Policy

Research and evaluation

*Please note this policy is mandatory and staff are required to adhere to the content*

Summary

This policy outlines for research and evaluation undertaken within Department for Education and Child Development (DECD) sites and services including that initiated by DECD and for reporting on research, evaluation and statistical analysis within DECD.

Table 1 - Document details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Publication date</th>
<th>2 June 2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>File number</td>
<td>DECD 14/11161</td>
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</table>
| Related legislation | This policy is consistent with the requirements and expectations of the Public Sector Act 2009, Public Finance and Audit Act 1987 and Treasurer's Instructions.  
**NOTE:** Treasurer's Instruction 17 instructs Chief Executives to ensure that officers of their authorities ensure evaluation of public sector initiatives. |
| Related policies, procedures, guidelines, standards, frameworks | Conducting research and evaluation in DECD procedure  
Reporting on research and evaluation guideline  
Initiating and sponsoring research and evaluation guideline |
<p>| Version | 2.3 |
| Replaces | 2.2 |
| Policy officer (position) | Manager Strategic Data Development |
| Policy officer (phone) | (08) 8204 1262 |
| Policy sponsor (position) | Director, Business Intelligence, Office for Strategy and Performance |
| Executive director responsible (position and office) | Executive Director, System Performance |
| Applies to | All Staff and other parties involved in research and evaluation within DECD. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key words</th>
<th>Research, Evaluation, Business Intelligence, Evidence, Findings, Recommendations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Status</td>
<td>Approved</td>
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<tr>
<td>Approved by</td>
<td>Executive Director, System Performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approval date</td>
<td>1 June 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review date</td>
<td>1 June 2020</td>
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<td>Date</td>
<td>Version</td>
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<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>1.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>2.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>22 March 2016</td>
<td>2.1</td>
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</table>
| 23 March 2017      | 2.2     | Minor edit:  
  - all references to A/Executive Director, Office for Strategy and Performance changed to Executive Director, System Performance,  
  - updated hyperlinks.                                                                 |
| 2 June 2017        | 2.3     | Minor edit:  
  - 4.2 Updated title of procedure amended throughout document.  |
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1. Title
Research and evaluation policy

2. Purpose
The DECD Research and evaluation policy aims to support DECD’s commitment to evidence-informed policy and decision making. The policy aims to be inclusive of all DECD partners to use research and evaluation for the purposes of delivering on DECD’s vision and strategic priorities.

The Research and evaluation policy outlines the strategic approach required by DECD to effectively strengthen the systematic and planned use of research and evaluation, and enable the transfer of knowledge for the purpose of improving outcomes for children and young people. The elements underpinning this strategic approach include:

- Key strategic decisions affecting education and child development in South Australia are informed by evidence from research, evaluation and business intelligence information and analysis.
- To provide key decision-makers within DECD with evidence to inform strategic and operational decisions, and some assessment of the quality of that evidence.
- To support continual improvement of services, policies, programs and legislative reform that leads to improvement in education and child development outcomes.
- To transfer knowledge gained from research, evaluation and business intelligence into improvements in practice by educators and other staff working directly with children and young people.
- To ensure that research undertaken in DECD sites is ethical, safe and respects the autonomy and rights of children and young people, staff and volunteers as well as parents/guardians, staff and the community.
- To ensure that research and evaluation which is initiated, commissioned, partnered or sponsored by DECD is of high quality and will provide reliable evidence.
- To encourage research and evaluation activity by DECD staff and external parties

3. Scope
This policy applies to all staff in DECD and research organisations, student researchers, external researchers and evaluators who are undertaking or propose to undertake research or evaluation within DECD sites, services, policies and programs. The policy applies to research and evaluation related to services, programs, projects, policies, legislation, interventions, initiatives, and business processes undertaken or managed by DECD.

4. Policy detail
The Research and evaluation policy outlines four key elements that aim to:

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1 DECLARATION OF THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD Adopted by UN General Assembly Resolution 1386 (XIV) of 10 December 1959
• Build upon the use of research, evaluation and performance information to shape strategic decision making; and

• enhance the quality of research and evaluation across DECD.

The elements are described as follows:

4.1. Reporting on research and evaluation

The Senior Executive Group (SEG) will ensure that strategic decisions are informed by evidence.

