



Application to Conduct Research Process Guide

Thank you for your interest in conducting research with Florida Virtual School (FLVS). This guide will help you complete the [Research Request Form](#).

Important Notice: Research activities must not begin (e.g., contacting principals or administrators, recruiting participants, requesting data) until FLVS provides you with its formal Research Notice of Approval (R-NOA). The R-NOA is provided only after all required FLVS reviews and approvals (e.g., cybersecurity clearance, as applicable) have been fully completed. During the application review process, the FLVS Research Committee will manage all FLVS-related consents and approvals, and the applicant will not contact FLVS departments directly while their application is under review.

In addition, please note that researchers (including internal employees working on advanced degrees) do not have an automatic right to access FLVS students, staff, or data. Access may be granted only when it is determined to be in the best interest of FLVS and in compliance with all legal requirements.

Please follow the process described below. In the first step, complete your Research Request Form and upload the required documents. In the second step, alert the FLVS Research Committee that you have submitted a completed application by emailing flvsresearch@flvs.net. This email confirms that you are ready to begin the review process.

If you have any questions about completing the application, please contact the FLVS Research Committee at flvsresearch@flvs.net.

Step 1: Research Request Form

Please note that you can move forward and back through the form, and it will save your progress so you can return to your application at any time as long as you use the same device. If you need to edit your application after you have submitted it, you can access it by returning to the link you used.

Applicant Information

This section of the form requests your name and preferred email address, as well as information about your job title and employer.

Select the option that best describes the reason for your research request. Please note that FLVS does not support coursework, thesis, or dissertation proposals from non-FLVS employees (including former employees) at this time, so the options below exclude such studies.

Option 1: Graduate-level thesis or dissertation requirements of a university.

- Only FLVS employees pursuing their degrees will be considered. We are unable to review applications from other candidates at this time.
- Select this option if you are a current FLVS employee conducting research as part of the completion requirements for a master’s, specialist, or doctorate degree.

Option 2: Research conducted by external professional investigators (e.g., education, science, health).

- Select this option if you are conducting research that is **not** connected with coursework or completion requirements for a master’s, specialist, or doctorate degree. If the thesis or dissertation is part of a larger study, the principal investigator of that study must submit this application.
- Research must be either: (a) conducted by or within high-quality research institutions¹; (b) an ongoing research partnership; or (c) an approved grant-funded proposal.

Study Details

The goal of this section is to communicate the features of your research study in a clear and concise manner. This section includes the following elements: (a) project title, (b) purpose and significance, (c) research questions, (d) methods, (e) data security, (f) risks, (g) reporting, and (h) research team.

Project Title. Please state the full title of the research study/project.

Purpose and Significance. The study’s purpose and significance should be as concise as possible and limited to your area of focus. The study purpose answers the question, “Why are you doing this study?” while the study significance answers the question, “How will your findings contribute to your field of study in a unique way?”

Research Questions. If you have several research questions, list the most critical to your research project. If you need assistance narrowing your research questions, please consult your advisor/committee chair or the primary investigator/project director for your proposed research.

Methods. Summarize the research methods in the space provided. Consider the most important information to know about how your study will be conducted, and then clearly and briefly describe that information for those unfamiliar with your study.

Data Security. Summarize your plan for maintaining the security and privacy of your data. Consider how you will manage data, including collection, transfer, and storage.

Risks. Describe all potential risks associated with participation in this study. Please explain the level of risk, even if minimal. For example, *“This study involves vulnerable populations, such as students with disabilities, students enrolled in early childhood education, or children in high-poverty or*

¹ High-quality institutions are defined as: recognized research institutions, and very high or high research activity colleges and universities (R1 and R2) as designated by the Carnegie Classification of Institutions, <https://carnegieclassifications.acenet.edu/lookup/lookup.php>

underserved areas.”

Reporting. Provide any plans for publication or presentation of your findings. Please note, you must remove the FLVS name, any program name, or names of any person in your research findings prior to dissertation or prospectus defense, publication, presentation, and/or any correspondence regarding this research project. To identify any of these places, groups, or individuals, you must specifically request this permission in advance by contacting flvsresearch@flvs.net. If FLVS consents, then FLVS will require review of your draft prior to publication.

Research Team. List all the members of your team who may have any interactions with your data, including data collection, data management, and data analysis.

Archival Data Requests

Please read this section carefully and provide all of the requested information. If you are not requesting archival data or collecting only primary data, select “No” to automatically move to the next section.

