



Conducting Research, Scholarly or Otherwise, with NACA or NACA® Members

Policy Statement

PURPOSE:

NACA, as a leader in higher education, commits to support, encourage, and inspire assessment, evaluation, and research in the fields of campus activities and student involvement. NACA welcomes colleges and universities, institutions, corporations, partners, graduate students, and others to join in this mission to build a body of scholarship in order to help direct the profession and inform decision-making. NACA will ensure this through the establishment of policies that reflect current and future needs in the field, citing needs for both NACA (the association) and the researcher.

SCOPE:

This policy document applies to all institutions and individuals interested in conducting any assessment, evaluation, research, or scholarship with NACA, as a professional association, or with any NACA®-affiliated members, including both institutes of higher learning and associates, where contact with these members is facilitated by NACA, as a professional association.

Research Integrity

Any research conducted with NACA or with NACA® members must adhere to strict professional guidelines and ethics accepted by the field. Research must provide evidence (such as defined procedures and safeguards) in any proposal of the protection of research subjects (as explained below), and, if required, must complete Institutional Review Board (IRB) protocols for the protection of human subjects, in accordance with the guidelines of their home institutions. The Research and Scholarship Group (RSG) of NACA will determine if the researcher has met such guidelines.

Additionally, any research conducted with NACA or with NACA® members must comply with NACA®'s statements on non-discrimination and civility and must plainly describe any possible or unavoidable conflicts of interest as a result of the research or to the association.

NACA has a responsibility as a professional association and as a supporter of research to protect its members' health, safety, rights, and confidentiality, and must ensure that researchers, consistent with ethical research protocols, respect and protect participants' anonymity, confidentiality, and privacy. In addition, NACA must protect its members, as well as any research participant, from undue burdens and research fatigue. NACA reserves the right to limit the number of approved research requests granted during any academic or calendar years, dependent upon completing research projects.

NACA views misconduct in research and scholarship in the gravest of terms and maintains the right to terminate any research project at any time if any ethical or material breach occurs in reference to the research or the researcher. Any willful misconduct will be resolved according to association or institution discipline procedures, if appropriate, or, if warranted, the association will seek legal remedies.

EFFECTIVE DATE: December 5, 2017

RECISION: This policy may only be revised or rescinded in writing by the NACA® Board of Directors.

DISTRIBUTION: NACA will make this policy publicly available on its website and will direct all interested researchers to it for review.



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Arbitration

Any dispute or controversy arising from or relating to the research will be decided by arbitration in the County of Richland, Columbia, South Carolina, by the American Arbitration Association and in accordance with the then current rules and regulations of that association. At the request of either NACA or the researcher, arbitration proceedings will be conducted in the utmost secrecy, and in such case, all documents, testimony, and records will be received, heard, and maintained by the arbitrators in secrecy, available for inspection only by NACA or the researcher and by their respective attorneys and experts who will agree, in advance and in writing, to receive all such information confidentially and to maintain the secrecy of such information until such information becomes generally known.

Eligibility and Conditions of Proposal Evaluation

Any individual or institution who currently maintains membership in the association is eligible to apply to conduct research with NACA or with NACA® members. The requestor must be a member at the time of application and at all times during the period of research, with the exception of those applying for a NACA® research grant.

Current members of the NACA® Board of Directors, the NACA® Research and Scholarship Group, or the NACA® Office staff will not receive preferential consideration for research with NACA or with NACA® members.

Research proposals must focus on issue(s) related to campus activities and student involvement that are relevant to a wide audience and have applications for student success initiatives. Preferred research projects will reflect the current NACA® Research Agenda, including, but not limited to:

- The influence of student involvement on academic achievement and/or student persistence to graduation
- Ties between the development of employability skills and campus involvement
- Student learning gains from types of student involvement activities, including student organization membership, positional leadership and event planning opportunities
- High-impact practices in campus activities
- Preparation experiences for employment in campus activities, including graduate preparation and/or career development activities
- The role of student organization advisors in facilitating student learning and/or student success

Proposals must articulate a strong research design that is appropriate for the research question(s). Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-method studies will be considered. Proposed research must be original work of the research team and must not have been reported elsewhere. This does not preclude meta-analyses or replicated methodologies; however, NACA will continue to promote ethical standards in its support for research and will not tolerate plagiarism in student activities research.

Proposals must comply with the NACA® Statement of Business Ethics and Standards, the NACA® Civility Statement, and the NACA® Non-Discrimination, Diversity Advancement and Affirmative Action Principles.

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Eligibility and Conditions of Proposal Evaluation (Continued)

Proposals must include an abstract of the proposed research. The members of the research team must be willing to have this information posted on the NACA® website and/or published in the *Journal of Campus Activities Practice* and *Scholarship, Campus Activities Programming*® magazine, or any other publication of the association.

