



# Research Application Manual

September 2, 2016

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## Introduction

Blackhawk Technical College (BTC) recognizes the importance of educational research among institutions of higher learning. This knowledge derived from research has the potential to elevate what BTC can provide for students and the community and improve the educational experience and outcomes across other institutions.

With this in mind, BTC also recognizes the importance of the protecting of the safety and welfare of all human research subjects. BTC is guided by the ethical principles regarding research projects for personal use or for an outside organization involving human subjects or participants as set forth in Federal Policy §46.101-46.505, Code of Federal Regulations, Title 45 Public Welfare, Department of Health and Human Services, Part 46, "Protection of Human Subjects," revised January 15, 2009, and effective July 14, 2009.

BTC has established the Research Review Committee (RRC) to serve as the decision-making body regarding all requests for all research projects involving BTC students, personnel, and/or property, records, or other materials.

Thank you for your interest in conducting research at Blackhawk Technical College (BTC). This manual serves as a guide to assist all researchers with the application and review process.

## What Types of Research Require Approval

Federal regulations define research as "... a systematic investigation designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge."

Approval is required prior to any research project that involves BTC students, staff, and/or facilities in any of the following activities:

- The recruitment of students or staff to participate in any research or evaluation project;
- The collection of data from students, faculty, and/or BTC staff;
- Observations, surveys, focus groups, interviews, evaluations, or other methods of research; and
- The use of data from BTC records.

In addition, applications are required to conduct research for a degree requirement (Master's, Ph.D. or equivalent) and/or personal research study.

In general, program evaluation or assessment activities within the college conducted by internal individuals with results intended for internal use are not considered research, and approval is not required. However, if these types of projects are conducted by external individuals or organizations, and/or not intended for internal use, then approval would be required.

If you are not sure whether approval is required, please contact Scott Davis, Director of Institutional Effectiveness, at [sdavis40@blackhawk.edu](mailto:sdavis40@blackhawk.edu).

## General Guidelines for Research

Guidelines for research at Blackhawk Technical College are as follows:

1. The project must have the potential to make a meaningful contribution to BTC and/or to the field of education.
2. The project must minimize disruption to BTC students and staff.
3. The project must minimize disruption to instructional learning time.
4. The project must provide reasonable proof that no student will suffer educationally, emotionally, or otherwise as a result of the research.
5. The project must comply with all federal laws, state laws, and BTC Policies and Procedures. Particular attention will be paid to the protection of student education records under the [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act](#) (FERPA).

Priority will be given to –

1. Research and evaluation work requested by BTC.
2. Research and evaluation work that is a component of a grant, where BTC is the lead fiscal agent or a partner.
3. Research and evaluation projects that align with the BTC mission: *Empowering Students, Enriching Communities*.

## Research Review Process

Any individual<sup>1</sup> or organization interested in conducting research at Blackhawk Technical College that utilizes students, personnel, and/or property, records, or other materials are required to submit an application to conduct research. This is required of both internal and external individuals and organizations.

The entire research application and review process is overseen by Institutional Effectiveness (IE). The Research Review Committee (RRC) is responsible for reviewing all research applications. The RRC serves as the decision-making body and issues final notice regarding a research application. The RRC may approve, conditionally approve, table, or deny approval of an application.

The Research Review Committee is NOT an Institutional Review Board. Nor does the RRC assume the role of evaluating the soundness of the proposed research design or study, the merits of the research design, or the potential contribution of the research to the scholarly literature.

In addition, the RRC has the authority at its discretion to –

- Require progress reports from the researchers and oversee the conduct of the study.
- Place restrictions, suspend, or terminate approval of a research study when this is deemed to be in the best interests of the participants in that study or the college.
- Observe the informed consent process as practiced by any researcher or authorized person in any approved protocol, especially in cases where the participants are from a vulnerable population.

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this document, an individual who is a current employee or contracted service provider (e.g., evaluation, grant writing, etc.) of BTC is considered to be an internal researcher. All others are considered external researchers. In general, all principles, processes, and guidelines apply to both.

## Research Review Committee Membership

Research Review Committee membership is comprised of staff from a cross-section of the college. The RRC will consist of two core members, who include –

- Director of Institutional Effectiveness
- Quality and Continuous Improvement Specialist

Additional staff with specific content area knowledge or expertise may be included as needed. This will be determined by the RRC.

