RESEARCHERS IN LUTHERAN SCHOOLS POLICY

RATIONALE
This policy provides information for individuals or organisations who are seeking to access Lutheran Education Queensland (LEQ) schools for the purpose of undertaking research.

It is expected that when researchers conduct research in LEQ schools they do so on the basis that the findings may assist to improve student learning outcomes and increase school effectiveness.

The data held by the secretariat of LEQ is for the accountability requirements of governments and for the purpose of providing leadership and support services to schools. Individuals and organisations seeking access to LEQ data collections will need to demonstrate that the release of that data will have real benefit for students and/or leaders in Lutheran schools.

PRINCIPLES
Capacity building
LEQ is a learning organisation which values the sharing of knowledge across the education sector in order to encourage creativity, innovation, improved learning outcomes, continual school improvement and collaboration.

Adding value
Research findings and access to information should provide a potential contribution to existing knowledge and a balance between short term and long term benefits.

Maintaining propriety
In order to protect the welfare and rights of individuals, access to information and exchange of knowledge must conform to legal and ethical requirements. This policy reflects the obligations on researchers outlined in the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) documents: National Statement on Ethical Conduct of Human Research (2007) and Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2007). The NHMRC statements can be viewed at www.nhmrc.gov.au.

PROCEDURES
Seeking access to Lutheran schools for the purpose of research
LEQ approval
All non school-based researchers and school personnel wanting to conduct research related to their post graduate studies need to seek LEQ approval to conduct research in a Lutheran school.

Procedures to be followed for obtaining approval from LEQ and an application form are in the appendices to this policy.

Ethics approval
Since research conducted in schools falls within the requirements of the NHMRC, evidence of approval from an Ethics Committee is normally required.

School Approval
As collection of data can be time consuming for schools and may divert attention away from higher priority tasks, the ultimate decision to allow the research to proceed within a particular school rests fully with the Principal.

June 2009
PROCEDURES FOR OBTAINING APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN A LUTHERAN SCHOOL

Step 1: Seeking LEQ Approval
LEQ assesses applications to conduct research in Lutheran schools to ensure that proposals are in keeping with the mission of Lutheran education. LEQ will not approve applications from researchers where:

a) The content of the research proposal may raise issues contrary to the ethos of the Lutheran Church;

b) The potential benefits of the research to Lutheran education or the broader community are not demonstrated; or the research is for commercial, journalistic or marketing purposes;

c) Benefits of the research are outweighed by the demands placed on school resources;

d) Required documentation is incomplete or inadequate;

e) The study method is inappropriate;

f) The researcher lacks the experience or qualifications to conduct research on:
   • The private affairs of participants e.g. focus on the body, body image, family relations; or
   • Negative risk-taking behaviour e.g. under-age drinking, promiscuity, illicit drug-taking, violence, stealing, carrying weapons, suicide;

g) The research focuses on behaviour outside the experience and age range of the participants;

h) There is an unacceptable level of risk to the wellbeing of the participants;

i) Additional support is not provided in relation to matters that may be disturbing to participants;

j) Confidentiality and privacy of participants are not adequately protected;

k) Inappropriate inducements are offered to participants or schools.

To seek approval to conduct research in Lutheran schools from LEQ, researchers must submit Appendix 2 – Application to Conduct Research in Lutheran Schools and include appropriate documentation.

Any modifications to the research proposal will require submission of an amended application to LEQ.

LEQ approval is given on the understanding that any report or summary of the research findings will be made available to the participating schools and LEQ, preferably in an electronic format emailed to director@leq.lutheran.edu.au

Step 2: Seeking Ethics Approval
Researchers will need to determine whether they are required to seek approval from an Ethics Committee by identifying which of the following categories 1–4, applies to them.

Category 1: Non school-based researchers
These researchers are typically:
• Professional researchers working in an institution with a research function; or
• Government departments or Lutheran organisations; or
• Students carrying out honours and postgraduate degrees; or
• Undergraduate students (other than student-teachers engaged in a practicum).

Researchers in Category 1 are required to obtain approval from an Ethics Committee unless they can demonstrate that the nature of the research is not subject to review by a Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC).

Private consultants or market researchers will generally not be granted approval to conduct research in Lutheran schools. Any exception to this would require the researcher to enter into a collaborative arrangement with an institution which has access to an Ethics Committee.

Category 1 researchers may apply for LEQ approval while their HREC application is being processed. If all other LEQ requirements have been met, provisional approval will be given. However the research may not be commenced in a Lutheran school until LEQ has received a copy of the notification of HREC approval, together with any modifications sought by the Ethics Committee.
Category 2: School-based researchers: school personnel conducting individual research as part of their studies
These researchers are typically teachers conducting a research project as part of an honours or postgraduate study seeking to involve students from their own classroom, school or other Lutheran school.

The same requirements for ethics approval as required for Category 1 researchers apply.