Data Category. Indicate whether you are requesting de-identified data and/or personally identifiable information (PII)².

If you are requesting de-identified data, you agree not to attempt, either directly or indirectly, to re-identify any individual represented in the dataset, nor use, combine, link, or analyze the data in a manner intended or reasonably likely to enable re-identification.

All requests for PII will require a data use agreement (DUA) and involve the FLVS Procurement and Contracting Department, as well as legal review and form approval from the FLVS Office of General Counsel. Requesting PII through a DUA typically takes about 3 months to complete. The timeline may be extended depending on the volume of requests. Otherwise, de-identified data will typically be completed within a couple of weeks, depending on data availability.

Data Element Details. For each data element you are requesting, please specify the school years requested, program requested (if applicable), grade levels (if applicable), and population (e.g., ESE students).

Certain data elements are readily available, including information on assessments, demographics, course enrollment, and accountability. Data requests involving only these data elements will take at least two business weeks. Requests involving other elements will require additional resources and may take longer to complete. Please be as specific as possible about the data you are requesting, and note that it must be approved by FLVS.

² PII includes any data that can be used to distinguish or trace an individual’s identity. Examples include direct identifiers (e.g., names, student ID numbers, email addresses) and indirect identifiers (e.g., date of birth, unique demographic combinations, or specific student records like IEP status).

Data Collection with Recruitment

This section is required if you plan to recruit participants for your project or if you plan to have any direct communication with FLVS staff, students, or families. Please provide a brief description of your proposed recruitment methods (e.g., using a recruitment script, email, flyer, or in-person meeting). For example, if you intend to email potential participants, you should also specify how you will obtain their email addresses.

Please indicate whether you will recruit participants. If you select “No,” you will automatically move to the next section. If you select “Yes,” please specify the population(s) you plan to recruit and describe your recruitment techniques.

You must also indicate whether your recruitment procedures will require access to personally identifiable information (PII)². All requests for PII will require a data use agreement (DUA) as noted above. The timeline may be extended depending on the volume of requests. Additionally, please indicate why your research could not be completed with access to PII.

Please note that any direct communication with students will require you to obtain security clearance prior to beginning your research. All external researchers must undergo a Level II background check through AHCA to gain access to our facilities, staff, students, and families. The steps to complete this process will be sent to you once you have received study approval. If the study does NOT require in-person or virtual interaction, a background check may not be necessary. FLVS employees with current Level II screening do not need to reapply.

Participant Details. For each of the participant groups, provide information about (a) the FLVS program or department targeted, (b) grade level (if applicable), (c) expected participant count, (d) activities to be completed, and (e) estimated duration of activities in minutes/hours. If your study includes multiple research activities (e.g., tests and surveys), aggregate the total time required for each participant group. Please note that FLVS reserves the right to limit the size of your sample requested to participate in your research.

Please review the following matrix to determine when prior written consent is required from participants.

Scenario	Consent
Students - direct participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent/guardian prior written consent required • Student prior written consent as applicable by age (e.g., an eligible student) • Participation is always voluntary
Student data-only request with no direct participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No consent if data are de-identified and used only as approved by FLVS • If PII is requested, requirements shift to DUA conditions
Staff - direct participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active prior written consent from FLVS staff • Participation is voluntary

Sampling

Summarize the sampling procedures used in this study. Your response should describe the process or technique used for selecting a subgroup of participants from the FLVS population. This applies to both archival data requests and data collection with recruitment. Please include a description of the group you wish to include, the projected number of participants, and why this group is important to your study. The size of your sample may be limited by the FLVS Research Committee. Please indicate whether a comparison or control group will be used.

Research Instruments

Identify the instruments you intend to use for your data collection. All instruments (e.g., surveys, interview protocols) must be uploaded at the end of the form. All researchers must provide parents/guardians with access to any student-facing materials (e.g., surveys, questionnaires), and parents/guardians have the right to review and consent to all submitted materials. FLVS will not approve studies if parent/guardian concerns are raised regarding the content of these materials. As with all FLVS research studies, parents/guardians may opt their children out at any time.

We recommend that all researchers review the [FLVS Survey Review Criteria](#) before submitting their application.

Compensation and Incentives

Indicate whether any compensation or incentives will be provided to participants. **In most cases, teacher and student incentives are not permitted.** For research studies sponsored by a grant or by a federal or state agency, teacher incentives may be permissible. Please specify the compensation or incentives you wish to provide.

