

# Research application guide

## Contents

Overview .....	3
Conducting research at BCE.....	3
Research not considered .....	4
Contact.....	4
Approval process.....	4
Working with BCE.....	5
Intellectual property .....	7
Appendix 1: Ethical and legal requirements .....	9
Appendix 2: Application submission checklist .....	10
Appendix 3: Frequently asked questions .....	11

# Overview

The purpose of this guide is to outline Brisbane Catholic Education's (BCE) requirements for research projects involving the BCE office and schools. The requirements include those contained in this guide, in Appendixes to this guide and in application forms (available on the BCE website under 'Research').

BCE is committed to fostering a research culture in line with the BCE vision, mission and values and supports research that:

- benefits BCE, employees and students by addressing one or more of BCE's research priorities:
  - Celebrating our Catholic culture: our faith makes a difference
  - Inspiring a love of learning: success in learning and life
  - Cultivating a connected community: partnerships enrich experiences
  - Nurturing a professional workforce: staff realise their potential
  - Embracing change and continuous improvement: creative and innovative solutions.
- aligns with the Brisbane Catholic Education Strategic Plan (available on the BCE website)
- is of high quality and always protects the safety and wellbeing of employees and students involved
- meets requirements of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (<https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/>).

A research application is required for research:

- involving the recruitment of BCE students or employees or the use of school employees or student data not in the public domain
- where the intent is to disseminate research findings to a broad audience in academic papers, theses, reports, conference presentations, or to make them available online, in a library or the media.

The application must be approved before seeking the participation of the BCE office or schools.

## Conducting research at BCE

BCE engages in research through a range of initiatives including:

### General research

BCE accepts applications from researchers for research projects seeking access to the BCE office or schools. Applicants must complete the Research Application form (available on the BCE website under 'Research').

If the research covers more than one jurisdiction or education system, researchers must use the National Application Form found on the Australian Association for Research in Education website.

## Collaborative Research Partnership

BCE encourages collaborative research partnerships with universities, government agencies, charities, and community organisations. Collaborative research partnerships may be initiated by BCE or by a prospective partner by using the Research Application form (available on the BCE website under 'Research').

BCE's contribution to collaborative research partnerships is usually in-kind e.g. BCE employee time and use of BCE equipment or resources. BCE assigns a project sponsor to approved research projects.

Researchers are encouraged to contact [Research@bne.catholic.edu.au](mailto:Research@bne.catholic.edu.au) to discuss a potential collaborative research partnership.

## Research advertising in schools

If a researcher only wishes to advertise their research in a school newsletter or on a noticeboard to recruit voluntary participants, and there is no intention to conduct research in the BCE office or schools, the Research Advertisement in Schools Application Form must be submitted (available on the BCE website under 'Research').

## Masters Capstone research projects

Masters students undertaking a Capstone research project must complete the Capstone Applied Research Application Form (available on the BCE website under 'Research').

# Research not considered

BCE does not support research applications that:

- fail to meet requirements set out in this guide, in Appendixes to this guide and application forms
- are deemed by BCE to be inconsistent with the BCE vision, mission and values
- target religious institute schools or Catholic schools outside of the Archdiocese of Brisbane
- research which is undertaken directly or indirectly for commercial gain or profit.

# Contact

Email: [Researchimpact@bne.catholic.edu.au](mailto:Researchimpact@bne.catholic.edu.au)

# Approval process

## Submission

Research applicants must seek approval to conduct research in BCE by completing the form appropriate for the type of research, as outlined above. Forms are available on the BCE website under 'Research'.

Applications forms submitted to BCE must be accurate, complete, and high-quality. Inaccurate, incomplete, or poor-quality applications will not be processed. Applications with attachments must be submitted to [Researchimpact@bne.catholic.edu.au](mailto:Researchimpact@bne.catholic.edu.au) in PDF format.

## Assessment

Applications are assessed against requirements described in this guide, Appendixes in this guide and in the application forms. In addition, when assessing research applications BCE considers:

- legislative requirements including the protection of privacy of personal information, management of data and legal risk
- risk of possible harm to BCE employees and/or students
- appropriateness of the research objective, methodology and instruments
- benefits and costs to BCE
- feasibility to be completed within specified parameters
- transferability of results to other contexts.

BCE may request further information from research applicants as required.

The period required for assessing applications depends on the availability of BCE employees. While BCE attempts to process all applications quickly, delays may occur.

