



RESEARCH POLICY

POLICY REGISTRATION NO:2025-04

RESEARCH POLICY 2025

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II) DEFINITION OF TERMS

Research	A systematic investigation into a subject or a problem, aimed at discovering or revising facts, theories, or applications. It includes research development, testing and evaluation designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge.
Observation Research	Non-invasive social research involving systematically watching and recording behaviours, events, or phenomena to gather data. It poses no risk and no interference with the mental or physical integrity of the human being.
Invasive research	Studies that involve physical intervention, manipulation, or intrusion into participant's bodies, environments, or personal spaces.
Autonomy	Respect for participant's independence and decision-making ability – a notion of human dignity.
Beneficence	A principle that refers to promoting the well-being and welfare of the research participants and society.
Non-maleficence	A principle of avoiding harm or minimising risks to research participants, their communities and society.
Justice	A principle of fairness, equity, and distributive justice in the conduct and application of research.
Social Work Research	Focuses on studying social issues, interventions, and policies to improve well-being, social justice, and human rights.
Population Based Research	A study of people or populations, examining the social determinants of health, behaviours,

	trends, and looking at the impact of environment on health.
Evaluation Research	A type of research that aims to assess the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of programs, policies, projects or interventions. It involves systematic data collection and analysis to determine whether a program or intervention is achieving its intended goals and objectives.
Population programs	Initiatives, policies and interventions aimed at managing and addressing population-related issues like growth, fertility rates, mortality rates, migration and aging.
Policy and Advocacy	Are crucial components of population programs, that shape the social, economic and political environment in which these programs operate. Advocacy promotes and support policies and programs that benefit the target population.
Feasibility Study	An analysis of the practicality and potential success of a proposed project, program or business venture, to evaluate the project's technical, financial, operational and social viability to determine whether it is worth pursuing.
Monitoring	A process of collecting, analysing and using information to track progress, identify problems and make informed decisions. It involves regular observations and recording the status of implementation of activities, outputs and outcomes, by use of indicators.
Social Audit	A systematic evaluation of an organisation's social performance, including its impact on society, employees, customers and the environment. It assesses an organisation's social responsibility and accountability and

	provides a framework for identifying areas for improvement.
Efficiency	Ability to achieve a desired outcome or goal with a minimum amount of waste, effort and resources. It is achieved by comparing programme output and input and determining whether alternative programmes would have been more cost effective.
Process	A systematic and structured approach used to conduct a study, investigation, or enquiry. It involves a series of steps, activities, or phases that are followed to achieve the research objectives.
Needs Assessment	A systematic process used to identify, analyse, and prioritise the needs of a particular group, organisation, or community. It involves gathering and analysing data to determine the gaps between the current situation and the desired situation.
Research and Development	Is a systematic and structured process of creating new knowledge, products, processes, and services to achieve business objectives, improve existing products or services, or solve real-world problems.
Basic Research	Pure research that aims to advance knowledge and understanding in a specific field or discipline. The results of basic research are not generally sold but are usually published in scientific journals or circulated to interested colleagues.
Strategic research	A type of research that is designed to inform and support strategic decision-making, policy development and organisational planning. It is carried out with the expectation that it shall

	produce a complex, high-priority issues and challenges.
Applied research	Is a type of research that involves the application of scientific knowledge and methods to address real-world issues and challenges with the aim of solving practical problems or improving existing products, processes or services.
Departmental Research Unit	A specialized directorate within the department that focuses on conducting research and promoting the use of data in planning, programming and policy formulation. The Population Unit provides social research support to the department.
Research Learning Network	The Research learning network is a collaboration of government research officials from all departments conducting research, to enhance the government research capacity through sharing of knowledge and learn from each other to achieve common goals or improve their collective performance.
Departmental Research Agenda	The Research Agenda of the Eastern Cape Department of Social Development is a detailed plan that outlines strategic goals, strategic objectives, priorities, research focus, timeline and resources needed to conduct a study.
Research Ethics	Refers to the moral principles guiding research, from its inception through to completion and publication of results and beyond.
Research Ethics Committee	A formal body established to review research proposals, to ensure that they meet ethical standards and protect the well-being of research participants.

