

## **RESEARCH AT NINER UNIVERSITY ELEMENTARY**

### **I. Policy Statement and Purpose**

Facilitating research is an important aspect of the Niner University Elementary (“NUE”) charge. NUE faculty, staff, and administrators engage in inquiry and reflection processes related to their practices. Moreover, they actively leverage existing and emerging research findings for the continuous improvement of the student, the school, and the greater NUE community. In addition to the inquiries NUE staff make into their practices, research with partners from beyond the school is encouraged. The overarching goal of this research is to generate, refine, and expand knowledge of interest to society while serving the interests and needs of NUE stakeholders, including students, school personnel, families, and the broader Charlotte community.

For the purposes of this document, “NUE personnel” will be used to refer to teachers, staff, teacher candidates or interns, and leaders whose appointments are to the school. While individuals within this group may conduct various forms of research, the term “researcher” will be used to designate scholars not appointed to NUE.

### **II. Action Research**

NUE personnel may conduct their own action research following written approval from the NUE principal. For the purposes of this policy, “action research” is a method of systematic inquiry that teachers undertake as researchers of their own practice. Action research:

- Is conducted in NUE personnel’s own classroom to allow for self-reflection and to improve one’s own practices.
- Cannot be published or publicly presented in any format (print, electronic or live presentation).
- Does not require university IRB approval.
- If being conducted for masters’ capstone or theses, must provide documentation that action research is a requirement for capstone or thesis.
- If action research is being conducted for a class project, student may present findings to class but school and individuals may not be identified.

If NUE personnel are uncertain whether they may want to publish or otherwise disclose the findings of their action research, they should utilize the criteria and process described in section III of this policy. University IRB approval cannot be obtained retroactively.

### **III. Application for Approval of Research**

Researchers interested in conducting work at NUE must gain approval for the projects they plan to conduct at the school prior to receiving a letter of support for research and/or engaging in any research activities. Proposals for research at NUE must satisfy the required criteria described below. Although the preferred criteria will be applied to the review of all research proposals, there may be specific cases in which one or more of these criteria are not appropriate or necessary for a particular proposal.

## A. Required Criteria

1. The purpose of the research is consistent with NUE's [pillars](#).
2. The research must address topics of scholarly significance that are also significant to the NUE community.
3. The research must be conducted ethically, responsibly, and in accordance with the standards and expectations of educational and school-based research.
4. The research must not disrupt instructional time.
5. The research must ultimately be approved by the UNC Charlotte Institutional Review Board (IRB). Researchers are encouraged to submit proposals for research at NUE to the NUE principal and Cato College of Education Associate Dean of Research first. If approved, then researchers will need to gain UNC Charlotte IRB approval before conducting any research activities at NUE.
6. Researchers must follow all NUE [policies](#) regarding access to the school. For example, research activities that call for interaction with NUE students can only be conducted following approved criminal background checks for the researchers who will conduct this work.
7. Researchers must adhere to state and federal law, including laws regarding the confidentiality of student information.

## B. Preferred Criteria

1. The research should inform educators about one or more of the following areas:
  - Improving teaching and learning in high-needs schools.
  - Improving leadership, organization, and mentorship in high-needs schools.
  - Improving student health, including mental health.
  - Improving school, family, community partnerships, relationships or some combination.
2. Whenever possible, researchers should have a previously established, positive relationship with NUE personnel and are encouraged to plan and conduct their research in partnership with NUE personnel.
3. The research and associated activities should help to expand NUE community members' knowledge about teaching, learning, health, mental health, and/or other forms of educational practice and outcomes.
4. The research and associated activities should help to expand NUE community members' knowledge about research and its uses for informing practice and policy.
5. The research should involve a UNC Charlotte-based scholar.

Approval of all research proposals, regardless of a request's alignment with review criteria, is contingent on the capacity of NUE to facilitate the proposed activities. Capacity may be related to NUE personnel or student availability, physical resources (including space), or the number of other initiatives and projects underway at the school. Written requests for approval should be submitted to both the NUE principal and the Cato College of Education Associate Dean of Research and Graduate Education (contact information for both individuals is available on [the Cato College of Education directory](#)). The principal and the Associate Dean will respond to the researcher in writing regarding whether the proposal has been approved.

### C. Submission of Findings to NUE

Upon completion of research conducted at NUE and/or prior to the sharing of research findings (with public audiences including but not limited to publications, presentations, and media outlets), researchers shall submit a report of their activities and findings to the NUE principal. This report should provide: a brief description of the methodology and process (no more than five pages), a description of the findings, and an explanation of how those findings might improve topics of interest to the NUE community (see list within the preferred criteria). The principal will review the report so that any dissemination plans can be coordinated and may call for follow-up communication with researchers before any findings are shared with public audiences.

In addition to the written report, researchers who conduct projects at NUE are expected to make themselves available for presentations of their work. The principal may request that researchers share their work with the NUE community.

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**Authority:** Chancellor

**Responsible Office:** Academic Affairs