## Research Review Criteria

Applications are reviewed based on the following criteria:

- a. Research question and topics align with the educational mission of Blackhawk Technical College.
- b. The project has the potential to make a meaningful contribution to BTC and/or to the field of education.
- c. Procedures and protocols are consistent with good research design and practices.
- d. The project complies with all federal laws, state laws, and BTC Policies and Procedures.
- e. There is minimal disruption of BTC students, staff, the learning environment, and regular work activities.
- f. Procedures and protocols are explicit in the protection of subjects' rights.
- g. The adequacy of measures for minimizing of risk and the protection of the health, safety, comfort and legal rights of subjects.
- h. Anticipated benefits outweigh expected risks / costs to human subjects.
- i. The adequacy of facilities and other resources necessary for completion of the study.
- j. The adequacy of procedures, protocols, and documents related to securing informed consent from the human subjects.
- k. Procedures and protocols for maintaining confidentiality is clearly articulated and audience appropriate.

See Appendix A.

## Decisions of the Research Review Committee

The Research Review Committee may approve, conditionally approve, table, or deny approval of an application. Decisions are based on criteria found on pages 2-3.

Approval: If an application is approved, the research application is complete and the identified protocols meet the RRC standards of acceptable practice. The RRC will notify the researcher, and the project may begin, including recruitment of participations and/or data collection.

Conditional Approval: If an application is conditionally approved, this signifies that the research application was complete, but the RRC found issues with the identified protocols that need to be adjusted to meet the standards of acceptable practice. The RRC will notify the researcher with the specific issue(s), suggestions for revision(s), and a timeline for providing revisions in writing to the research protocol via a revised application. The researcher will need to clarify the changes to the RRC within the given time. Revisions do not guarantee approval. The RRC will review the changes and notify the researcher of the decision. Research may not begin unless or until approval is given by the RRC.

Tabled: If an application is incomplete, the application will be tabled, and this means that the application will not be reviewed at the given time. The RRC will notify the researcher of the missing application components. The researcher will need to re-submit a completed application at a future date for review. This does not guarantee approval. Research may not begin unless or until approval is given by the RRC.

Denied Approval: If a research application and/or protocol fails to meet the standards of acceptable practice or have been determined to have too many flaws to address by the RRC, the application will be denied approval. The RRC will notify the researcher of the reasons behind the decision. The researcher may re-submit an application at a future date for review. This does not guarantee approval. Research may not begin unless or until approval is given by the RRC.

All applicants will be notified in writing via email as to the committee's decision.

Please note that even if the Research Review Committee approves a research project, all potential students and staff subjects have the option to decline to participate.

## Research Application Requirements

Applicants must complete the entire application for consideration by the Research Review Committee. The application is available for internal applicants on the Institutional Effectiveness intranet page. For external applicants, the application is available on the BTC Institutional Effectiveness webpage: *Conducting Research at BTC*.

The research application must include the following information, in order.

### **I. Researcher Information** (*cover page*)<sup>2</sup>

- A. Principal or Lead Investigator, with Contact information
- B. All Members of Research Team
- C. Affiliated University, College, or organization
- D. Type of Project

### **II. Research Protocols and Procedures**

- A. Title of the study
- B. Abstract (*250 words maximum*)
- C. Summary of research literature<sup>3</sup> (*1 page maximum*)
- D. Proposed start and end dates
- E. Purpose of study (*1 page maximum*)
- F. Research questions
- G. Methodology, including Data collection procedures (*3 pages maximum*)
- H. Expectations of participants (if applicable), including -
  - 1. Who, when, how many, site(s), classes, etc.
  - 2. Amount of time participants can anticipate with the project
  - 3. What tasks participants are expected to complete, etc.
  - 4. Any form of compensation
  - 5. How participants will be identified and recruited for participation, how initial contact will be done, and whether a form of compensation will be used

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<sup>2</sup> See Appendix B

<sup>3</sup> This is a short summary of the related literature review. This provides the committee with additional details and background information regarding your project, and it also allows the committee to see how the project aligns with previous research.

- I. Data elements (as applicable)
  1. Target population about/from whom data are requested
  2. List of data needed (i.e., variables or information)
  3. Timeframe of data request
  4. Data security plan<sup>4</sup>, including -
    - a. Computer security
    - b. Physical handling and storage of data
    - c. Transportation of data
    - d. Destruction of or return of data upon completion of the study
- J. All associated documents in support of the research design
  1. IRB approval letter from university or equivalent<sup>5</sup>
  2. Letter of support/approval<sup>6</sup>
  3. Informed Consent forms<sup>7</sup>, including audio- or video-taping
  4. Recruitment letters, flyers, etc.
  5. Copies of data collection instruments, such as -
    - a. Survey instruments
    - b. Interview questions
    - c. Focus group questions
    - d. Observational protocol
    - e. Assessment instruments
- K. Plan for reporting results, including the audience(s)<sup>8</sup>

***Mail three (3) copies of all required documents to –***

Blackhawk Technical College  
Institutional Effectiveness  
6004 S. County Road G  
P.O. Box 5009  
Janesville, WI 53547-5009

Attn: Scott Davis

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<sup>4</sup> See Appendix C

<sup>5</sup> See Appendix D

<sup>6</sup> See Appendix E

<sup>7</sup> See Appendices F1-F2

<sup>8</sup> See Appendix G

## Fees

### **Application Fee**

No application fees are required for research projects at Blackhawk Technical College.

