



# Data in Action: The Research Framework at EQAO

**#DataInAction 2.0**

## Introduction

Educational research has a long, yet short, history.

For many decades, research has focused on student achievement, learning environments, pedagogical approaches and classroom relationships—all of which have enriched our understanding of student learning.

More recently, there have been advances in educational tools and technology as well as in knowledge of brain development and social-contextual factors associated with learning. These advances have resulted in new areas of focus for understanding and promoting positive student outcomes.

EQAO recognizes the need for a continued focus on research to examine effective, high-quality educational experiences that impact learning contexts, student achievement and well-being at the individual, classroom, school and system levels.

This document outlines the framework EQAO uses to conduct research, including the priorities to be identified, collaborations to be fostered and approaches to be implemented.

## Priorities

EQAO prioritizes and undertakes research that is aligned with its mandate, values, strategic plan<sup>1</sup> and the objects under the *Education Quality and Accountability Office Act, 1996*<sup>2</sup>.

EQAO's research program is designed to achieve three main objectives:

1. To deeply understand mathematics achievement
2. To understand factors that influence student learning and well-being
3. To increase the likelihood of student success in all its forms, including learning attitudes, awareness, behaviours and achievement

Achieving these objectives in Ontario requires that EQAO's research undertakings consider diversity, inclusion and equity, and student learning from multiple perspectives, including unique consideration of Ontario's Indigenous communities, equity-seeking groups, students with special education needs and English- and French-language learners.

Achieving these objectives also requires consideration of the contexts in which learning occurs, including socio-economic influences, student factors (e.g., health, growth mindset) and the overall health of support systems (e.g., education, health and community-based interventions).

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<sup>1</sup> EQAO's mandate, values and strategic plan can be found in the "[About the Agency](#)" section of EQAO's website ([www.eqao.com](http://www.eqao.com)).

<sup>2</sup> *The Education Quality and Accountability Office Act, 1996*, can be found [here](#).

EQAO recognizes that educational experiences that support student achievement are always evolving. Research can have a critical and transformative role, as promising practices and approaches are examined, understood and implemented.

In practice, research priorities need to keep pace with advances in curricula, pedagogy and large-scale assessments due to changes in technology, testing environments, psychometrics and student experiences.

## Approaches to Research Objectives

EQAO is committed to the following five approaches in the achievement of its research objectives:

1. Conducting in-house research that uses the full potential of EQAO data
2. Partnering with academic and health researchers and their institutions
3. Leveraging the research that is underway at Ontario’s publicly funded school boards and educational institutions
4. Collaborating with Ministry of Education colleagues in research activities, particularly those related to student well-being, global competencies and curriculum assessment
5. Encouraging external researchers to access EQAO data and supporting Open Data initiatives as appropriate

## Ethics

Research activities conducted by or associated with EQAO are expected to align with the policies outlined in the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans* (2018)<sup>3</sup>.

Research involving Indigenous communities must align with the OCAP principles of ownership, control, access and possession<sup>4</sup> as outlined by the First Nations Information Governance Centre.

External researchers interested in working with EQAO are required to submit documentation of ethics review and approval.

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<sup>3</sup> Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (Government of Canada). (2018). *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans*. Retrieved from [https://ethics.gc.ca/eng/policy-politique\\_tcps2-epts2\\_2018.html](https://ethics.gc.ca/eng/policy-politique_tcps2-epts2_2018.html)

<sup>4</sup> First Nations Information Governance Centre. (1998). *The First Nations Principles of OCAP®*. Retrieved from <https://fnigc.ca/ocap>

## Contact

To learn more about EQAO's research, contact the EQAO Information Centre.

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