دائـــرة رأس الخيمـــة للمعرفـــة
RAS AL KHAIMAH
DEPARTMENT OF KNOWLEDGE

Private School Responsibility for External Research in Ras Al Khaimah Private Schools

Ras Al Khaimah Department of Knowledge

1. Introduction

This document sets out the Ras Al Khaimah Department of Knowledge's (RAK DOK) position on requests from external researchers to conduct research in private schools within Ras Al Khaimah. It also sets out the responsibilities of each school when it receives such a request. Each private school is solely responsible for deciding whether external research takes place in its school and for ensuring the research protects its students, staff, data, and reputation.

RAK DOK recognises the value of high-quality educational research in enhancing the private education sector. However, RAK DOK and its schools have a primary responsibility to safeguard students' learning and well-being. Therefore, any external research must not disrupt or compromise students' educational experience.

RAK DOK already conducts substantial research to inform policy planning and design the programmes and resources that support the private education system. Private schools already give their time and data to this work. RAK DOK therefore does not want to add to the number of surveys and requests schools receive from external researchers. Schools must be careful and selective and may decline any request.

RAK DOK does not review or approve applications from external researchers to conduct research in Ras Al Khaimah private schools. The only exception is a request from a Government entity for a clear strategic purpose. Even then, RAK DOK's involvement will be limited to what is needed for that purpose and will then evaluate the best approach for how RAK DOK may implement.

No approval, endorsement or permission from RAK DOK should be assumed by any external researcher or school. Of course, if the research request is generated from RAK DOK or an approved Government entity, then RAK DOK will make it clear in the circulation to all private schools.

The following guidelines set out what schools must consider before approving any external research, and what external researchers can expect.

2. Responsibilities and Process

2.1 Initial Contact with Schools

- RAK DOK will refer all external researchers who approach RAK DOK with a request to conduct research to the RAK DOK website. This public website provides contact details for RAK private schools if researchers wish to contact a school. Importantly, a private school that decides to consider a request should ask the researcher to send a written proposal to the school that sets out:
    - **Research topic and objectives:** Clearly define the research question, purpose, and intended outcomes.
    - **Methodology:** Describe the research methods (e.g., surveys, interviews, focus groups).
    - **University approvals:** Copy of the University's approval from the relevant University committee that reviews research proposals.
    - **Participants:** Describe the ages/grades of any students and/or the profile of any staff that you would like to engage.
    - **Data collection tools:** Specify the instruments used for data collection (e.g., questionnaires, interview protocols). Attach a copy of these instruments.
    - **Data analysis plan:** Explain who and how the collected data will be analysed.
    - **Ethical considerations:** Address potential ethical concerns and outline how they will be mitigated (e.g., informed consent, participant anonymity).
    - **Timeline:** Indicate the proposed timeframe for the research project.
    - **Dissemination plan:** Describe how the research findings will be disseminated (e.g., publications, presentations).

2.2 School Review and Approval

- The school is solely responsible for reviewing the proposal and deciding whether to approve it. The school must be satisfied that:
  - The research is of clear benefit to the school and its students and is worth the time it will take.
  - The research adheres to ethical research guidelines and respects the culture and values of the UAE.
  - Student privacy and data security are protected.
- The school may ask for changes or more information before it decides and may decline any request.

2.3 No RAK DOK Facilitation

- RAK DOK **will not facilitate communication** between external researchers and schools, and will not recommend or identify schools for research, except under the Government exception set out in the Introduction.
- A school must inform RAK DOK immediately (info@dok.rak.ae) if any external researcher says or suggests that RAK DOK has given permission, approval or support for their research. RAK DOK will then follow up with the researcher and may then inform the school to immediately cease engagement with the researcher.

2.4 Pre-Approval Requirements

Before approving any research, the school must ensure that:

- All necessary approvals are in place from the school's leadership and/or Board of Governors.
- Data collection activities are scheduled at convenient times for the school and participants.
- Research activities do not disrupt the educational environment.
- Every person who will enter the school has all the necessary administrative approvals and security clearances, and the school has checked these before allowing access.