III) ACRONYMS

ECDSD	Eastern Cape Department of Social Development
NDSD	National Department of Social Development
ECPPU/ PPU	Eastern Cape Population Unit/ Population Unit
NPU	National Population Unit
HoD	Head of Department
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development.
NDP	National Development Plan.
MTSF	Medium Term Strategic Framework.
SASQAF	South African Statistical Quality Assessment Framework.
DSTI	Department of Science, Technology and Innovation
HSRC	Human Science Research Council
MEC	Member of the Executive Council
ECSSEC	Eastern Cape Socio Economic Consultative Council.
IHL	Institutions of Higher Learning
REC	Research Ethics Committee
NHREC	National Health Research Ethics Committee
DMP	Data Management Plan

IV) LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORKS

1. Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996
2. Public Service Act, 103 of 1994
3. Public Finance Management Act, 1 of 1999, as amended
4. The Belmont Report Ethical Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of Human Subjects of Research, 1979
5. Protection of Personal Information Act, 4 of 2013
6. Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2 of 2000
7. National Archives and Records Service of South Africa, Act 43 of 1996
8. Statistics Act, 6 of 1999
9. Intellectual Property Rights from Publicly Financed Research and Development Act, 51 of 2008
10. Intellectual Property Laws Rationalisation Act, 107 of 1996
11. White Paper on Social Welfare, 1997
12. Children's Act, 38 of 2005, as amended
13. Children's Amendment Act, 17 of 2022
14. Child Justice Act, 2008, 75 of 2008, as amended
15. Child Justice Amendment Act, 28 of 2019
16. Older Persons Act 13 of 2006
17. Social Assistance Act, 13 of 2004
18. Non-Profit Organisations Act, 71 of 1997
19. Social Service Practitioners Act of 2018
20. National Health Act, 61 of 2003
21. Sexual Offences and Related matters Amendment Act, 32 of 2007
22. Cooperatives Act, 14 of 2005
23. National Development Plan: Vision 2030
25. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), 2015
26. White Paper on Families in South Africa, 2021 (revised)
27. White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2015
28. National Youth Policy, 2020-2030
29. National Integrated Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Policy, 2020
30. National Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Framework Strategy, 2015
31. National Youth and Adolescent Health Policy, 2017
32. South Africa's National Strategic Plan for HIV, TB and STIs, 2023-2028
33. White Paper on Population Policy for South Africa, 1998
34. South African Statistical Quality Assessment Framework (SASQAF), 2010
35. White Paper for Science, Technology and Innovation, 2019
36. White Paper for Post-School Education and Training, 2013

1. PREAMBLE

The development of the Eastern Cape department of Social Development research policy is underpinned by Population Policy, which emphasizes the enhancement quality of people's life through reliable and updated information on population and human development.

In recognizing the critical role of fostering equitable and inclusive society, the department is committed to advance developmental social services and empower vulnerable communities.

The research policy intends to establish a robust research framework to inform evidence-based decision-making, enhance service delivery, and contribute to the overall well-being of people. This policy shall serve as a guide for department and institutions interested to conduct research with the department to carry out research.

The department research priority seeks to understand complex social issues, exploring the root causes of social challenges such as poverty, inequality, disengagement and identify innovative solutions. Improve service delivery through evaluation of the effectiveness of existing programs, interventions, identify areas for improvement and support efficient resource allocation. The department shall empower communities, by fostering community-based research initiatives that empower local people to address their own challenges and participate in decision-making processes.

The department shall develop the research capacity for ECDSD staff and external partners to ensure production of high-quality research. Rigorous research findings shall be utilised to inform development and implementation of effective social policies that address specific needs. The department shall aim to create a culture of evidence-based decision-making that shall lead improved outcomes for the people.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to strengthen the department's capacity to conduct, utilize, and disseminate high-quality research to inform evidence-based policy development, decision-making, improve service delivery.

3. OBJECTIVES

- 3.1.1. To enhance research knowledge within the department.
- 3.1.2. To establish a dedicated departmental research unit.
- 3.1.3. To facilitate collaborations within the department, with Institutions of Higher Learning, Research Institutes and provincial government research units.
- 3.1.4. To promote the use of research evidence- based in decision-making.
- 3.1.5. To utilize research findings for policy development and programs through disseminations.
- 3.1.6. To promote a culture of evidence-based practice.

4. SCOPE OF APPLICABILITY

This policy is applicable to departmental employees involved in research activities and external partners including Institutions of Higher Learning, research institutes, government departments and NGOs in collaboration with the department.

5. PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

The guiding principle for the departmental research shall be carried out with:

- a) **Excellence:** Striving for the highest standards of research quality, integrity, and innovation.
- b) **Objectivity:** The implementation of this policy shall be objective and in line with the strategic objectives of the department
- c) **Relevance:** Focusing on research that addresses the pressing social challenges faced by the Province.
- d) **Accountability:** Upholding ethical standards and ensuring transparency in research processes.
- e) **Collaboration:** Fostering partnerships with researchers, policymakers, practitioners, and communities.
- f) **Value for money:** Ensuring that there is efficient resource allocation for research, investment to the continuous empowerment of departmental researchers, knowledge transfer.

6. POLICY PROVISIONS

6.1. Ethics

6.1.1 Ethics in Research

- a. The International ethical guidelines for research involve human research subjects, research conducted needs ethical justification and science validity of research involve people.
- b. The guidelines yield the position that research involving human subjects shall not violate any universally applicable ethical standards, acknowledge superficial aspects, the application of ethical principles, in relation to individual autonomy and informed consent, shall take account of cultural values.

6.1.2 Ethics Committees

- a. The research ethics committee is an independent, multidisciplinary body formally and intentionally constituted to be a multi-faceted body where diverse expertise, independence, and a shared commitment to protecting the rights and welfare of research participants are paramount.
- b. For this function department of Social Development is currently depends heavily on ethics committees from provincial universities and research organizations like the Human sciences research council. This result of stringent qualification requirements for research ethics committee members as per National health research ethics committee guidelines and best practices. This policy highlights external dependency, gap within DSD's internal capacity for ethical oversight.
- c. The provincial research forum coordinated by the Office of the Premier in which DSD affiliates, are initiating a process of establishing more streamlined ethics committee for government research. This move aims to speed up ethical clearances for departmental research, ensuring swiftly inform policy and service delivery.

6.2. Commissioned Research

- a. The department shall conduct research internally, commission research to be used for evidence-based planning and interventions.
- b. Research commissioned and conducted by the department shall adhere to terms and conditions of intellectual property rights from the Publicly financed research and development.

6.3. Research Ethics

6.3.1. Management of Research Data and Records

- a. This section refers to the information collected from the human subjects and the available data. The available data collected data from previous years and ready for secondary analysis.
- b. Data management is an administration process, which the data acquired, stored, protected, processed and which its accessibility, reliability and timeliness is ensured to satisfy the needs of data users.
- c. There are two types of data management software, data bases and data management paper.
- d. The department has a sensitive data, including personal information of research participants, which shall be protected.
- e. The research involving vulnerable groups, such as women, youth, children and persons with disability requires a detailed plan for data management and storage.
- f. This plan shall outline how data shall be handled, coded, and analysed, how to deal with missing data. For qualitative research, the specific methods of data analysis shall be clearly described.
- g. Questionnaires with the information of vulnerable groups, the department collects data from, shall be stored in a safe and locked place for the protection of the Human research subjects.
- h. The names of the respondents participated shall be withdrawn or deleted from the questionnaires and the respondents be identified anonymous. Failure on that, shall be regarded as the violation of ethics in research.
- i. Research conducted by the department shall be stored and archived in a safe place to protect and secure the information on the human research subjects.

- j. The department shall establish a centralised place used to store data collected from human research subjects. The departmental research unit shall identify the place and be responsible to secure keeping of data.

6.3.2. Data Storage and Maintenance

The department is committed to secure, ethical, and long-term management of research data, in full compliance with the Protection of Personal Information Act 4 of 2013 (POPIA) and other relevant legislation. Researchers are responsible for adhering to the following standards:

a) **Secure Storage of Primary and Secondary Data:** Researchers shall ensure the safe, confidential, and integrity-protected storage of data on which research is based, including primary and secondary datasets. This includes all forms of data, whether physical (e.g. hard copies of consent forms, questionnaires) or electronic in lockable cupboards and offices and strong passwords respectively.

b) **Data Backup and Recovery:** Electronic datasets, particularly primary data, shall be regularly backed up to secure, off-site, or cloud-based storage solutions to prevent data loss due to system failures, human error, or unforeseen events.

c) **Centralized Data Repository and Access Control:** The departmental research unit shall be responsible for the primary storage and maintenance of research datasets, especially those containing personal or sensitive information. This central repository shall ensure the long-term safety, integrity, and discoverability of data. Access to data shall be strictly controlled and granted only to authorized personnel on a 'need-to-know' basis, subject to appropriate confidentiality agreements and POPIA compliance. Where possible, identifiable data shall be separated from non-identifiable data, or de-identified/anonymized.