## Approval

Upon completion of the assessment process, BCE informs the research applicant of the outcome. For Collaborative Research Partnerships, a letter of offer is followed by signing of a contract/agreement. BCE may issue a letter of in-principle support for Collaborative Research Partnerships upon request.

Unsuccessful applicants are advised of the reasons for non-approval.

The BCE letter of approval does not commit the BCE office or any BCE school to participate in the research project. The BCE office Manager or school Principal has the discretion to decide whether to participate or to suspend or to cease participating in the research project at any time.

## Reporting

For all research projects, a copy of the final report in PDF must be provide to BCE within one month of the completion of the research project or report.

In addition, for approved Collaborative Research Partnership projects, a mid-way progress report using the BCE template (available from Research@bne.catholic.edu.au) must be provided to BCE.

Failure to provide these reports on time may result in the researcher and/or researcher's institution being excluded from applying to BCE to undertake future research.

## Review

BCE may initiate a review of an approved research application at any time for any reason, including where BCE believes that the safety or wellbeing of employees and/or students may be at risk. The review may result in a recommendation to:

- continue BCE participation or
- suspend BCE participation until further notice or
- cease BCE participation.

The researcher is informed of BCE's intention to review and of the review outcome, including any additional requirements that must be met or modifications made to the project.

# Working with BCE

## Before approaching the BCE office or a BCE school

The approval communicated to the applicant by BCE only permits the researcher to approach the BCE office or schools to seek participation in the research project. BCE

assigns a project sponsor to each successful applicant. The researcher must contact the BCE sponsor before approaching the BCE office or schools.

Before commencing, researchers must:

- read the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research
- read the Code of Conduct for Volunteers and Other Personnel (BCE website)
- observe the Code of Conduct (only for researchers who are also BCE employees)
- undertake a student protection briefing from the school's student protection contact officer.

### **Working with BCE offices and schools**

Upon approaching the BCE office or schools, the researcher must present BCE's written approval (can be an email) to the relevant BCE office Manager and/or school Principal.

The BCE office Manager or school Principal decides how best to accommodate the research project, including when the researcher may enter the premises, for how long and what activities may be undertaken.

In the case where a BCE office or school withdraws from the project, or where there is a significant change to the research team i.e., change to lead researcher, the researcher must inform BCE and submit a request for a variation to the original application to [Research@bne.catholic.edu.au](mailto:Research@bne.catholic.edu.au)

### **Informed and voluntary consent**

Only research that uses active consent (opt-in methodology) is permitted. That is, a parent or guardian is required to sign and return a form to give permission for the student to participate in the research. Passive consent (opt-out methodology) is not permitted.

As stated in the relevant application form, applicants must provide copies of proposed consent forms and information sheets (plain language statements), which contains all details about the research project, the general principle for informed consent and the details of the person to contact to discuss the research. The consent forms and information sheets must contain information for participants related to:

- expected participant involvement
- risks involved
- how confidentiality will be protected
- whether collected data will be housed overseas and/or made available for future research
- that participation is voluntary and non-participation will not adversely affect the right to participate in regular activities, or relationships with the school, BCE and the research institution
- assurance that it is possible to withdraw from the research at any time, including the details of who to contact to withdraw from the study
- how further information about the research may be sought, including a contact person and contact details
- how a complaint may be lodged, including a contact person and contact details
- what the participant and/or parent or guardian has to do after signing the consent form and reading the information statement.

Where participants or their parents/carers have limited English language skills, translated consent forms and information sheets must be provided with the application, or a process described how such translations will be made available. Where participants or their

parents/carers are not literate in their first language, interpreters must be provided to ensure consent is informed.

If video, photographic or audio recording is used to collect data, the following information is required in consent forms and information sheets:

- the purpose of the research project and how the research/collected information will be used
- the intention to use video, photographic and/or audio recording to collect data
- how participant anonymity will be protected
- the approach to be used for any non-consenting participants, to ensure they are not captured in any recordings without consent
- the option to consent to a child participating in the research but not being photographed or filmed.

If visual images are intended to be used by the researchers beyond data analysis e.g. for dissemination in reports or presentations, the research participants and parents or guardians must be fully informed and asked to provide specific consent using a Release form (a copy of this form must be included with the application).

Researchers intending to obtain work samples from students for data collection purposes must obtain the consent of the student and parent or guardian. The intention to collect student work sample must be communicated in the consent forms and information sheets that are attached to the application.

Use of deception in the research design is not permitted.

### **Student protection**

If a student discloses to the researcher any confidential information in relation to sexual or physical abuse/harm or circumstances where a student's health, safety or well-being is in danger, the researcher must disclose this information immediately to the school Principal or school student protection contact officer.