Access to Association Data

NACA maintains joint ownership of all data collected during research conducted with NACA or with NACA® members. As such, prior to researchers working with NACA or with NACA® members, the researchers will agree in writing to joint ownership of data with the association and will further agree to provide prompt access to data upon request by NACA. Researchers will also agree in writing before research commences to assist NACA, or its designee, at NACA's expense, in every proper way to secure rights in any copyrights, patents, mask work rights or other intellectual property rights relating thereto in any and all countries, including, but not limited to, the disclosure to NACA of all pertinent information and data with respect thereto, the execution of all applications, specifications, oaths, assignments and all other instruments which NACA deems necessary in order to apply for and obtain such rights and in order to assign and convey to NACA, its successors, assigns, and nominees the sole and exclusive rights, title and interest in and to such inventions, and any copyrights, patents, mask work rights or other intellectual property rights relating thereto. Researchers further agree that the researchers' obligations to execute or cause to be executed, when it is in the researchers' power to do so, any such instrument or papers will continue after the termination of the research.

NACA encourages researchers to utilize, present, and scrutinize data collected to help grow a library of scholarship on behalf of the profession. However, NACA does require researchers to inform the association of any requests or needs for publication or presentation.

NACA does not permit the release of protected information of its members, including email addresses, mailing addresses, or phone numbers. NACA will, through the RSG, provide the service of sending one research announcement, one email invitation, and one reminder for all electronic research on a schedule developed by the researcher in consultation with the RSG.

Guidelines and Application Process

Researchers interested in conducting research with NACA or with NACA® members must complete an online application. In addition to completing the online application, the researcher must also upload any supporting documents, including a completed IRB form from the home institution, proposed survey instruments, or others.

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Guidelines and Application Process (Continued)

The online application will include the following sections:

- **Purpose and abstract**—a brief summary of the research proposal’s key points and outcomes
- **Mission and values**—a statement that ties the research proposal to the NACA®’s mission and core values, as found on the association’s website
- **Introduction**—a rationale for the study, citing relevant theories and issues, as well as providing a context to current literature in higher education
- **Methodology and identification of subjects**—a summary of the research, including research questions, subject and sample selection and identification, data collection and means, instruments and protocols, and data analysis and presentation
- **Potential implications and risks**—a brief overview of how this research could impact the profession, as well as any risks that may occur to the association or the participants
- **Timeline**—a detailed listing of dates and times of any activities related to the proposal, including subject contact, data collection, analysis, and publication (Reminder: All NACA® grant-funded research must be completed within one calendar year of receipt of funds.)
- **Expected use and dissemination**—a brief overview of the planned use of data and outcomes, as well as plans for dissemination, such as presentations or publications
- **References**—official APA citations of all sources referenced in the research proposal
- **Optional uploads**—additional documents, such as IRB documents, survey instruments, or other documents that can be uploaded utilizing the upload tool in the application
- **Funding request**—a checkbox which allows the researcher to request financial support of the proposed project
- **Contact information of all project researchers**—names, titles, institutions, mailing addresses, email addresses, phone numbers, and affiliations with project
- **Signature of acceptance**—official acceptance of research integrity, as well as agreeance to non-discrimination and civility statements from the association

Association Review and Approval

Online applications and all supporting documentation uploaded with applications will be reviewed by the Director of Education and Research for the association. All researchers submitting applications will receive a confirmation of receipt from the Director or her/his designee from the RSG. If the proposal meets all appropriate criteria as determined in this policy and the number of research proposal requests has not exceeded the maximum as determined in this policy, the Director, with advice and consent of the RSG, will ask the NACA® Board of Directors for further review.

Researchers should receive a decision within two to four weeks after submitting the online application. Atypical requests may cause extended timeframes for decisions, although no application request should take more than six weeks to reach a decision.

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Association Review and Approval (Continued)

The Director and the RSG will review each application for purpose, duplication of study, applicability, use of subjects, and research integrity. NACA, nor the Director or the RSG, will make any determinations of IRB protocols and will rely on the judgement of the researcher's home institution.

An approval letter will be signed by the Director, upon advice and consent of the RSG, and will include all expectations and requirements, as indicated in the association policy guide. All letters of approval must include language that the proposed research has been approved by the home institution's IRB board and that the research is consistent with the mission and core values of NACA.

Support For and Funding Research

NACA, through the work of the RSG, provides a variety of supports to researchers in the field, including training and education, policy guidelines, mentoring, connection with internal and external resources, staff assistance and expertise, research libraries, and peer review.

Additionally, NACA also provides limited financial resources for research projects, as outlined on the [research grant website](#). NACA introduced research grants in 2008 and combined its funding initiatives under the umbrella of "Advancing Research in Campus Activities Grants" in 2015. This offers a reflection of the ultimate goal of research funded awards, which is to advance the field of campus activities by encouraging the development and dissemination of knowledge that has the potential to improve the experiences of college students through their involvement of campus activities. Researchers may apply for a research grant by completing the application as described above and by selecting "yes" to the question of interest in research grant funding.