Instructional Time

Please describe how any disruption of instructional time will be minimized. Stating that this is not applicable or “N/A” is not an acceptable answer.

Timeline

This is a mandatory section. When planning your research timeline, it is critical to include the FLVS Research Committee’s application review period. Please note that the review timeline is subject to change during peak business periods (e.g., statewide assessment windows). You are encouraged to review the current school calendar, the Florida Statewide Assessment schedule, and the [Estimated Timelines for Research Request Reviews](#) prior to completing this timeline.

To complete this section, estimate the amount of time it will take to perform all research activities, including data collection (in person or virtually, via survey, or via an archival data request) and report writing. Also, include the estimated submission date of your final report to your institution. This will help you determine when to submit your executive summary to FLVS.

When estimating your timeline, account for the length of time necessary for the FLVS internal review process. Please note that only completed applications are reviewed by the FLVS Research Committee. Once your application is reviewed, you will receive one of three responses: (a) Research Notice of Approval (R-NOA), (b) revise and resubmit, or (c) rejection. If you receive a revise-and-resubmit request, the FLVS Research Committee will respond within 20 business days after receiving all required revisions.

Once you have received a formal R-NOA document, if any of your estimated dates change by more than 30 calendar days, you must submit an updated timeline to flvsresearch@flvs.net. If other components of your application change after approval, such as the methods or data collected, you must contact flvsresearch@flvs.net for further instructions and/or additional approvals.

We require all studies completed in FLVS to culminate in an executive summary within 45 calendar days of the R-NOA expiration date, which is one year after approval. If you believe this will pose a problem, please email flvsresearch@flvs.net as soon as possible. To submit your executive summary, please send it to flvsresearch@flvs.net. The executive summary should not exceed one page and should include an introductory description, research questions, and a summary of the research findings.

Document Uploads

In this section, please upload all applicable items. In some cases, you may need to merge multiple documents, such as when you have multiple instruments or consent forms. If this is the case, please upload these documents as a single ZIP file (no larger than 100 MB). Only one file can be uploaded to each upload section. If you wish to replace a file, upload the current version, and it will automatically replace the former one.

Once you have uploaded your materials, send an email to flvsresearch@flvs.net to notify the FLVS Research Committee that your information is complete and ready for review. Please note that the FLVS review period begins only after the FLVS Research Committee deems a submission complete.

Applicant Assurances

This mandatory section consists of statements pertaining to assurances of the applicant and the conduct in which research will occur. Read each statement carefully, as you will be responsible for adhering to each one. You must include your electronic signature at the end of the form.

You will have 12 months from the date of the R-NOA approval to complete your research project. If additional time is needed to complete your approved research, you must contact flvsresearch@flvs.net for an extension. If your submitted application and corresponding materials remain inactive for a period of two months after the review is completed, you must reapply.

Step 2: Application Review

Important Notice: Alert the Research Committee that you have submitted a completed application by emailing flvsresearch@flvs.net. This email confirms that you are ready to begin the review process. Your submitted application will be prescreened to ensure it is complete before the review can begin. You may be notified if any elements are missing from your application. Only completed applications will be

reviewed.

During the review period, we may contact you with follow-up questions. Once the review is complete, you will be notified whether your application has been approved, rejected, or requires revision and resubmission.

You can expect status updates from the FLVS Research Committee at the following stages:

- **Receipt:** Confirmation that your application was received.
- **Screening:** Notification when your proposal is being screened for completeness.
- **Full Review:** Your application was deemed complete and is referred to the FLVS Research Committee for formal evaluation.
- **Principal Invitation:** If applicable, when the process moves to the school-level invitation stage.
- **Final Decision:** Notification of approval or rejection.

Review Timeline. The following table outlines the estimated FLVS review timelines and will help you plan your study.