d) **Data Retention Periods:** Raw data including identifiable personal information, data containing necessary personal information shall be retained. Upon expiry of the retention period, personal information shall be securely destroyed or de-identified. Research-Based Publication Data (anonymized/de-identified): The underlying anonymized or de-identified data that supports published research findings shall be retained within the department for a minimum period of five (5) years and a maximum of ten (10) years after the date of publication. This period allows for verification of findings, subsequent analyses, and adherence to academic integrity standards. For

data that holds significant historical or public value, arrangements for permanent archiving with the archives and records service shall be explored.

e) **Data management plans:** For research projects, particularly that involve human participants or sensitive data, researchers shall develop a comprehensive data management plan. The DMP shall outline procedures for data collection, storage, security, access, sharing (where permissible), and long-term preservation or destruction, in alignment with this policy and POPIA requirements.

f) **Technological Safeguards:** The department shall implement appropriate technical and organisational measures to ensure the security of electronic data, including encryption, access logs, firewalls, and regular security audits, in consultation with the department's IT unit.

6.3.3. Confidentiality of Data

- a. Researchers shall keep data sets confidential before publication. After publication, when the research is in the public domain, the data shall, upon request, be available to other researchers through the principal researcher.
- b. The available data shall not override the right to confidentiality and privacy of individuals.

6.3.4. Plagiarism

Plagiarism is defined as the unauthorized, uncredited, and unacknowledged use of ideas, words, intellectual property, or work of another, whether published or unpublished. This includes the following:

- a. Direct word-for-word reproduction of text without proper citation and quotation marks.
- b. Paraphrasing, summarising, or otherwise presenting another's ideas or work as one's own without full and accurate attribution.
- c. Self-plagiarism, which involves reusing substantial portions of one's own previously published or submitted work without appropriate acknowledgment.
- d. Mosaic plagiarism, where phrases or ideas from a source are interspersed with one's own words without proper citation.

The Department of Social Development is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic and research integrity. Research outputs are expected to be original and to rigorously adhere to proper citation and referencing conventions. Plagiarism constitutes a serious breach of research ethics and, where direct reproduction is involved, shall represent an infringement of copyright.

- a. The department shall have a dedicated plagiarism detection software, to employ a multi-pronged approach to detect and prevent plagiarism, emphasize rigorous review and a culture of integrity: This is a rigorous peer review where research proposals, reports, and publications undergo thorough internal (i.e. the population unit and the departmental research committees) and, where appropriate, external peer review by experts. Reviewers shall be specifically tasked with scrutinizing submissions for originality, proper citation, and adherence to academic integrity standards.
- b. Plagiarism is a research misconduct, and allegations of research misconduct shall be taken seriously and investigated accordance with the department's established disciplinary procedures. Identified cases of research misconduct shall result in disciplinary action commensurate with the severity of the offense, which shall include, public retraction of findings, prohibition from future research, restraining, suspension from conducting research, and shall have legal implications.

6.3.5. Quality Assurance

The departmental research committee shall draft a protocol to describe quality control and quality assurance system for conduct of studies, monitoring mechanisms and data management.

6.4. Use and payment of fieldworkers

- a) When the research has been commissioned, the appointed researcher, shall employ their own field workers. It is advisable for researchers to give preference to the local matriculants and unemployed graduates. where research is done in the districts. The departmental database shall be used to check the names of the registered fieldworkers.
- b) In instances where the department conducts the research internally and needs their own fieldworkers, they shall be recruited by the department and shall be paid according to the standard questionnaire rates. When the research is conducted at

the district level, the district where the research shall take place shall help in the recruitment of fieldworkers. Preference shall be given to the fieldworkers who have done research for the department.

6.5. Partnerships with Institutions of Higher Learning

- a) The research unit shall have partnerships with the Institutions of Higher Learning in the province and outside the province, when necessary. This is done to ensure research knowledge sharing between government and bodies of knowledge.
- b) In cases where the department has commissioned research to the Institutions of Higher Learning:
 - I. Post graduate students from the level of honours and master's shall be used.
 - II. The lecturers at a PhD level and principal researcher shall assume a leading role in the contract between the two Institutions and play the role of an overseer of the project.
 - III. The department shall enter a research contract with the institution.
 - IV. Institutions of higher learning in the province shall register and commissioned by the department as per the requirements of the project.
 - V. Commissioning of external research shall strictly adhere to the departmental internal policies and procedures, including applicable preferential procurement regulations as gazetted under national legislation (e.g., PPPFA) aimed at fostering local economic development and capacity building.

