**Conducting Research in Atlanta Public Schools (APS)**

**Frequently Asked Questions**

**Prospective Research Applicants:**

**PhD/EdD/Master’s Level Students**

***My college or university requires a letter of commitment from the school district prior to Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval. Can I complete the APS Research Application without IRB approval?***

Yes. The APS Research Review Committee recognizes that many colleges and universities will not grant IRB approval prior to the school districts approval to conduct research. In this case, researchers may submit their APS Research Application with a letter of support from their dissertation committee chair on official university stationary. The research review committee will review your application and provide a response within eight weeks of the submission date. ***All approvals to conduct research will be conditional pending IRB approval.*** Once IRB approval is granted, the researcher must submit a copy of the IRB approval to [research\_screening@atlanta.k12.ga.us](mailto:research_screening@atlanta.k12.ga.us) for full approval to conduct research in APS.

***I am a current graduate student or doctoral student working on my Master’s Thesis, Capstone Project or Dissertation. Does APS require that all projects and research studies have IRB approval?***

Yes. Only candidates whose research study or project is acknowledged by the home institution as a research study and approved by the home institution as a research study can submit a prospective research application to conduct research within APS. Applications submitted without the proper documentation will be issued a denial letter from the APS Research Review Committee.

***Is it a requirement to submit my CITI Program documents with my research application?***

Yes. The APS Research Review Committee recognizes that many institutions require up-to-date training to support the research you seek to conduct involving various populations. All certifications must remain valid during the length of your research study with Atlanta Public Schools. If you are unaware of the CITI documents needed, please visit their website by clicking the [link](https://about.citiprogram.org/).

**Atlanta Public Schools Staff Members**

***I am a current APS employee and doctoral/graduate student. Can I collect data for my dissertation/thesis/class project at my home school?***

If you are working on your dissertation, you are not authorized to collect data at your home institution. To mitigate any bias, it is a best practice and a requirement that you find a school within your cluster, or within the district, to conduct your research. For **class projects**, you are authorized to collect data at your home institution if it is deemed an action research study. Please fill out the [Internal APS Class Project Research Application](https://survey.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_7Woc53MVqjkW18O) to begin the application process. If you have additional questions, please contact the Office of Research and Evaluation, [research\_screening@atlanta.k12.ga.us](mailto:research_screening@atlanta.k12.ga.us).

***I am an APS employee who would like to collect information about student performance for research purposes. Does that require that I submit a research application, or would I need to submit a formal data request to a data strategist?***

The answer to this question depends on the type of the data you are requesting. If you are requesting publicly available data such as district or school-level Georgia Milestones Assessment results, you can access this data from the Georgia Department of Education. Click the [link](https://www.gadoe.org/Technology-Services/Data-Collections/Pages/Requesting-Data.aspx) for more information to begin this process. If you are conducting research with defined research questions, an application submission is warranted. Please click on the [APS Prospective Research](https://www.atlantapublicschools.us/Page/48237) link to submit and an application.

**Research Application Protocols & Next Steps**

***Who has the authority to grant permission for an external prospective researcher, external or existing vendor, or current APS employee to conduct research within APS?***

All research applications are reviewed by the Atlanta Public Schools Research Review Committee. The committee will review each application and its supporting documents to ensure the proposed study is sound and is a benefit to Atlanta Public Schools. ***All decision letters will be sent out by the Director of Research and Evaluation or their designee. While Principals may be in support of a research study, they do not have permission to grant approval for research to be conducted within their school prior to the approval of the Atlanta Public Schools Research Review Committee. All research requests must come through the Office of Research and Evaluation for approval.*** If you have an existing approval letter to conduct research within APS, approval is only granted for one year. A request to extend a current approval letter must be submitted 10 weeks before the approval letter is set to expire. There is an 8-week turnaround time to review and approve all submissions for an extension of conduct research. Requests for extensions may be made by submitting an [APS Research Modification and Extension Form](https://survey.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_2miPTJRsrwM2iRD).

***If I apply to conduct research with APS and my research application is denied, can I resubmit my application after making revisions?***

Applications that are denied by the APS Research Review Committee are deemed by the committee as having serious issues that cannot be addressed with a resubmitted application. Because of this, researchers whose proposals are denied are not encouraged to resubmit their application. Should a researcher insist on re-submitting an application, the resubmission must occur after 6-months from the date of the decision letter. Applications received prior to 6-months from the date of the decision letter will not be reviewed.

**Application Approval Process**

***How often does APS review research applications?***

Applications are reviewed twice a year. Please view the homepage for additional information. If you miss the application deadline, your application will not be reviewed until the next review cycle.

***If approval is granted by APS to conduct research, what is required of all researchers once a study or project is completed?***

Upon completing your study/project, a write up of the results must be sent to the Office of Research and Evaluation, [research\_screening@atlanta,k12.ga.us](mailto:research_screening@atlanta,k12.ga.us), This must be done before the document can be published in any form. If you have any questions, please contact the Office of Research and Evaluation, [research\_screening@atlanta.k12.ga.us](mailto:research_screening@atlanta.k12.ga.us).

***Why would APS deny a prospective research study?***

The APS Research Review Committee is tasked with the opportunity to protect the interests of its students and teachers. There are three common reasons why a research application would not be approved.

1. The potential study does not align with the needs of the district, or the study is currently being conducted by another entity.
2. The potential study lacks quality. APS observes professional standards, and the work of external researchers must be held to the same standards. If some elements of the proposal are missing or unclear, the research study will be rejected.
3. The potential study is a burden on Atlanta Public Schools resources and the research may place an overly undue strain on resources that APS is able to accommodate. This includes taking away from instructional time during school hours or APS resources are limited and cannot support additional research.

**Prospective Vendor Research Partnerships**

***I am an outside vendor seeking to support one or more schools in APS. Is there a protocol in place that my organization must follow to conduct research and/or collect data?***

***OR***

***I am an administrator within APS and would like to add a series of programs to support my students and staff. Is there a protocol I need to follow before allowing external partners to begin research activities and/or collect data?***

Yes. Any form of data collection (i.e., surveys, interviews, focus groups, etc.) or discourse to collaborate on potential research projects work being conducted within an APS school must come through the Office of Research and Evaluation for approval. In many instances, a research application, a data sharing agreement, and/or a digital products and services agreement will need to be completed before any work can begin. If you question whether you or a potential service provider needs to complete a form, please reach out to the Office of Research and Evaluation at [research\_screening@atlanta.k12.ga.us](mailto:research_screening@atlanta.k12.ga.us). All potential collaborations that can yield results where APS student or staff data is required, approvals can only be granted by the Office of Research and Evaluation. Not adhering to this research protocol can delay the approval process and postpone the implementation of research related activities to support APS students and staff.