# Standard CERR Approval Process

Please download and thoroughly review the Standard CERR Approval Process document, embedded below, prior to submitting your proposal. This document outlines LAUSD’s legal and procedural requirements for research (e.g., strategies for recruitment or data collection). **Any proposal not adhering to the guidelines specified in this document will not be considered.**

During the open submission window, the proposal submission link can be located at the bottom of this webpage.

Anyone wishing to conduct research in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) must obtain approval from the Committee for External Research Review (CERR). Only proposals for research that will result in a clear and direct benefit to the district will be approved. If you have any questions, please contact [the](mailto:c.alexander@lausd.net) [**CERR Team**](mailto:cerr@lausd.onmicrosoft.com).

**2025-26 SY Application Windows:**

We will be accepting proposals to conduct research involving LAUSD resources for one week in both June and October 2025, for data collection beginning in Winter and Spring 2026. *Please be aware that the proposal and approval process can take several months to complete so CERR strongly encourages researchers to plan accordingly.*

**No late submissions will be accepted.** Researchers who miss the submission window will be encouraged to apply during the next submission window. CERR only processes District-sponsored research projects outside of submission windows. For more information regarding District-sponsored research projects, please contact Carolin Alexander or call (213) 241-4100.

**Due to the difficulties experienced by our school and District communities, only those research projects found by program decision-makers to be of concrete and timely benefit to the District will be approved. CERR, in concert with program staff, will determine the benefit to the District proposed by the researcher(s).** **In addition, please note that we are NOT accepting proposals from graduate students who wish to distribute and collect surveys. Graduate students may still submit proposals that focus on qualitative research and/or administrative data (quantitative).**

A. General Directions

This process and form are for External Research Requests, to be used by all research entities requesting to conduct research within the District, including employees who aim to conduct research as university students.

Please review the following Standard CERR Approval Process document for the online research proposal submission form as these items are required for completing the form. Footnotes with red text describe District legal and procedural requirements regarding research. CERR expects researchers to proactively address District requirements in their proposals. For more information about research requirements, please see the FAQ linked in the right panel of the webpage. Proposals that do not adhere to the format (e.g., are missing required documents) or address legal or procedural requirements delineated in the guidelines will not be considered for review.

 We strongly recommend you complete the research proposal submission form’s sections in this Microsoft Word document, save it, and then copy and paste the text into the online proposal form’s sections. This document will also be useful if you are asked to revise your proposal.

Do not save your submission unless all required fields are completed. You are unable to save information to edit later. We recommend that you copy and paste information into the required fields to ensure all information is saved. Each field has a character limit of 2500 characters. You can use the character count tool in Microsoft Word to count all characters.

The link to complete and submit your proposal is available on our proposal submission webpage and will be active only during the submission window.

You will receive a confirmation email with a proposal identification number once your proposal is submitted. Please refer to this identification number **in any correspondence regarding your research application.**

B. Template for Online External Research Proposal Submissions

Please note the order and format of each question and field as it will appear on the online form. This will allow you to easily copy and paste your information from this Word document. Descriptions for each item are also available on the online form. Most fields are required.

Background Information

**Proposal Submission Window:**(A drop-down menu of date options are given)

**Researcher First Name:**

**Researcher Last Name:**

**Researcher Role:** (A drop-down menu is provided with the following categories: Research Professional/Evaluator, University Professor, University Student, and Other)

**Address:**

**Phone Number:**

**Affiliation:** (A drop-down menu is provided with the following categories: College/University, Health Organization, Research or Evaluation Firm (For-Profit Organization), Research or Evaluation Firm (Nonprofit Organization, and Other)

* College/University (Including student research sponsored by a college/university and supervised by a faculty member. Please include a letter of sponsorship from a faculty advisor. This letter should have a faculty advisor's contact information and should be included in the Appendix.)
* Health Organization
* Research or Evaluation Firm (For-Profit Organization)
* Research or Evaluation Firm (Nonprofit Organization)
* Other

*Note:* Research may sometimes be sponsored by a for-profit entity such as a textbook publisher, or a non-profit agency with a primary mission other than scholarly research. Because of the potential for biased outcomes, inappropriate incentives, and misappropriation of public resources, the proposal will be held to an extremely high standard of validity and justification in terms of benefit to the District.