6.5.1 Submission and Presentation of Student Research

In cases where students from the institutions of higher learning requested permission to conduct research with the department, they shall follow the department research request process:

- I. They shall be required to request permission from the Head of department, in writing.
- II. The departmental research unit is responsible for providing guidance and the processing of the research request for the HoDs approval.
- III. Specific documents shall be required for the approval of the request, letter of request, approved research proposal, research ethics certificate with a number.
- IV. When permission has been granted, the research unit shall review the proposals, dissertations of the students for the purpose of population research and social work research.

The following shall be expected from the students:

- I. The students shall effect no changes with respect to proposal/ method of work after having research application approved by the department. Changes on students shall be submitted to the department for approval.
- II. The students shall not portray the department in a false light and to embarrass the department.
- III. Draft copy of student's final paper, report, dissertation and thesis shall be submitted to the department for scrutiny and comments and shall be granted a minimum of thirty (30) days to study the draft copy.
- IV. The students shall abide by any reasonable additional conditions the department shall impose regarding the use of research report.
- V. Upon completion of their research, students who have conducted studies in collaboration with or under the auspices of the department shall submit a final research report to the department. To facilitate knowledge dissemination and contribute to the department's evidence base, the student shall be expected to present their research findings to departmental officials or relevant stakeholders as and when deemed necessary by the department.
- VI. The above-mentioned requirements shall remain in effect after the contract expired and research report handed over to the research unit.

6.5.2 Submission and Presentation of Research by Department-Sponsored Students

In addition the expectations of the department to students who conduct research with the department, departmental officials studying at Institutions of Higher Learning financed by department have additional requirement that:

- I. Upon completion of academic research, to submit a final research report to the department. In recognition of the department's investment and to ensure the findings contribute directly to its knowledge base and inform policy and practice, students shall further be expected to formally present research findings to departmental officials and relevant stakeholders, and when required by the department.
- II. The departmental bursary holders shall consider the departmental research needs proposed by research committee when choosing fields of study.

- III. The departmental bursary scheme shall consider funding for officials intending to pursue on master's and PhD levels, when fields of study related to departmental functions.

6.6. Requirements for Observance

- a. To uphold the highest standards of research integrity, contracts of affiliation and memoranda of understanding between the department and other government departments, universities, or independent research institutes shall explicitly require parties to be involved in collaborative research, adhere to ethical and conduct standards that are equivalent to, or align with, the department's research ethics and integrity policy.
- b. The shared commitment shall ensure rigorous adherence to established formal procedures and regulations governing research.
- c. The overarching principle guiding researchers engaged in departmental projects is the expectation that shall act with utmost integrity, prioritizing the public interest and the objectives of the department, and conducting research affairs with scrupulous diligence and accountability."

6.7 Publication of research

6.7.1 General

- a. The department promotes the widest dissemination of research results to relevant departments and community stakeholders, through disseminations in various platforms. Ensure research conducted is translated into programmes, interventions and policies.
- b. In cases of government entities, Statistics South Africa, the department utilise data on census data, the community survey, mid-year population estimates, household surveys and labour force survey, to inform the socio-economic demographic profiles used to guide planning, interventions and policies.
- c. There is an interdepartmental research forum constituted by relevant provincial government departments and institutions of higher learning where research challenges and findings are discussed.
- d. The department utilises the platform of integrated learning network and the research forum at National to present findings of the conducted research.

6.7.2. Peer Review

- a. Peer review is a cornerstone of rigorous and credible research. It's a process where scholarly work, research, or ideas are subjected to the scrutiny of experts in the same field before being accepted for publication, funding, or internal use.
- b. To ensure the scientific soundness, ethical integrity, and relevance of research undertaken or commissioned by department, a robust peer review process shall be implemented. This process relies on the expertise of internal departmental structures and external bodies.
- c. The internal peer review shall be done through the established departmental research unit and departmental research committee, and these shall be strengthened and empowered continuously, through research-based trainings. At this stage the focus shall be mainly on practical relevance and operational viability within the department context.
- d. For the external peer review the department shall commission the expertise of external peer reviewers or bodies.
- e. These bodies shall deal with specific research projects, particularly those of significant scope, high sensitivity, or intended for public dissemination.
- f. The function of external peer reviewers is to provide an impartial and objective assessment of the department's research, free from internal biases, by leveraging specialized academic and practitioner expertise from outside the department.
- g. This rigorous scrutiny evaluates the scientific merit, methodology, ethical considerations, originality, and robustness of research conclusions, thereby enhancing the credibility and legitimacy of findings for all stakeholders and significantly contributing to the quality, relevance, and impact of the research.

