Appendix 2: Researcher Checklist for Preparing an Application

This checklist is a quick-reference guide for researchers to use when preparing an application to conduct research in Melbourne Catholic schools. It may also be used by MACS in the review process to quickly point applicants to an issue that needs to be addressed. **Please note, this checklist does NOT need to be submitted with the application.**

Item	Requirements	Yes/No
Documentation: 1. Principal letter	a. I understand principal permission must be sought first	
	b. The introductory principal letter outlines: o Purpose of research o Overall timeline o Who participants will be o What participants will do o Time demand for each activity o School resources required o Process for principal to provide consent	
	c. Copies of research instruments, plain language statements, consent forms and other participant information will also be provided to the principal	
2. Plain language statement (PLS)	a. I have PLSs for each participant type	
	b. Each PLS outlines: o Purpose of the research o What participants will be asked to do o Time demand of each activity o How data and identity will be protected o Process for withdrawing participation and/or data o How to access follow-up support (if applicable)	
	c. The PLS for students is in age-appropriate language	
3. Consent forms	a. I have consent forms for each participant type	
	b. The consent forms clearly list each component of the research	
	c. Participants have a yes/no option for sensitive or non-essential components of the research (e.g. height/weight measurement, being photographed or video-recorded, using participant data in future research)	
4. Instruments	a. I have provided all instruments to MACS for review	
	b. I understand final versions are strongly preferred to prevent delay in approval	
	c. If final versions are not possible at the time of submission, I will provide indicative drafts with my application	
5. Copy of ethics approval	a. I have provided a copy of my institution's ethics committee approval	
	b. If ethics committee approval is not yet granted, I will indicate the expected date and provide a copy once received, as well as any amendments	
6. Proof-read	a. I have proof-read and edited all documentation before submission	
	b. If I am a student researcher, I understand my supervisor must have approved the documentation before submitting to MACS	
7. Translated (if applicable)	a. If participating schools have research participants that are not proficient in English, I understand relevant documentation should be translated	
8. Benefit	a. I have clearly outlined the potential value of the research to participants, schools, MACS and/or the broader education community	

	b.	I have considered what benefits I can offer to participating schools to make their involvement in the research more worthwhile (e.g. professional learning for staff, individualised school report, student workshop)	
	c.	I understand I must provide a summary of the research findings to MACS and participating schools at the conclusion of the study	
9. Burden/demand	a.	I have considered and minimised (where possible) the demand on school and participants' time and resources	
	b.	I have clearly communicated to schools and participants what they are required to do and a realistic time demand for each activity	
10. Incentives	a.	I understand incentives should not be used as a recruitment strategy, but as compensation if a school or participant contributes significant effort	
	b.	If I am offering an incentive/compensation, I understand it must be proportional to the effort and appropriate to school practices and customs	
11. Randomised Controlled Trial	a.	If I am proposing an RCT in the research design I have considered the demand and costs to the control group/s and have offered appropriate compensation	
12. Sensitivities	a.	If I am conducting research that is deemed sensitive, I have identified and minimised any potential risks, and have a process for managing unexpected situations	
	b.	I have built into my research a process for follow up support and referral, should a participant need further advice and support	
13. Duty of care	a.	I understand I must present a valid Australian Working with Children Check to the school principal before conducting research within school grounds	
	b.	I understand I must report to the school principal the identity of a student who may be at risk of harm	
14. School & sector comparisons	a.	I will not report on research findings that compare schools or sectors, and may be interpreted as some schools or sectors being 'better' or 'worse'	
15. Consent	a.	Informed and active consent will be sought from each participant type	
	b.	If in exceptional circumstances, passive parental consent is approved, I understand I must seek principal permission for this process, make sure communications clearly state it is opt-out consent, and work with the school to ensure multiple communications are used and adequate time given for parents to respond	
16. Confidentiality and privacy	a.	I understand I must comply with the Commonwealth Privacy Act 1988	
	b.	I will protect the privacy, confidentiality and where possible anonymity of participants, in the collection, analysis and storage of data	
	c.	If anonymity cannot be guaranteed, I will inform participants of this and assure confidentiality	
17. Ethics committee approval	a.	I understand MACS approval is conditional on my institution's ethics committee approval, and even though I can apply simultaneously the documentation I provide to MACS must include ethics committee feedback	
	b.	If I believe formal ethics committee approval is not required, I must explain why and how the research will still be conducted ethically	