Strategic and operational information will be provided to key decision-makers in DECD including the SEG, to support continual improvement of services, policies, programs and legislative reform that leads to improvement in child development and learning outcomes.

Major Australian and international research and evaluation reports and findings, including those commissioned or sponsored by DECD will be actively and systematically considered. Where appropriate, the Business Intelligence Unit will provide:

• an assessment (or review) of the quality of the evidence made;

• a summary of the findings and recommendations of the evidence; and

• a management response to those findings drafted in consultation with Senior Officers in each DECD Office, for consideration by key decision-makers in DECD. Where the management response to the recommendations requires a change in practice by teachers and other DECD staff working directly with children and young people, it will incorporate any necessary recommended changes to policy and a communications plan for operational staff, professional associations and those responsible for teacher and leader professional development.

The assessment and reporting of research and evaluation evidence should be in accordance with the Reporting on research and evaluation guidelines.

4.2. Conducting research with DECD staff, students and data

Researchers seeking to undertake research in or involving DECD sites will be encouraged and this process is described in detail within the Conducting research with DECD staff, students and data procedure and Initiating and sponsoring research and evaluation guidelines.

To encourage consistency and guide decision making around research and evaluation in DECD sites, all proposed research and evaluations will be centrally coordinated and managed.

Research will only be undertaken in DECD sites if:

• it does not conflict with DECD policies;

• will be conducted in a manner which is ethical, safe and respects the autonomy and rights of children and young people, staff and volunteers; and

• complies with the requirements set out in the Conducting research with DECD staff, students and data procedure and Initiating and sponsoring research and evaluation guidelines.
4.3 Initiating and sponsoring research and evaluation

Research and evaluation initiated or sponsored by DECD will be conducted in accordance with the standards for quality evaluation described in the *Initiating and sponsoring research and evaluation* guidelines.

4.4 Building research and evaluation capacity and collaboration

DECD will develop and promote the Research and evaluation policy across DECD and with partners for a shared commitment to conduct and apply research and evaluation that will inform education and child development policy, program and practice.

Partnerships between and among DECD staff, researchers, educators, parents, families, other education institutions, business and community organisations will be fostered to address priority research and evaluation needs and share approaches for connecting research and evaluation to policy and practice.

Individual and organisational capacity to access, use and conduct research will be developed to support DECD’s research and evaluation culture and internal capacity building. The Business Intelligence Unit will oversee research applications and significant evaluations as well as promoting a culture of evaluation and evidence-informed policy.

5. Roles and responsibilities

**Table 2 - Roles and responsibilities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Authority/responsibility for</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senior Executive Group (SEG)</td>
<td>Making time available to actively consider evidence from research, evaluation and business intelligence that informs key decisions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Intelligence Unit</td>
<td>Oversee DECD research applications and significant evaluations. Provide advice and report on significant research and evaluation evidence to key decision-makers within DECD. Provide support and quality assurance where feasible to DECD staff initiating or reporting on research and evaluation. Foster partnerships where possible between and among DECD staff, researchers, educators, parents, families, other education institutions, business and community organisations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Staff</td>
<td>Compliance with policy</td>
</tr>
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</table>
6. Monitoring, evaluation and review

This policy will be reviewed by the Business Intelligence Unit every three years after the publication date.

7. Definitions and abbreviations

Table 3 - Definitions and abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>Research is defined as the creation of new knowledge or the use of existing knowledge in new, creative and systematic ways so as to generate new concepts, methodologies and understandings”. (OECD, 2002) A studious inquiry or examination; especially : investigation or experimentation aimed at the discovery and interpretation of facts, revision of accepted theories or laws in the light of new facts, or practical application of such new or revised theories or laws.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>Evaluation is the systematic collection and analysis of information about the activities, characteristics, and outcomes of programs to make judgments about the program, guide improvement in program effectiveness and/or inform decisions about future programming. Programs include services, projects, policies, interventions, initiatives, business processes and activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key decision-makers</td>
<td>The Senior Executive Group (SEG) within DECD, the Chief Executive, the Minister for Education and Child Development and Cabinet.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. Supporting documents

Conducting Research and Evaluation in DECD sites procedure
Reporting on Research and Evaluation guidelines
Initiating and Sponsoring Research and Evaluation guidelines

9. References