**Name of Institution/Organization:** Please provide the name of your Institution or Organization

**Partner/Secondary Affiliation and Name of Institution/Organization (if applicable):** Please complete these if you are working in collaboration with another external entity. A representative from each entity will be required to complete a CERR Statement of Agreement – see below.

**Applicant's E-Mail Address:** The confirmation of submission containing the proposal confirmation number will be sent to this e-mail address.

**Please indicate if the main contact information is the same as the researcher contact information listed above:** (Please indicate 'yes' or 'no' on the drop-down menu. If you answer 'no,' indicating that the main contact information is different, you will need to complete the next three fields. If you answer 'yes,' no further information regarding the contact person is necessary.)

Main Contact First Name:

Main Contact Last Name:

Main Contact E-Mail Address: The confirmation of submission containing the proposal confirmation number will be sent to this e-mail address.

**LAUSD Employee:** (Please indicate 'yes' or 'no' on the drop-down menu.)

If yes, will you be conducting research in your own classroom, school, or district office? (Please indicate 'yes' or 'no' on the drop-down menu.)

Proposal

**Proposal Title:**

**Research Study Design:** (A drop-down menu is provided with the following categories: Experimental, Survey research, Quasi-experimental, Case study, Correlational, Qualitative)

**Study Start Date:** (The exact date must be selected)

**Study End Date:**(The exact date must be selected)

**Which Department is going to benefit the most from this research?** (A drop-down menu is provided with the following categories within LAUSD):

* Beyond the Bell/Supplemental Education Services
* Budget Services and Financial Planning
* Early Childhood Education Division (ECED)
* Educational Transformation Office (ETO) (e.g., BSAP, HEET, Priority Schools)
* Human Resources/Talent Management (e.g., Professional Development)
* Multilingual & Multicultural Education Department (MMED)
* Operations (e.g., Food Services, Transportation, Facilities, etc.)
* Parent, Community, and Student Services Branch
* School Leadership
* Special Education
* Student Health and Human Services (SHHS) (e.g., Student & Family Wellness, Pupil Services, Attendance, Diversity & Equity etc.)
* Transitional Programs (e.g., Virtual Academy, Adult Ed, Option Schools, etc.)
* DOI – Access, Equity & Acceleration
* DOI – Advanced Learning Options (e.g., AP courses, GATE, AVID, IB, etc.)
* DOI – A-G Intervention & Support (i.e., College and Career Readiness)
* DOI – CTE/Linked Learning Office
* DOI – Instructional Technology Initiative
* DOI – School Counseling Services
* DOI – Other Programs (Interscholastic Athletics, Personalized Learning Systems, Library & Textbook Services, Community Schools, etc.)
* DOI – Instruction - Arts Education Branch
* DOI – K-12 Instruction - Health Education
* DOI – K-12 Instruction - History/Social Studies
* DOI – K-12 Instruction - Literacy/Language Arts
* DOI – K-12 Instruction - Mathematics
* DOI – K-12 Instruction - Physical Education
* DOI – K-12 Instruction - Science
* DOI – K-12 Instruction - Secondary Advisory Program
* DOI – K-12 Instruction - Mastery Learning and Grading
* Other

**LAUSD Point of Contact (if applicable**): If you have already been communicating or working with someone from LAUSD regarding this research study, please provide their name and title or department.

**Abstract (2500 character limit):** Please provide a brief, comprehensive summary of your research proposal indicating the purpose of the research, research questions, hypotheses (if applicable), description of research participants, research method(s), analytic approach, and implications (approx. 200 words).

**Statement of Purpose (2500 character limit):**State clearly what you intend to accomplish with this research.

**Literature Review/Theoretical Framework (2500 character limit):** Please provide a brief statement of the theoretical basis for your study from prior published research, with reference citations in American Psychological Association (APA) format, and what contribution your work is expected to make to your field. Include a Reference List in the Appendix.

**Research Questions/Hypotheses (2500 character limit):** Please state briefly the research questions you plan to address, along with any necessary hypotheses. Hypotheses are not required for qualitative research studies.

**Methods:**

Design (2500 character limit): Please describe the methods you plan to use and how they will address your research questions.