Category 3: School-based researchers: Lutheran schools undertaking their own research
This category applies to school personnel who seek to survey students, parents or staff regarding school-initiated projects such as curriculum or policy development, evaluation of programs and pastoral care matters.

Principals have responsibility for determining whether ethics approval is necessary for internal research, based on the nature of the data being collected. Generally, ethics approval should be sought for research where, for example, the data being collected is of a personal or sensitive nature; or individuals would be upset by the questions; or participants could be identified.

If ethics approval needs to be obtained, and the project is being undertaken in partnership with an external institution, approval by that institution’s Ethics Committee could be sought.

Category 4: School-based researchers: student-teachers engaged in research during their practicum
These researchers are typically undergraduate students who as part of their teacher training may seek to conduct small-scale research projects that involve collecting and analysing data from school students.

Step 3: Seeking Approval from the School
Once approval for a research proposal is obtained from LEQ and ethics approval has been obtained where applicable, researchers need to contact the Principal of the school. It should be noted that gaining LEQ approval in no way commits the Principal to allow the research to be conducted in the school.

In determining whether to accept a research proposal, the Principal will consider the potential benefits of the research to the school and to the wider community, weighed up against any disruption and the level of commitment of school resources likely to occur.

The following documentation must be provided by the researcher to assist the Principal in deciding whether to allow the research to be conducted in the school:
• A cover letter to the Principal inviting participation and providing details about the level of involvement expected of the school;
• A Plain Language Statement (PLS) for the Principal describing the research;
• Documents to be used in the project e.g. PLS for participants/parents, consent forms etc;
• A copy of the LEQ letter of approval which may include conditions placed on the approval;
• A copy of notification of Ethics Committee approval, if applicable;
• A Working with Children Suitability Card, if the researcher is visiting the school.

All researchers wanting to work with students less than 18 years of age or to enter a Lutheran school site are required to seek guidance from the Queensland Commission for Children and Young People regarding their need to possess a Suitability Card. Applications for research involving direct contact with students will not be approved if the researcher cannot provide evidence of a Card or supporting evidence indicating that a Card is not required.
APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN A LUTHERAN SCHOOL

This application form is intended for researchers wishing to conduct research within Lutheran schools in Lutheran Education Queensland.

Research must be able to demonstrate that it will assist in maintaining and improving the provision of quality Lutheran education.

Any approvals are granted in principle only, and are subject to the approval of the participating school Principal/s.

All applications should be addressed to
Executive Director
Mrs Sue Kloeden
Lutheran Education Queensland
PO Box 1535
Milton
Queensland 4064
Email: director@leq.lutheran.edu.au
# Principal researcher contact details

Name  
Address  
Telephone  
Email  
Fax  

Are you currently employed in Lutheran Education Queensland? Yes  No  
If "yes" please specify where and in what role

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<th>1. Title of proposal</th>
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<th>2. Details if proposal is part of a tertiary course</th>
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<td>School / Faculty</td>
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<td>Institution</td>
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<th>3. Category of researcher (from appendix 1 categories)</th>
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<th>4. Name of Human Research Ethics Committee which is reviewing the proposal</th>
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<td>If no approval has been sought please give reasons:</td>
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<th>5. Proposed date for starting research</th>
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<th>Anticipated end date</th>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Year</th>
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<th>6. Reasons for wanting to involve Lutheran schools in the proposal</th>
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<th>7. Contribution of proposal to education or broader community</th>
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8. Number of schools to be approached

| Number of primary schools | Number of secondary schools | Number of P – 12 schools |

9. Approximate number of participants sought

- Students (indicate year level and number)
- Parents
- Teachers
- Principals
- Others (specify)

10. Demands on participants include time allocation and other commitments for students, staff, schools and other participants

- Students
- Parents
- Teachers
- Principals
- Other (specify)

**Inducements**: are participants or schools to be offered any inducements to participate in the research?
- Yes ☐
- No ☐

If "yes", please give details

11. Consent of participants: indicate how consent will be sought

12. Intrusiveness identify any part of the research that are potentially intrusive, upsetting or incriminating to participants

**Follow up support**: indicate what support will be made available for students, if required

13. Confidentiality provide outline of arrangements for protecting confidentiality of data and ensuring privacy of participants

14. Agreement to provide reports and to grant Lutheran Education Queensland the right to publish a summary of the report

I agree to provide Lutheran Education Queensland with a full copy or summary of the findings of the research
described in this application.

I further agree to provide participating schools with a suitable report.

I grant Lutheran Education Queensland the right to publish an edited summary of the research findings using either the print or electronic media.

I agree to protect the confidentiality of data collected during this project and to ensure privacy of all participants.

Signature of applicant: ........................................................... Date: .............../................/................

15. Declaration

I declare that the above information is true and correct

Signature of applicant: ........................................................... Date: .............../................/...............