

Ethical Standards for IB supported Research Projects

These guidelines have been adapted from the Ethical Standards of the American Educational Research Association (AERA), 1992, (<http://aera.net/resource/ethics.html>) and the British Educational Research Association (BERA) Ethical Guidelines, 1992, (<http://www.scre.ac.uk/bera/guidelines.html>).

This document specifies the code of ethics to which all IB supported research projects are expected to adhere closely. In promoting these guidelines, the IB does not aim to usurp any existing ethical codes which researchers may be obliged to follow. The intention is to define the minimum ethical standards which the IB considers to be essential for conducting and evaluating educational research in an international context.

The relationship between the International Baccalaureate and member schools is a voluntary one and the IB is not in a position to coerce schools to support any kind of research activities. In the event of the IB Research Committee endorsing a proposal, it is incumbent upon the researcher(s) to obtain informed consent from the appropriate school authorities.

Before submitting a research proposal, researchers are strongly encouraged to read this document carefully to ensure that the proposed research project does not contravene the IB guidelines.

Research Population and Research Environment

Any research conducted within a school must be sensitive to the research population within the school community and the research environment. It is of paramount importance that the research should respect the rights, privacy, dignity, and sensitivities of the research populations and also the integrity of the institutions within which the research takes place.

- 1 Researchers should communicate the aims of the research project as clearly as possible to the participants (and their guardians), and appropriate representatives of institutions. Researchers should be sensitive to the first language(s) of the research populations and how this might affect communications with the research subjects.
- 2 Researchers should disclose full details of the research programme to all interested parties. If researchers are unable to disclose full details of the study, because of the research objectives, a full disclosure of the facts should be made at the conclusion of the programme.
- 3 Researchers should communicate any significant changes in the conduct of the research programme to all concerned parties as early as possible before any changes are implemented.

- 4 Participants (and their guardians), should be informed about any potential hazards involved in the research, and their possible consequences for participants, and should give their informed consent before participating in the research.
- 5 Participants have a right to remain anonymous and this right should be respected when no clear understanding to the contrary has been reached. Researchers must take all appropriate precautions to protect the confidentiality of both participants and the research data. Participants (or their guardians) must be informed if, for any reason, anonymity cannot be guaranteed.
- 6 Researchers should consider very carefully cultural, religious, gender, and other significant differences within the research population in the planning, conduct, and reporting of their research.
- 7 Researchers should be sensitive to any nationally and locally established institutional policies, practice, or guidelines for conducting research.
- 8 Researchers should be sensitive to the integrity of established institutional activities and alert institutional representatives to possible interruptions in such activities which may result from the conduct of the research.
- 9 Researchers should exercise caution to ensure that there is no exploitation of research populations or institutions for personal gain or advancement. Researchers should not use their influence over students, subordinates, or others, to compel them to participate in the research.

Research Techniques and Research Personnel

Careful consideration must be given to the design of the research project, selection of research techniques, and the recruitment and training of research personnel.

- 10 Researchers should take care to ensure that the research techniques which they select are appropriate for the age and level of maturity of the research population. Particular care should be taken where young children are involved.
- 11 Researchers should avoid the use of research techniques that are expected to have negative consequences for the participants: for example, where experimental interventions might impinge on important parts of the students' standard curriculum.
- 12 Researchers have the responsibility to ensure that all research personnel in direct contact with the participants have been adequately trained for the tasks in which they will be involved. All research personnel should be made aware of the code of ethics by which they are bound.

Relationship with the IB and Sponsoring Agencies

Researchers and sponsors share a responsibility for ensuring the integrity of the research. Every effort should be made to safeguard the principles of educational research, the community of educational researchers, the research participants.

- 13 The data and results of a supported research project will remain the property of the researchers, unless alternative contractual arrangements have been made with the IB and/or the sponsoring agencies.
- 14 Researchers are free to interpret the results of their findings without censorship from the IB or sponsoring agencies.
- 15 If any restrictions are imposed by sponsoring agencies on the research, the IB Research Committee must be notified by the researchers before a proposal can be supported.
- 16 Researchers should make clear the aims and sponsorship of the research project. The IB has the right to place disclaimers in any reports to differentiate the views of the IB from conclusions drawn by the researchers.
- 17 The IB Research Committee which will be responsible for the selection and evaluation of all supported research projects. The Research Manager (IB) will maintain regular contact with researchers to offer support, where necessary, and to ensure that project objectives are being met. The IB Research Committee reserves the right to request information on the progress of the research.
- 18 The IB has the right to receive a report of the research work undertaken prior to publication and to insert a brief disclaimer in relation to any views expressed.

Publications

Researchers and sponsoring agencies should support the widest possible dissemination of research results.

- 19 Researchers have a duty to report their findings to the IB, sponsoring agencies, and the wider public. Under no circumstances should researchers fabricate, falsify, or misrepresent the evidence or data, neither should they misrepresent the significance or implications of the findings.
- 20 Researchers should provide a complete and objective evaluation of the research project. Any strengths and problems should be clearly identified in reports.
- 21 Research reports for the IB and the sponsoring agencies should be written in a style that is appropriate for the intended audience so that key information is communicated clearly. Publications directed to an informed audience should be sufficiently detailed to allow fellow professionals to understand and interpret the research findings within the context of a single publication.