Requests for funding will only be considered provided researchers are not current members of the NACA® Board of Directors, the NACA® Research and Scholarship Group, or the NACA® Office staff.

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Additional Information—Page 6

For more information about assessment, evaluation, research, and scholarship in higher education, or for more information about conducting research with NACA or with NACA® members, please see the following sources:

Association of American Colleges and Universities. (2011). *The LEAP vision for learning: Outcomes, practices, impact, and employers' views*. Washington, DC: Author. ([Available online](#))

Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education. (2015). *CAS professional standards for higher education* (9th ed.). Washington, DC: Author. ([Available online](#))

Fowler, Jr., F. J. (2002). *Survey research methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Gahagan, J., Dingfelder, J., & Pei, K. (2010). *A faculty and staff guide to creating learning outcomes*. The University of South Carolina: National Resource Center for the First-Year Experiences & Students in Transition. ([Available online](#))

Gay, L. R., Mills, G. E., & Airasian, P. (2011). *Educational research: Competencies for analysis and applications* (10th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

Knefelkamp, L. L., Golec, R. R., & Wells, E. A. (1985). *The practice-to-theory-to-practice model* (Unpublished manuscript). University of Maryland, College Park.

Poister, T. H. (2003). *Measuring performance in public and nonprofit organizations*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Schuh, J. H. (Ed.). (2009). *Assessment methods for student affairs*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Upcraft, M. L., & Schuh, J. H. (1996). *Assessment in student affairs: A guide for practitioners*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Walvoord, B. E. (2010). *Assessment clear and simple: A practical guide for institutions, departments, and general education* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.



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Definitions—Page 7

Please see the following definitions of common words or subjects pertaining to research, evaluation and assessment. All definitions are adapted for use from Gay, Mills, and Airasian's text, *Educational Research: Competencies for Analysis and Applications (10th ed.)*, as cited on the previous page.

Anonymity: Refers to one's ability to participate in research without being identified – Respondents are not identifiable because either identity information is not requested or not disclosed. Anonymity should guarantee respondents that their name (or other identifiable information) will not be released or used.

Assessment: Any effort to gather, analyze, and interpret evidence that describes institutional, departmental, divisional, or agency effectiveness

Confidentiality: Refers to the treatment of information that an individual has knowingly disclosed in a relationship of trust and with the expectation that this information will not be disclosed to unauthorized parties—Confidentiality guarantees respondents that their data will not be shared in a way that can be traced back to them. This agreement made with respondents is formalized through the statement of informed consent.

Causal-comparative research: Style of research that attempts to determine the cause or reason for existing differences in the behavior or status of two or more groups

Correlational research: Style of research that involves collecting data to determine whether, and to what degree, a relationship exists between two or more quantifiable variables (or questions)

Descriptive research: Style of research that determines and reports the way things are, such as preferences, attitudes, practices, concerns, or interests

Ethnographic research: Style of research that studies cultural patterns and perspectives of participants while present in their natural settings and environments

Evaluation: Any effort to use assessment evidence to improve institutional, departmental, divisional, or agency effectiveness

Experimental research: Style of research that manipulates at least one independent variable while controlling other relevant variables in order to observe the effect upon one or more dependent variables so as to define generalizable impacts or causation

Institutional Review Board (IRB): The Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of the Human Subjects is the regulatory body of institutes of higher learning that is responsible for the review of research that involves human participants. The purpose of IRBs nationally is to protect participants in research, as well as to protect researchers conducting research involving human participants.

Limitation: Some aspect of the study, research, or assessment that the researcher knows may negatively affect the results of the study, an aspect over which the researcher has no control

Narrative research: Style of research that explores how different individuals experience the world around them by allowing participants to tell the stories of their experiences and lives



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Privacy: Guarantees that access to personal information is not disclosed without respondent's consent

Qualitative research or assessment: Methodology or research design that emphasizes the collection, analysis, and interpretation of comprehensive narrative or visual data in order to uncover the reasons, opinions, motivations, and other meaning behind a particular belief or hypothesis

Quantitative research or assessment: Methodology or research design that emphasizes objective measurements, as well as the statistical, mathematical, or numerical analysis of data, which was collected through polls or surveys, or by manipulating pre-existing statistical data using computational techniques

Research: Systematic investigation designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge— Under this definition, some demonstration, service, and training projects may or may not be considered research.

Scholarship: Discovery, integration, service, application, and teaching, so as to build a commitment to thinking, questioning, and pursuing answers

Scientific method: An orderly process by which phenomena is explained, predicted, or controlled, and includes a number of steps, such as defining the problem, formulating a hypothesis (or explanation), executing a research plan, collecting data, analyzing data, and determining conclusions based on analysis