### **Data Extract Fee<sup>9</sup>**

A data extract fee may be charged for research projects that include the need for data from Blackhawk Technical College (e.g., student demographics, grades, etc.) that must be provided by BTC staff to external researchers.

There shall be no fee imposed upon any person who requests a record if the costs of locating that record do not exceed \$50.00. Regardless of who processes the request, fees will be calculated based on the hourly wage of the lowest paid staff member capable of performing the work.

## Changes to Research Protocol

If a researcher plans to make changes to a previously approved research application, the researcher must submit a research addendum. An addendum is a summary of what and how any procedures, protocols, or elements of the original research project have changed.

Research addendums will be reviewed within 30 days of submittal, and the researcher will be notified if the proposed changes have been approved. The research project, if underway, must be suspended until approval of changes is granted by the RRC.

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<sup>9</sup> If the data can be readily accessed by the internal researcher as part of his/ her normal job functions, there is no charge or need to submit for a data extract.

## Review Schedule

Research Applications are accepted and reviewed by the Research Review Committee on a monthly basis. Generally speaking, research applications are due by the first Monday of the month for consideration in that month, excepting of holidays. Reviews will be conducted no more than 10 days after the due date. Tentative 2016-17 schedule below.

<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Review Date<sup>10</sup></b>
September 5, 2016	September 15, 2016
October 3, 2016	October 13, 2016
November 7, 2016	November 17, 2016
December 5, 2016	December 15, 2016
January 10, 2017*	January 20, 2017
February 6, 2017	February 16, 2017
March 6, 2017	March 16, 2017
April 3, 2017	April 13, 2017
May 1, 2017	May 11, 2017
June 5, 2017	June 15, 2017
July 10, 2017*	July 20, 2017
August 7, 2017	August 17, 2017

Applications are accepted at any time, but will only be reviewed following the above schedule. **The Research Review Committee does not conduct expedited reviews.**

The RRC will notify all applicants via email as to the committee's decision within 1 week of the review.

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<sup>10</sup> Review dates are tentative and may change depending on schedules of participating staff.

## When Research Can Begin

No research activities may begin, including recruitment of participants, obtaining consent from any participants, or data collection, until written approval has been granted by the Research Review Committee.

All members of the external research team who will be interacting with BTC students must also complete a background check prior to data collection. The researcher will be notified by Research Review Committee if a background check is required.

Background checks will be conducted by BTC, and any associated costs and fees will be charged to the external researcher.

## Contact Information

If you have any questions not outlined in this manual or would like to discuss your research application prior to submission, please contact:

**Name**

G. Scott Davis,  
*Director of Institutional Effectiveness*

**Phone**

(608) 787-7754

**Email**

[sdavis40@blackhawk.edu](mailto:sdavis40@blackhawk.edu)

Blackhawk Technical College  
Institutional Effectiveness  
6004 S. County Road G  
P.O. Box 5009  
Janesville, WI 53547-5009

## Appendix A: Research Review Checklist and Criteria

The Research Review Committee considers applications using the following worksheet.

	Yes	No	N/A
Does the application address all required information?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the application have current IRB approval from a related university, college, or similar organization?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are the required Informed Consent forms attached?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the application have a Letter of Support or Supervisor Approval from an appropriate BTC representative?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are Participant Recruitment documents attached?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are the research instruments or templates attached?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Meets Criterion</b>	<b>Does Not Meet Criterion</b>
a. Research question and topics align with the educational mission of Blackhawk Technical College.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. The project has the potential to make a meaningful contribution to BTC and/or to the field of education.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Procedures and protocols are consistent with good research design and practices.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. The project complies with all federal laws, state laws, and BTC Policies and Procedures.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. There is minimal disruption of BTC students, staff, the learning environment, and regular work activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Procedures and protocols are explicit in the protection of subjects' rights.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Measures are in place for minimizing risk and the protection of the health, safety, comfort and legal rights of subjects.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Anticipated benefits outweigh expected risks / costs to human subjects.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Facilities and other resources necessary are adequate for completion of the study.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. Procedures, protocols, and documents related to securing informed consent from the human subjects are adequate.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k. Procedures and protocols for maintaining confidentiality are clearly articulated and audience appropriate.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

