

Utah Virtual Academy

External Research Review Process

2017/2018

Utah Virtual Academy will implement the following external research review process, beginning 2017/2018 academic year.

Applications to conduct research involving students, parents or staff of Utah Virtual Academy (UTVA) must be approved in writing by the Head of School in conjunction with various administrators. While UTVA is committed to the advancement of educational research any project or research approved must be aligned and support UTVA's Academic Plan. In addition, proposed research generally will not be approved during the time students are participating in state testing (April-June).

Research guidelines incorporated in this application are designed:

- to protect staff and student time from unauthorized or excessive data collection.
- to protect the confidentiality and safety of students, parents and staff.
- to guarantee the integrity and quality of any research conducted in the school.
- To ensure the school is complying with applicable laws and regulations governing student data privacy.

This policy, applies to research studies which includes the systematic collection of any data about UTVA students, parents, and/or staff for developing descriptions, predictions, interventions or explanations relating to various aspects of education.

Research studies may include:

- Projects/research that addresses critical educational needs of the district.
- Grant-funded projects that have been subjected to peer review and have full-time faculty or professional evaluators supervising data collection and analysis.
- Studies conducted by the district employees for the purpose of fulfilling advanced degree requirements.
- Studies conducted by agencies that provide health and social services for children and families
- Surveys for grant monies use evaluation

Approved research must not violate state and federal code related to privacy. In addition, it should not impose undue burden on school personnel, such as excessive surveys, testing and unreasonable time demands. In addition, no research by students at the undergraduate level will be approved.

The Application Process

The following instructions describe the forms/documentation that must be submitted for consideration of approval of external research. These should be submitted to: Meghan Merideth, Head of School, mmerideth@utahvirtual.org.

Each application must include the following elements:

1. Name of the organization, institution or agency represented by investigator and or team.
2. Other institutional review or human subject review boards involved (attach copies of current approval from all applicable approval sources).
3. Names and titles of all researchers who will have contact with subjects and data.
4. The proposal should include the following information:
 - Statement of the research questions, problem, or purpose.
 - The research/study time period
 - A brief literature review including sources supporting the thesis of the research project.
 - Description of research design, sample data, data collection procedures and methods of analysis used.
 - If applicable, provide copies of any surveys, tests and questions that will be employed.
 - If applicable, provide copies of all necessary Informed Consent documents.
 - Data on how all the data will be secured, shared and destroyed following the completion of the research

The forms used for the study to obtain consent from parties from whom data will be collected must include descriptions of: (1) the individual(s) conducting the research including contact information, (2) the purpose of the study, (3) data collection procedures, (4) the study duration and time required of those participating in the study, (5) procedures to withdraw from the study with no penalty, (6) how the data will be utilized, (7) potential risks and benefits to the participants and (8) steps taken to ensure confidentiality of the study data and participants. In addition, these consent forms must include lines for participant's signature and date of signature giving consent.

The last date for new research to be considered is 30 days prior to the end of the school year. However, UTVA reserves the right to extend the period should the need arise. Any research deadlines extensions must be submitted in writing to the HOS 30 days before expiration of existing research permission dates.

Review Process

Research requests will be assessed foremost for their value to UTVA and UTVA families. In addition, UTVA will assess the relative cost-benefit of the research to UTVA . Finally, the research design should be one from which valid conclusions can be drawn.

Prior to making the decision whether or not to approve the external research request, the Head of School will obtain feedback from the Administration team and other stakeholders, as appropriate, based on their knowledge of and concern with the proposed research including the researchers access to and use of student data.

The review process will take approximately four weeks to complete, but it could take longer. A final decision regarding the status of the application will be sent to the applicant in writing.

Research Conduct

UTVA holds the following expectations for external researchers:

- The confidentiality of student records must be maintained and the privacy and rights of individuals and schools respected.
- While conducting research studies in the schools, individuals should abide by standards of professional conduct and dress.
- The disruption of the school's routine must be kept to a minimum.
- Meetings and data collection should be scheduled far enough in advance to allow for adequate planning.
- It is the obligation of the researcher to secure informed consent from parents/guardians.
- The researcher(s) is/are responsible for absorbing all financial costs of conducting the study.
- The researcher(s) must notify the Head of School regarding any proposed changes in the study. Such changes cannot proceed until the Head of School has approved them in writing.
- **No research will be approved unless the researcher agrees to provide UTVA a copy of the final research report. The researcher applicant must agree to release this report for use by UTVA and its service provider without limitation, approval or remuneration.**

Compliance with Applicable Law

This policy is a good faith attempt to comply with all applicable laws. To the extent any provision of this policy does not comply with any applicable law, it is invalid to the extent to it does not comply with any applicable law.”