Sampling and Recruitment**[[1]](#footnote-2)**,**[[2]](#footnote-3)** (2500 character limit): Please describe the target population, sampling frame, and selection procedures.

Measures (2500 character limit): Please describe the instruments of measurement you plan to use. Please include results from pilot testing and/or other evidence for the validity of the instruments. Although conditional approval may be granted based on preliminary instruments, the complete and finalized instruments must be submitted before the project can begin.

Data Collection**[[3]](#footnote-4)** (2500 character limit): Please describe the method of data collection and procedures you plan to use.

Type of Data Collection (2500 character limit): A drop-down menu is provided with the following categories (select all that apply):

* Archival/Secondary Data Analysis
* Assessments
* Classroom Observations
* Document Review
* Focus Groups
* Mixed Methods (Quantitative and Qualitative)
* One-on-one Interviews**[[4]](#footnote-5)**
* Questionnaire/Survey
* Other

Is any part of your data collection going to be audio/video recorded?**[[5]](#footnote-6)**  (Please indicate 'yes' or 'no' on the drop-down menu.)

Analysis (2500 character limit): Please describe your anticipated analysis plan, including specifics regarding your treatment of the data, statistical or otherwise.

**Human Subjects Protections (2500 character limit):**State which regulations and ethical codes will govern this research. Describe how the identity of the subjects and data will be protected.

**Burden to the District (2500 character limit):** Please describe the burden that your research will have on the District. The following is required of all research proposals that involve human subjects:

* The research proposal will clearly state the number of participants, specifying the role of each group of participants. For example: Twenty math teachers in four schools will be observed, six principals will be interviewed, and forty students from five classrooms will be surveyed.
* The research proposal will clearly state the amount of time to be requested from each participant and when the interaction will occur. For example: Math teachers will be observed for four class sessions during the first two weeks in March.
* It is the District's interest to minimize the human costs of research. Therefore, the research proposal will provide a clear rationale for the number of participants, the number of contacts, and the total time required by each participant.
* The research proposal will include a statement of how research participants are to be compensated[[6]](#footnote-7) for their involvement, if at all.

**Benefit to the District[[7]](#footnote-8) (2500 character limit):** Please indicate how your research will directly benefit the District and how your findings will be shared with sample schools, as well as region and central offices. The proposal must identify the benefits that the research is expected to provide to the District and how those benefits align with the 2022-2026 Strategic Plan. Specifically, please outline how your research aligns to one or more Pillars or Strategies in the 2022-26 Strategic Plan: <https://sites.google.com/lausd.net/lausdstrategicplan/home>

**Data Request (2500 character limit):** Depending on the research design, substantial time and effort may be required for staff to provide requested data with the appropriate selection and matching of records and concealment of personal identities. The cost of data extraction is $100.00 per hour upon receipt of an approved Data Use Agreement (DUA). Please note that CERR approval of a proposal is not a guarantee of access to student data. Upon submitting a completed DUA, the Office of Data and Accountability (ODA) will decide what data elements will be authorized to be shared.

**Need a Data Use Agreement (DUA):** (Please indicate 'yes' or 'no' on the drop-down menu.)

**Submit Institutional Review Board (IRB) clearance:** (Please indicate 'yes' or 'no' on the drop-down menu.)

**Submit CERR Statement of Agreement:** (Please indicate 'yes' or 'no' on the drop-down menu.)

C. Attachments

**Upload Appendices 1, Appendices 2, IRB, and CERR Statement of Agreement:** You will be asked to upload a PDF or Microsoft Word document of each of the following:

Appendices 1: Please include all Appendices 1 materials in one PDF file, including:

* + Literature review and references;
  + Instruments (e.g., surveys, interview/ focus groups/ observation protocols, tests);
  + Sample active consent/assent forms**[[8]](#footnote-9)** (e.g., LAUSD staff, parent, student assents);
  + Letter from graduate student's sponsor stating that the sponsor has read the CERR proposal and approves it (if applicable).; and
  + Other supporting documentation.