Failure to disclose such information immediately will result in the suspension of the research project and a review.

### **Suspending, amending, or ceasing participation in projects**

BCE may suspend and/or cease BCE's participation in any research project at any time that BCE believes might compromise the safety or wellbeing of participants, or for any other reason.

BCE may request the researcher to amend the research project e.g. methodology, at any time as a condition of BCE's continued participation and funding.

If an approved research project requires amendment, the researcher must inform BCE by email [Researchimpact@bne.catholic.edu.au](mailto:Researchimpact@bne.catholic.edu.au). Amendments must be approved by BCE.

## **Intellectual property**

BCE must be acknowledged in the final report and any publications arising from approved research projects. Where possible, the BCE logo should be included (a JPEG image of the BCE logo is available from [Research@bne.catholic.edu.au](mailto:Research@bne.catholic.edu.au)).

BCE retains the right to store, use, disseminate and publish the whole, or part, of any research report for business purposes.

Ownership of intellectual property or the division of intellectual property rights will be explicitly specified in research funding agreements and in deeds of agreement for collaborative research partnerships.

For research conducted by higher degree research students, intellectual property remains with the student. For students who are also BCE employees undertaking the research as part of approved professional learning, the intellectual property of the research remains with BCE.

Where research is conducted and subsequently published by a BCE employee in the course of employment, the first owner of intellectual property for the report and publications is BCE as the employer, unless both parties agree otherwise.

Intellectual property from student work samples remains with the child. Explicit consent must be obtained to reproduce or publish student work in research reports and other publications.

For further information see **Appendix 3**: Frequently asked questions.



# Appendix 1: Ethical and legal requirements

**Research involving human participants:** research applicants must demonstrate compliance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research by applying for ethics clearance from an accredited Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). Applicants must provide BCE with evidence of HREC approval.

**Research involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants:** when conducting research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities, research applicants must comply with the Guidelines for Ethical Research in Australian Indigenous Studies (<https://aiatsis.gov.au/research/ethical-research/guidelines-ethical-research-australian-indigenous-studies>).

**Research involving animals:** where a research application involves the use of animals, research applicants must obtain approval from the Queensland School Animal Ethics Committee (<https://education.qld.gov.au/curriculum/school-curriculum/animals-in-education/QSAEC>) and provide the approval to BCE.

**Working with children check:** if the research involves contact with students in schools, research applicants must provide evidence of a Working with Children Check (Positive Notice Blue Card) (<https://www.bluecard.qld.gov.au/>) or evidence that a Positive Notice Blue Card is not required. This applies to all researchers involved in the project who will have contact with students. For advice on when applications or exemptions are required, contact Blue Card Services (<https://www.bluecard.qld.gov.au/contact.html>) on 1800 113 611.

**Indemnity and insurance:** research applicants must ensure that their organisation has appropriate and sufficient insurance to indemnify researchers and BCE for any loss or damage suffered by reasons of negligence or breach of a duty of care by researchers, or research contractors/sub-contractors for an adequate period of time. Permission to conduct research in the BCE office and/or schools is usually granted for the duration of public liability insurance cover.

**Privacy and confidentiality:** research applicants wishing to conduct research in BCE schools must comply with the provisions of the Privacy Act 1988. A copy of the research organisation's privacy statement must be included with the research application.

Applicants must explain the processes used for maintaining confidentiality when storing, accessing and disposing of data are clearly specified. Personal data must be stored on servers located in Australia. Persons other than the researcher must not be able to link the information collected to individual participants. Researchers must ensure that in reporting the findings of research, that small cell sizes containing information that could potentially identify individuals are suppressed.

## Appendix 2: Application submission checklist

The following must be submitted with research applications\*:

- Formal approval letter from an accredited human research ethics committee or an ethics statement
- Evidence of public liability insurance
- Sample letter to the BCE office Manager and/or school Principal regarding the research project
- Sample letter to parents regarding the participation of their child in the research project
- Consent forms (for all categories of research participants)
- Participant information sheets (for all categories of research participants)
- Release form (if required)
- Copies of research instruments e.g. survey questionnaire, interview guide questions
- Sample 'help-seeking card' for the participants (if research is sensitive in nature)
- Positive Notice Blue Card (or evidence of exemption)
- A copy of administering organisation's privacy statement
- Completed and signed BCE Volunteer and Other Personnel Registration Form\_ (<https://www.bne.catholic.edu.au/students-parents/student-protection/Pages/Student-Protection-and-Code-of-Conduct-Training-for-Volunteers-and-Other-Personnel.aspx>).

