Process and Timeline

The CMS Office of Accountability Research Request Guidelines

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The CMS Office of Accountability Outside Research Projects web page includes a link to download the research application form and also includes more information on the application process.

The research review panel meets monthly (dates posted on website) and will review all applications that are complete and received approximately 10 days prior to review panel meetings (dates posted on website). You will be emailed a list of questions/comments. You may respond directly to the email or you may update your research application in response to the comments by using Track Changes and then re-submit the application. The review panel will conduct a final review of the responses from the researcher and make a final decision at the following research review panel meeting. Once the panel of reviewers has made a decision on your study, you will receive an email from Susie Freije. If approved, the email will include a letter of approval and a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that is created by CMS Accountability and has been signed by the Chief Accountability Officer. You should sign the MOU and return a copy of the entire document to Susie Freije. The MOU will outline exactly which data will be shared with you by Accountability, so be very clear in your application about the data needs of your project so that you are able to request the information that you need. Once you have signed and returned the MOU, you are able to begin conducting your research study.

Data Collection

CMS school staff cannot provide demographic (e.g., address, race/ethnicity, LEP status, EC status, etc.), attendance, discipline, or testing information on individual students; all data should be requested from Accountability. This is done to: (1) save schools from being over-burdened by requests for data that Accountability can easily provide; and (2) ensure that researchers get accurate information that can be verified. This means that you cannot retrieve data from the Portals or other sources for research purposes.

However, some student information requires prior parental consent before it can be released if it is identifiable (e.g., student birth date, address). Similarly, to receive identifiable teacher data, (e.g., EVAAS growth scores), teacher consent is required.

Research cannot take place in the school where the researcher is currently employed.

Data should be collected from a minimum of three schools to maximize the value and generalizability of the study. Each school's principal should submit a preliminary letter of support (although principals cannot officially sign on to support your study until you have Accountability approval), to be included with the submission of your research application.

Participation expectations

Expectations for participants should be clearly identified for each type of participant (student, parent, teacher, etc.) and should include the time commitment (e.g., number of hours per session or data collection/training activity; number of months during which data will be collected) for each type of participant who receives a consent form.

Data requests

If data is required that will not be collected as part of the study, once the research study is approved, a data request can be submitted to CMS Accountability.

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Recruitment

School staff cannot offer referrals for specific students/staff to participate. Recruitment can be school-wide (e.g., the researcher may distribute a letter to all students or staff), and in some instances, can target sub-groups. If, for example, only male teachers or students in self-contained classrooms are necessary participants, it would be allowable to make the announcement only to those groups. Staff can be recruited, for example, by posting fliers in common spaces (e.g., the teachers’ lounge) or in their mailboxes with information on how to contact the researcher if they are interested in participating.

Consent and assent forms

Participants should consent to each activity of the study separately. In particular, consent and assent to videotape should have separate check box and signature lines on the consent and assent forms (something like this):

I consent to my child’s participation in the science activity:    ____ Yes    ____ No
I consent to the use of videotape during the science activity:    ____ Yes    ____ No
I consent to my child’s participation in the baseline and follow-up questionnaires.    ____ Yes    ____ No

_________________________        ______________________
Parent/Guardian Signature     Date

Anonymity and Confidentiality

Please be aware of the difference between anonymity and confidentiality and be clear about which you expect to guarantee in your study. It is extremely critical that confidential information of students and staff is not disclosed. We expect a plan to address confidentiality to be described in the research proposal application.

Data Security and Disposal Plan

While data security and data disposal plans haven’t been explicitly requested in the previous version of the research application, they will be included in the next version. However, in cases where it is not clear that the data will be stored and disposed of properly, researchers have been asked to describe their data security and disposal plan.

Of note, federal regulations suggest storing data for a minimum of three years and then disposing of it: Research data must be archived for the longer of (i) three years after the final project close-out or (ii) five years after the final reporting or publication of a project, with original data retained wherever possible. Sponsored research grants, contracts, and cooperative agreements may mandate different retention periods (including state and local sponsors which generally require retention for six years following final project close-out).

Surveys and Interviews

It is our aim to not over-burden school staff with data collection requests. Therefore, we do not typically allow large-scale (i.e., greater than 250 participants) surveys or surveys/interviews/focus groups that last longer than 45 minutes.

Fees

Students will be required to pay the $50 application fee.

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