2.5 Research Involving Students

- Written permission is obtained from parents/guardians before any student takes part, and they are told clearly what the research is for and how the data will be used.
- The school reviews every question, survey item, interview prompt and activity beforehand, and removes or changes anything that is not age-appropriate, is intrusive, or does not respect the culture and values of the UAE.
- Students can decline or stop taking part at any time without any consequence.
- No personal or identifiable student information is given to the researcher without the school's written agreement and in line with UAE data protection requirements.

2.6 Responsibility and Risk to the School

- RAK DOK does not approve, and is not responsible for, any research that a school chooses to allow. The school is solely responsible for its decision and for what follows from it.
- RAK DOK will not be responsible if research approved by a school lead to findings or opinions about the school being published externally, including negative material, or if this may harm the school's reputation.
- Each school must undertake a risk assessment as part of any approach from an external researcher, as will be the case with any external entity wishing to provide services to the school.
- Before approving any research, the school should agree in writing with the researcher how the school will be named or described in any publication, and whether the school will see the findings before they are published.

2.7 Data Collection and Management

- Data collection must comply with the proposal approved by the school and relevant ethical guidelines.
- Researchers are responsible for:

- Obtaining informed consent from participants (parents and students as appropriate).
- Anonymising and securing all collected data.
- Limiting data collection to what is strictly necessary for the research.

2.8 Data Sharing and Reporting

- Sharing of data with third parties is strictly prohibited without explicit written consent from the school and relevant stakeholders.
- Researchers should share their findings with the participating school before any publication.
- RAK DOK does not review or approve research publications and is not responsible for their content.

3. Parameters

- Research proposals must be of clear benefit to the school and consistent with the school's own policies and the laws and values of the UAE.
- Data collection methods must be age-appropriate and respectful of participants.
- Researchers must obtain informed consent from all participants involved in the research.
- All collected data must be anonymised and stored securely as per UAE regulations.

4. Data Protection and Sharing

- Schools are responsible for protecting the privacy and confidentiality of their students' data, and for deciding what data, if any, is shared with external researchers.
- Researchers are responsible for adhering to all applicable data protection laws and regulations.
- Data sharing with third parties requires explicit written consent from the school and relevant stakeholders. Do not share any RAK DOK data or

information that is not publicly available with a researcher without RAK DOK's written approval.

5. Compliance

Effective Date: This policy takes effect from 2 November 2026.

Enforcement and Penalties: Schools that do not adhere to this policy will be subject to accountability measures as stipulated by RAK DOK, including possible penalties or other corrective actions. Non-compliance may result in intervention by RAK DOK as per UAE federal regulations. This includes allowing research or access to the school without the required approvals.

Compliance Audits: RAK DOK reserves the right to conduct periodic compliance inspections to ensure schools comply with this approved policy. The school administration must promptly resolve any discrepancies found during these audits to avoid further action. Schools must keep a written record of every external research request, the decision made, and the approvals obtained.

6. Feedback and Improvement

Annual Review: RAK DOK will conduct a yearly review of this policy to incorporate feedback, address emerging needs, and ensure it aligns with the latest educational standards and regulatory requirements.

Feedback Mechanisms: School administrators are encouraged to submit feedback on this policy to RAK DOK to support continuous improvement based on schools' practical experiences.

7. Contact Information

For any questions related to this policy, please contact: info@dok.rak.ae. External researchers should not use this address to request research approval or school details. They will be referred to the Heart of RAK website.



8. Conclusion

This policy confirms that each private school is solely responsible for deciding whether external research takes place in its school and for ensuring that all approvals, consents, and safeguards are in place. RAK DOK does not approve external research or share school details with researchers, other than in limited cases requested by a Government entity for a strategic purpose. RAK DOK is not responsible for the outcomes of research that schools approve. Researchers are expected to uphold the principles of privacy, integrity, and data security.

9. Revision History

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Note:

This policy is issued and controlled by Ras Al Khaimah Department of Knowledge (RAK DOK), the "Authority." It is understood that this policy is to be treated as confidential and the same should not be copied. Any disclosure in whole or in part for any purpose is considered not authorised unless prior written permission is obtained from the Authority.