# Action Research CERR Approval Process

Please download and thoroughly review the Action Research 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). CERR expects applicants to proactively address requirements in their proposal.

Anyone wishing to conduct research in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) must obtain approval from the Committee for External Research Review (CERR). **In addition, please note that we are NOT accepting proposals from graduate students who wish to distribute and collect large-scale surveys. LAUSD employees who seek to conduct small-scale surveys within their classrooms or schools to fulfill their program requirements may apply. Additionally, graduate students may still submit proposals that focus on qualitative research and/or administrative data (quantitative).**If you have any questions, please contact [the](mailto:c.alexander@lausd.net) [**CERR Team**](mailto:cerr@lausd.onmicrosoft.com).

A. General Directions

This process and form are for LAUSD employees and other external researchers seeking to conduct research in the District to fulfill their EdD or master’s program requirements.

Please review the following CERR Approval Process for Action Research 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.

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.

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.

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 Action 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** **Date**: (Provide the month, day, and year of the date of submission.)

**Applicant’s** **Full Name**:

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

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

**LAUSD Employee:** (Please indicate 'yes' or 'no'.)

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

Proposal

**Describe the education problem you intend to study (2500 character limit)**: (An open-ended response, please include your research questions if you have them.)

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

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

**Type of Data Collection:** Select from the following categories (select all that apply):

* Archival/Secondary Data Analysis
* Assessments
* Observations
* Document Review
* Focus Groups
* One-on-one Interviews**[[1]](#footnote-2)**
* Other

Is any part of your data collection going to be audio/video recorded?**[[2]](#footnote-3)**  (Please indicate 'yes' or 'no'.)

**Data Collection[[3]](#footnote-4) (2500 character limit):** Please describe the data you plan to collect

How will the data address the education problem you specified?

Sampling and Recruitment**[[4]](#footnote-5)**,**[[5]](#footnote-6)**: Please describe the target population, sampling frame, and selection procedures.

**Human Subjects Protections (2500 character limit):** Describe how you will address human subjects protections, including intentions to assure participants confidentiality, plans to obtain informed consent/assent from participants, and plans to abide by FERPA protections (if applicable).**[[6]](#footnote-7)**

**Analysis (2500 character limit):** Describe how you plan to organize, analyze, and interpret your data.

**Anticipated Short-term Outcome:** Describe the anticipated short-term outcome of the research project.

C. Attachments

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

Appendices: Please include all appendices and additional materials in one PDF file, including:

* IRB**[[7]](#footnote-8)**: Provide the appropriate IRB documents or evidence that IRB review is not required;
* Instruments (e.g., surveys, interview/ focus groups/ observation protocols, tests);
* Sample active consent/assent forms**[[8]](#footnote-9)**, **[[9]](#footnote-10)**, **[[10]](#footnote-11)** (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
* Documentation of approval to conduct research at your school or other sites. For teachers, we require documentation from your principal that indicates you have their approval to conduct research at your school site. For principals, we require documentation from your Region Director (or other Region staff) that indicates you are permitted to conduct research at your school or other schools. The documentation can be in the form of an email correspondence.

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. 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**

The Committee for External Research Review (CERR) must certify each external researcher (i.e., someone who is not employed by the District) 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. 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-2)
2. 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-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. Central office staff do not have capacity to support recruitment efforts. Ensure your proposal outlines a recruitment plan that does not rely on central office staff for support. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. Include descriptions regarding processes to obtain active, written consent from participants in your recruitment plan. For more information regarding consent and assent forms, see Footnotes 8-10. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. Teachers aiming to study the students in their classroom must adhere to the following guidelines: To ensure that students are not coerced into participating in this research and to ensure that students who do not consent to participate are not treated differently than consenting students, we require that all student recruitment be conducted by someone other than the principal researcher. Similar guidelines are required for principals aiming to study members of their school community (e.g., students or staff). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. 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-8)
8. LAUSD requires researchers collect active, written consent and assent from all research participants regardless of what was approved in the IRB process, including adults (e.g., teachers and principals). Researchers must collect wet signatures or use Adobe Sign to collect valid e-signatures. Consent and assent forms should contain a signature and date line, as well as a checkbox to indicate that participants actively consented to being recorded if the proposal intends to video or audio recordany part of its data collection. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. District staff, students, and parents are not required to participate in external research. The voluntary nature of your research must be reflected in your consent forms. For staff, consent forms must include text that states decisions not to participate will not negatively impact staff employment or benefits. For parents and students, consent forms must include text that states decisions not to participate will not negatively impact access to educational resources. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. Consent and assent forms must be written at a reading level comparable to the anticipated research participants to ensure that research participants understand what is being asked of them. Consent forms should be available in multiple languages (English, Spanish, etc.) depending on anticipated research participants. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)