Review Activity	Timeline
1. Application is reviewed for completeness	10 business days
2. Review process by FLVS Research Committee	40 business days
3. Review by FLVS department leaders	10 business days
4. Review of data collection instruments intended for students by parents/legal guardians	At least 10 business days
5. Archival Data Request (if applicable)	At least 14 business days
6. Security Clearance (if applicable)	7 business days (average clearance cycle)
7. Research Notice of Approval (R-NOA)	At the conclusion of the FLVS review process

1. **Review Process.** This may involve multiple reviews (each subsequent review may take an additional 20 business days). Please be aware that data collection during the statewide standardized assessment periods is prohibited. Please plan accordingly.
2. **Site Administrator Notification.** The FLVS Research Committee will internally notify the Directors and/or Principals of the schools or departments identified in your application. Participation is at the discretion of these administrators; Principals or Directors must provide formal acceptance before a Research Notice of Approval (R-NOA) can be issued.
3. **Timing and Seasonal Constraints.** Please be mindful of the following calendar constraints regarding invitations to participate:
 - **Peak Periods:** To respect administrative workloads, the FLVS Research Committee will not send invitations during the first and last weeks of each semester, or any testing

windows (e.g., progress monitoring, EOC, etc.).

- **Summer Hiatus:** The FLVS Full Time (FT) program operates on a 9-month academic calendar. Consequently, FT students and teachers are unavailable for research activities—including recruitment, data collection, or intervention—during the summer months.
 - **Academic Breaks:** Invitations to students, families, or staff are not sent during Winter break or Spring break.
 - **Administrative Transitions:** School leadership may change over the summer. An invitation accepted by a principal in May may require re-authorization if a new administrator assumes leadership in August.
 - **Important Compliance Note:** Recruitment is considered a formal research activity (e.g., contacting FLVS staff or students) and may not commence until you have received your official R-NOA.
4. **Archival Data Request.** Requests for archival data are processed by the Department of Analysis, Assessment, and Accountability on behalf of the FLVS Research Committee. Contacting individual schools, departments, or staff to request FLVS database data is prohibited.
 5. **Research Notice of Approval (R-NOA).** Research activities must not begin (e.g., contacting principals, recruiting participants, visiting campuses, requesting data) until the formal R-NOA document and any required security clearances are received and completed, as applicable.
 6. **Security Clearance:** Once your research request has been approved, and **prior to** your initiating your study, each person on the research team interacting in-person or virtually with FLVS staff, students, or families, or visiting FLVS facilities, must complete a Level II background check. (FLVS employees have already completed this process upon hire.) This Level II background check is handled by Fieldprint and processed through AHCA. More details will be provided once research approval is obtained.

Revise and Resubmit. A revise and resubmit requirement of your research request signifies that your application has some areas that must be explained and/or corrected before the research review team can approve your research. For example, this may mean your IRB is inactive, your human subjects research training certification has expired, you are missing supporting documents, or your consent forms need revision. Please address the identified areas and resubmit the affected portions of your application as directed. Please note that any revisions required by the FLVS Research Committee will result in an additional 20 business day review period.

Research Notice of Approval. After FLVS (and sponsoring department, if there are student data collection materials) has conditionally approved your research request, a research notification correspondence is sent by FLVS to the proposed participating program Directors and/or Principals. To proceed with final approval by FLVS, the proposed participating Directors and/or Principals must agree to host the study and provide access to study participants. For any studies that include data collection instruments used with students (surveys, interview protocols, focus group protocols, etc.), principals will distribute materials to parents to allow them to review and opt their child(ren) out of participation.

A formal Research Notification of Approval (R-NOA) document is sent to you by email with an attachment. The attached R-NOA document will contain an applicant identification number and an expiration date. When applicable, it will also list the FLVS programs that agreed to participate in the study. If student data collection materials are available, the researcher will obtain informed written parent/eligible student or staff consent and administer the student survey, conduct focus groups, or conduct interviews.

The approved research is eligible for a one-year period. An approved research request means that you may proceed to the next step of your project (e.g., recruitment of research participants). Retain this R-NOA in your possession during your research activity period. Please remember that this R-NOA notice does not obligate administrators, teachers, students, or families to participate in your study; participation is voluntary. Finally, please report any unanticipated problems or adverse events related to subject participation in the approved research project to flvsresearch@flvs.net.

Plan in advance of your R-NOA expiration date. You must renew your research request annually, for as long as the study is active, by emailing flvsresearch@flvs.net. Please contact us at least 40 days before your expiration date to allow time to review your request and ensure a smooth continuation of your research project.

Rejection. A research request that has been declined may not proceed further. No research activities may begin or occur with any FLVS party related to the proposed research.

Sample Timelines. While each application is different, estimated timelines for research request reviews have been developed for planning purposes. Please refer to the Estimated Timelines for sample pathways, which applicants can use to better understand the process steps and timeline.