

Mississippi Association of Community Colleges
Council for Institutional Research & Effectiveness
External Research Sub-Committee
Policies & Procedures

I. PURPOSE OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE

The purpose of the Mississippi Association of Community Colleges (MACC) Council for Institutional Research & Effectiveness (CIRE) External Research Sub-Committee is to review and consider for endorsement requests by external entities to conduct research in conjunction with two or more colleges within the MACC system for a particular study.

The sub-committee exists to provide a service of initial review and quality control for the colleges of MACC. Priorities for the sub-committee's work include:

- Evaluating the existence and adequacy of controls for the proper anonymity and information security, as well as reasonable procedures for acquiring consent, for participants and participating colleges.
- Protecting individual colleges and the MACC from unsound or unwarranted comparisons against other colleges or systems.
- Considering and protecting the public reputation of individual colleges and the MACC in matters of external research.
- Acting as an agent of quality control for research requests submitted to the colleges.
- Serving as the first single point of contact for external researchers and as a collector and holder of completed external research.
- In some cases, offering limited advice to external researchers related to research approaches generally preferred by the colleges, and possible alternative data sources.
- Helping to foster high quality and beneficial external research for the improvement of individual colleges and the MACC.

The sub-committee does not act as a dissertation advisor or participant in research. The sub-committee's role is to act as a first gateway for external research within the MACC.

The sub-committee does not act in any capacity as or satisfy the function of an Institutional Review Board (IRB), or any form of independent ethics committee, relative to research ethics involving human subjects. External researchers must gain IRB

approval for the requested study from the sponsoring university or organization before requesting sub-committee approval.

CIRE External Research Sub-Committee endorsement means that the external researcher may, upon notification of affirmation by the chairperson, contact the two or more MACC colleges directly with the request. Sub-committee endorsement does not obligate any MACC college to participate in a study. As MACC institutions are locally governed and autonomous, the decision to endorse external research ultimately lies with each individual college.

II. MEMBERS OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE

The CIRE External Research Sub-Committee is composed of five members - one chairperson and four additional members. The chairperson and members are selected by the entire membership of CIRE.

III. DEFINITION OF EXTERNAL RESEARCH

For the purpose of consideration by the CIRE Sub-Committee on External Research, "External Research" is defined as:

1. Systematic processing or investigation of quantitative and/or qualitative data or information for the purpose of reaching inferential conclusions conducted (a) for publication, or (b) by or on behalf of an entity outside of the MACC. The intent of the definition of external research is to encompass studies, normally including formally stated research questions and/or hypotheses, of greater depth than simply the reporting of statistical information or outputs.
2. External Research includes studies performed by employees and students of MACC institutions, as well as employees of the Mississippi Community College Board (MCCB), when the conclusion(s) resulting from an investigation are intended for publication or sharing with an entity outside of the MACC.
3. External Research excludes data or information submissions to State of Mississippi and federal governing authorities (Educational Achievement Council, Master Budget Request (MBR), Office of Civil Rights (OCR), *Building a Better Mississippi*, etc.).
4. External Research excludes system data, descriptive statistics, outputs, facts, and similar information not reaching the threshold of in-depth study or inferential investigation, communicated or shared with the discretion of the Mississippi Community College Board (MCCB) to governing authorities, stakeholders, or media in the reasonable and normal course of its coordinating role.

5. External Research excludes information published, shared, or authorized by the MACC Presidents Association, or in conformance with statute (such as the Mississippi Community College Performance Profile).
6. External Research excludes information included in accreditation compliance certifications or related compliance research.
7. External Research excludes the publication or sharing of data or information associated with colleges within a consortium upon the consent of the consortial institutions.
8. External Research excludes data or information extracted from already public sources such as IPEDS, NCES, etc.

IV. ACCEPTABLE USE OF SHARED DATA

The Mississippi Community College Board (MCCB) periodically distributes enrollment audit information to the individual colleges for the purpose of institutional benchmarking and performance analysis. Such information is intended for internal use, and should not be utilized in external research without (a) following the CIRE External Research Sub-Committee request procedure or (b) approval of the MACC Presidents Association.

V. THE APPLICATION TO CONDUCT EXTERNAL RESEARCH AND APPROVAL PROCEDURES

Research with One MACC Institution

External research requests involving only one MACC institution are not within the purview of sub-committee review and should be addressed directly with the college in question.

Research with Two or More MACC Institutions

An outside entity wishing to conduct research involving two or more MACC institutions should complete the latest revision of the MACC External Research Application, posted on the MCCB website, and submit via electronic mail to the chairperson of the CIRE External Research Sub-Committee. If the research involves human subjects, evidence of IRB approval from the researcher's university or other organization must be included with the submission of the application.

The chairperson electronically distributes applications and supporting documents to the sub-committee membership for review and consideration in the following meetings (meetings may be held electronically):

For research to begin in the fall semester:

Last Thursday of the month of April (for the immediately subsequent summer or fall).

First Thursday of the month of September.
First Thursday of the month of October.

For research to begin in the spring semester:

Second Thursday of the month of November (for the immediately subsequent spring).

First Thursday of the month of February.

First Thursday of the month of March.

For research to begin in the summer semester/terms:

No later than the last Thursday of the month of April (for the immediately subsequent summer or fall).

Note: External researchers may submit applications ahead of schedule. For example, research to begin in the fall of 2020 may be submitted for approval in the fall of 2019.

If a scheduled meeting as outlined above cannot take place according to the timeline indicated due to a conflict or lack of a quorum, the chairperson will re-schedule to a date as close as possible to the established timeframe.

A scheduled meeting with three or more sub-committee members present constitutes a quorum. The presence of the chairperson is not required for a quorum. A majority vote of a meeting quorum, in the affirmative for an application, constitutes approval. A tie vote constitutes non-approval, as does any failure of an application to gain a majority of affirmative votes in a meeting quorum. After each scheduled meeting, the chairperson notifies applicants of the results. Applicants not gaining approval may submit revised applications for the next scheduled meeting.

VI. SUBMISSION OF COMPLETED RESEARCH

The sub-committee requests approved external researchers to forward the final research study to the chairperson for review, retention, and potential distribution to participating colleges. Upon completion of the research, the approved external researcher should email the final product to the chairperson.