6.7.3. Redundant Publication

- a. The publication or re-submission of the same, or substantially the same, research article or report in multiple venues without full disclosure and justified consent from relevant parties, is strictly prohibited.
- b. Researchers within the department shall strategically consider effective means to disseminate research findings, prioritizing a clear communication of results and policy implications over merely maximizing publication count.

- c. The release of research findings to the media or general public, including social media platforms or press conferences, shall only occur after the research has undergone rigorous peer review and has been formally accepted or published in a reputable journal or departmental report.
- d. Deviation from this standard requires explicit approval from the department's research committee or designated authority, to ensure public communications of research findings are accurate, validated, and contextualized appropriately.

6.7.4. Research Misconduct

- a. Research misconduct refers to the intentional or reckless behavior that deviates from accepted standards of conducting research that shall compromise the reliability, validity and integrity of the research findings.
- b. This includes fabrication, falsification and plagiarism
- c. Allegations of research misconduct shall be taken seriously and investigated accordance with the department's established disciplinary procedures.
- d. Cases of research misconduct shall result in disciplinary action commensurate with the severity of the offense, which shall include, public retraction of findings, prohibition from future research, restraining and suspension from conducting research, and shall have legal implications.

6.7.5 Conflict of Interest and Conflict of Commitment

- a. The department encourages its members to interact with the wider community, by undertaking research, consulting, and engaging in other activities, which shall benefit the department, the public, or the individual conducting research.
- b. The activities shall be consistent with principles of openness, trust, and free enquiry.

6.7.6 Conflict of Interest

- a. A conflict of interest arises when a government official, involved in any aspect of the department's research activities, has a personal interest or external interest, perceived to influence, objectivity, impartiality, or judgment in carrying out official duties.
- b. Such conflicts can be real, potential, or perceived, and exist when an official has an opportunity to advance interests that are at odds with the legitimate interests of the department and the public it serves.

- c. These interests shall include financial gains, professional advancement, personal relationships, family connections, or affiliations with external organizations (e.g., academic institutions, NGOs, private companies, research funding bodies).
- d. Officials are responsible for identifying and disclosing any such conflicts promptly to ensure research decisions and processes remain ethical, transparent, and beyond reproach.
- e. Breach on this policy shall be dealt with according to the Public Service Regulations (PSR), 2016, in line with Public Service Act and shall be processed through the departmental risk management processes.

7. APPROVING AUTHORITY

The Head of department shall submit recommendations for approval of research policy to the Member of the Executive Authority.

9. ADMINISTRATION OF THE POLICY

The director for the departmental research unit shall be responsible for the administration of this policy to ensure adherence to the provisions of the policy.

10. ACCOUNTABILITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

10.1. Departmental Research Unit

- a. The departmental research unit shall serve as the operational and driving force behind the department research endeavours.
- b. Its primary functions shall include initiating and coordinating research activities, providing technical support and guidance on methodology and ethical standards, and conducting initial reviews of research proposals and reports to ensure alignment with departmental objectives and policies.
- c. The research unit shall advise Head of Department and management on emerging population, demographic and research issues through submission of reports. Brief the Head of Department on research findings and possible gaps identified through research to promote evidence-based service delivery.

- d. The Unit shall play a crucial role in the capacity building of the departmental and district research committees by identifying training needs, developing or sourcing relevant learning opportunities, and facilitating the continuous professional development of its members.
- e. Capacity building of the departmental research committee on ethics, informed consent process, community engagement, POPIA, vulnerable groups, research integrity and misconduct shall enhance their meaningful participation and role.

10.2. Risk Management Unit

- a. The departmental research policy shall integrate with risk management unit as a critical partner across the entire research lifecycle.
- b. This unit shall be responsible for proactively identifying, assessing, mitigating, monitoring, and reporting on potential risks associated with research activities.
- c. These risks span ethical considerations (e.g., participant privacy and well-being), data security, financial management, reputational impacts, and compliance with relevant legislation and departmental policies.
- d. By collaborating closely with the departmental research unit and research committee, the risk management unit shall provide expert guidance on risk treatment, contribute to the development of robust controls, and ensure research endeavours align with the department's broader risk management framework.
- e. This systematic approach shall ensure department research is not impactful and ethically sound but conducted with accountability and a proactive management of potential challenges.