# Appendix B: Research Application Cover Page

**Blackhawk Technical College**  
Application to Conduct Research  
Cover Page

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Information about the Researcher(s)			
Principal / Lead Investigator Name: _____			
Organization or Institution: _____			
Email: _____		Telephone: _____	
<b>BTC Affiliation</b>			
<input type="checkbox"/> BTC Faculty or Staff ( <i>Dept:</i> _____)			
<b>Is this project part of your regular job duties?</b>			
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes			
<input type="checkbox"/> No			
<b>Other Members of the Research Team</b>			
Name	Email	BTC Faculty or Staff	BTC Student
_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Please attach an additional sheet with additional names, email, and BTC affiliation status.</i>			

Information about the Research Project	
Project Title: _____	
<b>What best describes this research project?</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Academic Research ( <i>e.g., publication, tenure, etc.</i> )	
<input type="checkbox"/> Program Evaluation ( <i>e.g., outputs, process, impact, etc.</i> )	
<input type="checkbox"/> Research as part of a degree requirement ( <i>Master's, PhD, EdD, etc.</i> )	
<i>If part of a degree: What degree are you seeking?</i> _____	
Name of College / University: _____	
Name of Advisor: _____	
Advisor Email: _____ Telephone: _____	
<b>Has this project been requested by BTC?</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes IF YES: Who is the sponsor? _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> No	

## Appendix C: Data Storage and Security

Data must be stored on a secure, password-protected computer. Researchers who have access to identified data must have their computer(s) encrypted. The researcher must describe the data and computer security capabilities.

Data will be transferred from BTC to the external researcher via a secure file transfer protocol such as ShareFile. Once the required data is available, a member of Institutional Effectiveness at BTC will contact the primary investigator via email with a secure URL link to the data. The data will be available for 24 hours, and only available for a single download.

All data must be destroyed or returned to BTC within one year of completion of the study.

## Appendix D: Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval

As stated, the Research Review Committee is NOT an Institutional Review Board. Applicants who are requesting to conduct research at Blackhawk Technical College either as academic research connected to a university or college, or as a part of a degree requirement (Master's, Ph.D. or equivalent) must obtain Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval from the related institution of higher learning prior to submission. Applications without an appropriate and current IRB will not be reviewed.

## Appendix E: Letter of Support / Approval

A letter of support or approval demonstrates that the research project is something that the college is interested in and supports.

For internal researchers (employees of Blackhawk Technical College) who are conducting research projects within their own departments or classrooms, this letter should be signed by the BTC Vice President, direct supervisor, or Dean, as appropriate.

## Appendix F1: Informed Consent

Separate Informed Consent forms must be submitted for each group that the researcher is targeting (students, staff, etc.). All responsibilities and expenses associated with obtaining consent are the obligation of the researcher. Templates for creating Informed Consent can be readily found online at various university research and IRB pages.

Any student or staff who is over the age of 18 can give his or her written consent to participate. However, any student who refuses to participate must have the statement honored by the researcher.

If applicable, the researcher must provide a clear and detailed plan as to how he or she will account for those students or staff who do not consent to participate.

## Appendix F2: Audio- or Video-Taping

For researchers who are interested in audio- or video-taping participants, a reasonable case must be made to indicate why taping is important to the research, and assurances that taping will not interfere with student learning or responsibilities of BTC personnel.

Any research using audio- or video-taping must include active consent. This means that the student or staff will have to opt-in specifically for the audio- or video-taping. It is suggested that the researcher include this as a separate item on the Informed Consent, with clearly denoted "opt-in/opt-out" and participant signature or initials.

Students or staff must be informed that they have the option to be audio- or video-taped. If a student or staff should decline, the participant must still be allowed to participate in any class-related activities but not included in the taping process. The process as to how non-consenting participants will be protected from the taping must be included.

When audio- or video-taping, the consent form must include the following:

- The purpose of the taping
- How the taping will be used
- How long the tape will be kept
- When and how the tape will be destroyed
- Who will have access to the tape

## Appendix G: Final Research Report to the College

The researcher must provide a copy of the final report to Institutional Effectiveness at Blackhawk Technical College within three months of completion of the study. For studies that last more than one year, researchers must submit an interim or progress report no more than two months after the end of each year of the study. Progress reports should not be more than five pages in length. Final and progress reports are to be submitted via email to Institutional Effectiveness. ([sdavis40@blackhawk.edu](mailto:sdavis40@blackhawk.edu))

If the researcher is planning on presenting or publishing results that specifically identify Blackhawk Technical College, its students, personnel, and/or property, records, or other materials, a copy of the presentation or publication must be submitted to Institutional Effectiveness with a minimum of 30 days' notice for review of the presentation or publication.

Failure to submit an interim report will place the project at-risk for discontinuation. Failure to submit a final report and/or presentation or publication (if applicable) may jeopardize approval of future research applications.