\*The following are not required for applications to advertise research. Applications to advertise research must include a copy of the advertisement with the application form.

# Appendix 3: Frequently asked questions

## **I am a BCE teacher and wish to conduct research within my own school. Do I need to complete a research application?**

Yes, if:

- the intention is to disseminate the research findings outside of BCE e.g. academic publication, conference paper, webinars, online post, in a library, used in the media or advertising, or
- the research is part of a Masters Capstone research project.

## **Are program or project evaluation considered research? Do I need to apply?**

Yes. An evaluation activity is generally considered a research project if it utilises research methodologies and instruments, collects data from participants and its main objective is to contribute to the organisation's knowledge by generating insights that can be used for decision-making. If the evaluation aligns with this definition, and the intent is that findings will be disseminated beyond BCE, a Research Application form must be submitted.

## **What do I need to do if I think there may be a conflict of interest?**

All research applicants, whether internal or external, are required to declare any conflict of interest in the Research Application form. The applicant must disclose in the application any affiliation or financial involvement with any organisation or entity with direct interest in the research subject matter.

A conflict of interest exists where a person's individual interests in another organisation have the potential to influence the carrying out of his or her institutional role or professional obligations in research, or where an institution's interests have the potential to influence the carrying out of its research obligations.

While conflicts may relate to financial interests, it can also relate to other private, professional or institutional benefits or advantages that depend significantly on the research outcomes.

## **Can commercial organisations undertake research in BCE?**

No. It is not the intention of BCE to provide approval for research which is undertaken for commercial or material gain.

## **Can I provide incentives to research participants?**

Yes. BCE supports giving incentives to research participants to maximise participation in the research. However, the incentives must be reasonable and proportionate, i.e. based on the demographics of the target participants, how critical the research topic is, and how much the participants will be inconvenienced by participating in the research. Incentives must be of low or no value and not directly or indirectly harm participants or place the reputation of the school or BCE at risk.

## **What if I don't have access to an accredited human research ethics committee (HREC)?**

Where applicants do not have access to an ethics review through an accredited HREC, an ethics statement will be required. An ethics statement outlines the ethical approach to the research, including how the applicant will address the following:

- informed and voluntary consent

- privacy and confidentiality of personal information
- risks and benefits of the research
- management, sharing and disposal of data
- dissemination of results, including publication and reports.

BCE may still request for a formal HREC review of a research project if the level of risk is high e.g. the research requires the collection of highly sensitive information or it includes a specific category of research participants such as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, etc.

### **What is human research?**

Any research conducted with, or about, people or their data or bodily tissue. Human participation in research is therefore to be understood broadly, to include the involvement of human beings through:

- taking part in surveys, interviews or focus groups
- undergoing psychological, physiological or medical testing or treatment
- being observed by researchers
- researchers having access to their personal documents or other materials
- the collection and use of body organs, tissues or fluids or exhaled breath
- access to their information in individually identifiable, re-identifiable or non-identifiable form as part of an existing published or unpublished source or database.

### **I am a Brisbane Catholic Education teacher. Do I need to provide evidence of a Positive Notice Blue Card?**

No. BCE teachers involved in research will only need to advise of their Employee Number. Other evidence of a Positive Notice Blue Card is not required.

### **I will only be at a school for a short period. Do I still need to apply for a Blue Card?**

BCE does not provide advice to researchers on when applications or exemptions are required. Please contact Blue Card Services (<https://www.bluecard.qld.gov.au/>) on 1800 113 611 for formal advice. Please include this advice in your application.

### **I have a New South Wales Commission for Children and Young People Working with Children Check, do I need to apply for a separate Queensland Blue Card?**

Please contact Blue Card Services (<https://www.bluecard.qld.gov.au/>) on 1800 113 611 for formal advice. Please include this advice in your application.

### **I will be conducting my research in a school site, but not directly working with students, will I still need to apply for a Blue Card?**

Please contact Blue Card Services (<https://www.bluecard.qld.gov.au/>) on 1800 113 611 for formal advice. Please include this advice in your application.

### **I will be surveying students through an online and/or mailed out hard copy survey, but will not be interacting with children face-to-face or in an individual setting, will I still be required to apply for a Blue Card?**

Please contact Blue Card Services (<https://www.bluecard.qld.gov.au/>) on 1800 113 611 for formal advice. Please include this advice in your application.