Appendices 2- Materials for Program Staff: Please download and complete the document titled “Materials for Program Staff Review.” Then, upload this document to the appropriate field in the Standard CERR Application ***separate from Appendices 1***. The “Materials for Program Staff Review” document asks you to provide the following information:

* + A summary of your research directed to District staff whom you believe will benefit most from your research. This summary should answer the following question:
    - What question do you anticipate your research will help program staff answer about their practice? In response to this question, researchers should include:
      * a succinct, jargon-free description of your research methods,
      * your hypothesis (i.e., your anticipated research findings), and
      * possible implications for practice based on your hypothesis.
  + A description of the anticipated burden and benefit to the District: this text can be copied from your responses to the respective sections on the Standard CERR application.

IRB**[[9]](#footnote-10)**: Provide the appropriate IRB documents or evidence that IRB review is not required. Please include all completed IRB submissions in one PDF file.

Submit CERR Statement of Agreement: Please indicate if this proposal includes your signed CERR statement of agreement. Your signed CERR statement of agreement is required for submission. This statement establishes that your research activities within Los Angeles Unified School District comply with existing legal and ethical codes. It further establishes that the research you perform will not differ significantly from the research proposed, and that you are to provide the Committee with an executive summary of your findings. If you identify the District in your study, CERR policy dictates a 30-day review period.  LAUSD may require changes to your document before publication. Violation of this statement of agreement will be considered a breach of contract. Please scan your signed CERR statement of agreement and upload in PDF file. \*CERR statement of agreement is required.

[Download the CERR Statement of Agreement here](https://www.lausd.org/cms/lib/CA01000043/Centricity/domain/1370/cerr%20docs/LAUSD%20Statement%20of%20Agreement%20for%20External%20Research.pdf)

**Certification to visit classrooms and conduct research with students (if applicable)**: The Committee for External Research Review (CERR) must certify each researcher who visits classrooms and/or conducts research with students. If your on-site research proposal is approved, you will be required to submit the results of a TB test and your name will be checked against the Megan’s Law online database for sex offender clearance. **In addition, documentation of a Liability Insurance policy of $1,000,000 is required.**

1. LAUSD staff are not obligated to support your recruitment effort. Ensure your proposal outlines a recruitment plan that does not rely on staff for support. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Include descriptions regarding processes to obtain active, written consent from participants in your recruitment plan. For more information regarding consent and assent forms, review the External Research Consent Form Checklist. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Staff are not allowed to engage in data collection during work hours (unless the data collection method in question is classroom observation) and can only be compensated for time spent participating in research outside of work hours. Students are not allowed to engage in data collection during instructional time (unless the data collection method in question is a classroom observation). Ensure your application includes descriptions re: how you will collect data outside of work hours/instructional time. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Per the Code of Conduct with Students, external researchers are not allowed to conduct 1:1 interviews with students. If you aim to conduct individual interviews with students, be sure your application describes how you intend to abide by this rule (e.g., all student interviews include an interviewer and a notetaker). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. Classroom recordings and student surveys require active parent consent/student assent for each student in the class. Proposals should include contingency plans for students/parents who do not wish to participate to ensure the student(s) does not miss instructional time. *\*Observations without communication with students do not require parent consent or student assent.* [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. Incentives to participate in external research (e.g., donations, gift cards, or stipends) must adhere to LAUSD guidelines. For example, when compensating student or parent participants, compensation must be under $40 to avoid being coercive. To ensure plans to compensate researchers – as defined in your CERR application - adhere to District guidelines, review the following documents: Guidelines for External Research Proposals with Incentives or Stipends for Participants; LAUSD Policy Bulletin 5895.2: Donations; LAUSD Reference Guide 055300: Tax Implications on Employee Receipt of Gift Cards, Tickets, and Other Fringe Benefits. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. To increase the benefit to the District, we encourage researchers to include in their application possible future benefits such as: free or discounted access to the research, instruments, or training sessions on how to use instruments); or more immediate benefits to the District, such as: using the data collected to provide formative feedback to research participants or annual presentation of findings to central office staff. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. To ensure your consent forms adhere to LAUSD legal and procedural requirements for research, please review the External Research Consent Form Checklist document. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. Researchers do not need IRB approval at the time of proposal submission. Researchers are encouraged to submit, at minimum, documentation that demonstrates researchers are in the process of receiving IRB approval or exemption. CERR can process and grant conditional approval to researchers. However, to receive formal CERR approval, researchers must submit IRB approval or exempt documentation. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)