10.3. Departmental Research Committee

- a. The department shall promote the concept of integration, collaborate internally and work in an integrated manner.
- b. There shall be a departmental research committee consist of interested and qualifying officials on research processes, able to provide complete and adequate review of the research proposals submitted, contribute to research needs of the department.
- c. The committee shall review and interpret departmental documents, research proposals and academic journals to ensure rigorous scrutiny and informed decision-making.

- d. The research committee shall consist of departmental programmes to represent various sub-programmes in the committee.
- e. A collaborative approach in terms of planning and the implementation of the research projects, impact assessments and evidence-based approaches.
- f. The existence of the committee shall work closely with planning unit of the department to ensure departmental planning is informed by current statistics of the province and informed by research findings.
- g. The committee shall adhere to the ethical considerations.

10.4. District Research Committee

- a. The department shall establish a structured district research committee to focus on research needs of the districts and respond to requests related to research.
- b. The district research committee shall be a subcommittee of the departmental research committee. This shall be done with the guidance of the provincial research unit.
- c. The district research committee shall work closely with other government departments conducting research at the district level to promote integration.

10.5. Integrated Research Learning Networks

The research collaboration involves institutions to achieve common research goals, consist of researchers in the department, government departments and institutions of research capacity. The parties involved shall work in an integrated manner and focus on the following issues that affect research:

- i. **Research Ethics**
- ii. **Intellectual Property Act**
- iii. **Issues of sharing research analysis software, SPSS licence**
- iv. **Collaborative research capacity in the province.**
- v. **Sharing research findings**
- vi. **Knowledge and data management**

The department shall promote networking and exchange of expertise between researchers as part of increasing both quality and quantity of output. The department shall recognise a great value for researchers in collaborating with fellow researchers, both from other government departments, national, international body of academics and institutions of higher learning from the province, nationally and internationally. Sufficient common interest between the departments, other departments and institutions of higher learning in

the province, country, and formal inter-institutional ties shall be established to facilitate collaboration between individuals from two institutions to the benefit of both institutions.

10.6. Employees

Employees using research information and conducting departmental research shall familiarise with the content of this policy.

10.7. Departmental Management

- a. The departmental directors shall identify research needs of the units and communicate in writing with Population unit.
- b. The management shall ensure units adhere to the guidelines provided in this policy.
- c. The Programmes shall be responsible to ensure representation of their programmes through recommendation of officials to participate in the departmental research Committee.

10.8. Head of Department

- a. The disagreements arising from the complaints handling procedure shall be escalated to the Head of Department for mediation and decision-making.
- b. The HoD shall authorize investigation on service delivery related complaints upon recommendation from departmental research unit and shall allocate a slot to discuss emerging research issues affecting the department, new data and the monitoring research reports.
- c. The Head of Department shall be responsible for appointment of officials to serve in the departmental research committee and be responsible for gatekeeping on interested researchers to conduct research with the department.

10.9. Member of the Executive Council

- a. The Member of the Executive Council shall be responsible for adjudicating discrepancy arising from administrative action in the implementation of this policy.
- b. Provide leadership to departmental outreach campaigns aimed at engaging the public on service delivery issues identified by the research findings.

10.10. Office of the Premier

- a. The office of the Premier shall be responsible for setting guidelines of the provincial research coordination framework.
- b. Provincial research priority shall be set by the office of the Premier and adhered to this policy.

11. EFFECTIVE DATE OF THE POLICY

This policy shall be effective from the date of its approval.

12. MONITORING MECHANISMS


The research unit together with departmental planning unit shall conduct regular progress reviews on research projects, these shall be conducted quarterly through reports submitted to HoD and to the Office of the Premier. The departmental research unit shall ensure the required legislative reports of the department, province are prepared and submitted.

13. REVIEW OF THE POLICY

This policy shall be reviewed after three years of its effective date of approval or changes on legislation.

14. POLICY RECOMMENDATION AND APPROVAL

Recommended/ Not recommended




Head of Department

Dept. of Social Development



Date

Approved/Not Approved



Member of the Executive Council

Dept. of Social Development



Date