the research, care should be taken to ensure that each test item corresponds exactly in the alternative language used.

## **8. RESTRICTIONS & OBLIGATIONS PLACED ON THE RESEARCHER/S**

8.1. All research efforts that involve schools and offices of the Gauteng Department of Education may only commence from the second week in February and must be concluded by the end of the third term. This provision may be waived for all research commissioned by the GDE itself. (Refer to 6.1 of this policy)

8.2. Only in exceptional circumstances will the Gauteng Department of Education grant permission for research to be conducted during school hours. It must however be noted that the consent of the Principal and the SGB (if at a school) and the relevant Director.

(If at a district/head office) must be obtained when determining appropriate time/s for conducting research. This provision may also be waived in respect of all research commissioned by the GDE itself.

8.3. The applicant should submit the form and the supporting documents to the ER Sub-directorate. ER Sub-directorate shall scrutinise, align the topic with GDE key strategic goals and pillars, and approve the research request within 30 days. ER Sub-directorate shall inform the applicant of the GDE's verdict in writing.

8.4. The written detailed consent of parents and learners is a mandatory condition that researchers are expected to acquire before involving any learner/s in their research study. The following information should be included in the ethical letter given to the respondents:

- a) The aims of the research should be communicated as soon as possible to respondents;
- b) The respondents should have the right to remain anonymous;
- c) Questions asked should not be insulting or embarrassing;
- d) The use of monitoring devices such as tape recorders and cameras should be open, and fully understood by the people concerned. They should be free to reject them if they wish;
- e) Results should be consonant with the respondent's right to welfare, dignity and privacy; and
- f) There should be no exploitation of respondents for personal gain.

8.5. The researcher must undertake to supply the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management and Research with one bound hard cover copy, a PDF electronic copy, the abstract and research report summary with research findings and recommendations of the final approved research report, thesis or dissertation. Failure to submit the above-mentioned records may result in GDE not granting the researcher permission to conduct research in any of its institutions in future.

8.6. Completed research documents (i.e. final hard copy and electronic copy (PDF) must be kept by the GDE only for the period of five (5) years to protect the interested parties and to ensure that the findings will be used for research purposes ONLY.

8.7. Should the researcher have been involved with research at a school and/or a district/head office level, the Director concerned must also be supplied with a PDF electronic

copy, the abstract and the research report summary with research findings and recommendations of the final approved research report, thesis or dissertation.

8.9. The title, abstract and the research report summary will be placed on the GDE website to be accessed by the broader public while the bound hard cover copy will be placed in the GDE Reference Library located at Head Office where it may be accessed by all users of the Library. Only in very special circumstances will the Research Report be loaned out to users of the Library.

8.10. The researcher/s may be expected to provide short presentations on the purpose, findings and recommendations of his/her research to both GDE officials and the schools concerned.

## **9. APPROVAL OF RESEARCH REQUESTS**

9.1. Research request approval will be based on the following criteria:

- Assessing the purpose of the study;
- Assessing the methodology to be employed;
- Potential Benefits of the Research to GDE; and
- Potential value of the Research to Education in general.

9.2. The Gauteng Department of Education will interact with the research proposal, and when satisfied that all the required criteria have been met, will issue an approval letter (within 30 days from the date of receipt), that would serve as a formal contract between the Department and the researcher. The approval letter will contain a GDE registration number that will be used for tracking, monitoring and database maintenance purposes.

9.3. A Research Request Approval letter would only indicate that a researcher has been granted permission to conduct research within the GDE. All research processes may only commence from the beginning of the second week of February and be concluded by the end of the third quarter of the academic year.

9.4. Listed below are some key considerations for a researcher to bear in mind once permission has been granted:

- a) All Social Research Ethics must be honoured; and
- b) The researcher must utilise his/her own resources to complete the study;

9.5. The name/s of the official/s, school/s, principal/s, educator/s, SGB member/s and learner/s may not appear in any research report without the written consent of each of the individuals (or their parents if relevant) and/or the structures listed; if, however, for any

reason the respondent/s would like their real name/s to be used in the research report/publications, they will need to make written request to the researcher/s concerned.

a) The Director of the relevant office (head office or district) and both the principal and SGB of each institution must be notified by the researcher, in writing, about the study being undertaken within their respective office/district and institution respectively.

9.6. Researchers are requested to apply for permission **at least 2 months before** the actual research investigations are to be conducted at any site within the GDE. During this time the Research Coordinator would interact with all the relevant documents submitted by researcher and canvass the assistance of relevant line managers to assist in making a decision around whether approval should/should not be granted.

9.7. The Department is involved on an ongoing basis in developing and updating its own list of Research Priorities and is prepared to engage with prospective researchers around adopting these research topics that can be of benefit to the organisation. A full list of the GDE Research Priorities will be made available to all prospective researchers on written request and on the GDE website.

9.8. Despite the above, GDE may refuse permission and/or is not obliged to grant permission to researcher/s.

9.9. Research request can be

- (a) Approved, or
- (b) Rejected

9.10 All applicants will be informed in writing whether or not their application has been successful, in cases where:

- a) An applicant is not successful, he/she will be provided with reasons.
- b) An applicant is successful, he/she will be:
  - (i) Provided with a letter identifying him/her as a GDE approved researcher for the duration of his/her research;
  - (ii) Expected to produce the letter (original) as identification to the District Director and the school when they meet.

9.11. Should a researcher be a foreigner, a **study permit** shall be requested together with the proposal.

## **10. MEDICAL RESEARCH AND TESTING**

10.1. Study by Research Institutions and/or organisation and/or individuals involving medical research and testing of learners in schools shall not be permitted. The researcher shall be

advised to submit his/her research request to the department of health. Numerous legislation on this matter, guides the Department's decision on this matter.

a) The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa emphasise the right to human dignity. Section 10 of the Constitution states that everyone has inherent dignity and the right to have their dignity respected and protected. The Constitution, in Section 14, further states that everyone has the right to privacy.

b) Section 4(3) of The National Policy on HIV/AIDS, for Learners and Educators in Public

Schools, and Students and Educators in Further Education and Training Institutions, 1999 (Government Gazette 20372 of 10 August 1999), prohibits the testing of learners or students to determine the incidence of HIV/AIDS at schools or institutions.

c) The South African Schools Act (Section 8A) allows the Principal (or his delegate) to administer at random a urine or other non-invasive test to any group of learners that is on fair and reasonable grounds suspected of using illegal drugs, after taking into account all relevant factors.

## **11. INDEPENDENT RESEARCHER/S**

Independent researcher/s may be requested to submit their research request to HSRC research ethics committee for approval before GDE considers whether approval to conduct research in GDE institutions should be granted or not

## **12. INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT**

Every researcher/entity/research institutions that have requested permission to conduct research within GDE institution should include full personal details of **all the people** who will be involved in data collection within the GDE institutions and each individual should also complete the declaration form. Where teams are involved in a research, a team leader should complete a research request form while **all other individuals** involved in the project complete personal information and a declaration form.

## **13. DELEGATIONS**

The Director for ER and KM approves the research request from undergraduate and postgraduate students, academics, organisations, NGOs, Universities, services provider, agencies and research teams that seek to conduct research in the Institutions and/or offices of the department in consultation with GDE management.

## **14. CONCLUSION**

Should any additional information be required pertaining to research activities within the GDE; officials from the Research Coordination entity may be contacted.