



Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services

External Research Proposal Grading Rubric

The following rubric is intended for use in the evaluation of the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) research proposals from both internal and external requestors. The submission of research requests to DCFS is a competitive process that requires key components to be met before consideration of approval. The research proposal is one of the key components required as part of the research request approval process (see our website for a complete list of requirements).

In order to be considered for research approval, the proposal must be sufficient in all categories. If the proposal does not meet the requirements, the requestor will have two weeks from the date he/she receives our approval notice to resubmit his/her revised proposal for our review. This rubric is not intended to be aligned with other metrics or tools that may be used by other institutions and is solely for the purpose of reviewing and approving research proposals submitted to DCFS.

Quality of Research Proposal Components	Inadequate	Needs Improvement	Sufficient
Research Purpose			
Advancement of Knowledge	<input type="checkbox"/> Fails to describe how the research will advance knowledge in the area of child protection and contribute to achieving positive child welfare outcomes	<input type="checkbox"/> Attempts to describe how the research will advance knowledge in the area of child protection; however, the rationale for conducting the research is not sound.	<input type="checkbox"/> Adequately describes how the research will advance knowledge in the area of child protection and adequately describes its contributions to positive child welfare outcomes.
Risks/Benefits	<input type="checkbox"/> Fails to describe the benefits to the Department in improving child safety, permanency and access to effective and caring service; fails to describe the risk to the participants, such as physical, psychological, social or economic; fails to describe and justify the risk level.	<input type="checkbox"/> Attempts to describe the benefits to the Department but does not summarize or explain the rationale clearly or sufficiently; attempts to describe the risk to the participants, such as physical, psychological, social or economic; attempts to describe and justify the risk level but is somewhat unclear.	<input type="checkbox"/> Adequately describes the benefits to the Department in improving child safety, permanency and access to effective and caring service; adequately describes the risk to the participants, such as physical, psychological, social or economic; clearly describes and justifies the risk level.

Quality of Research Proposal Components	Inadequate	Needs Improvement	Sufficient
Methodology			
Research Questions and Hypothesis	<input type="checkbox"/> Fails to clearly describe research questions and hypothesis; the hypothesis is unrelated to literature reviewed; argument is loose and disorganized; lists overall goals, but makes no specific prediction about expectations for what will be found or makes a specific prediction but it is unclear.	<input type="checkbox"/> Attempts to describe research questions and hypothesis, but not clearly described; hypothesis connects some of the literature with own thoughts; some relevant literature is reviewed, but not fully integrated; predictions are somewhat unclear.	<input type="checkbox"/> Adequately describes research questions and hypothesis related to the literature reviewed; hypothesis connects literature with own thoughts and draws conclusions that outline how the literature fits with the current project; indicates what is expected; lists specific predictions that are clear and understandable.
Methods/Instrumentation	<input type="checkbox"/> Fails to clearly describe adequate methods/instrumentation for the topic or issue addressed in the proposal; study samples and procedures, such as sampling methods, sample size, and participant recruitment, are not clearly described.	<input type="checkbox"/> Attempts to describe methods/instrumentation for the topic or issue addressed in the proposal, but are somewhat unclear; attempts to describe study samples and procedures, such as sampling methods, sample size, and participant recruitment, but are somewhat unclear.	<input type="checkbox"/> Adequately describes methods/instrumentation for the topic or issue addressed in the proposal; study samples and procedures, such as sampling methods, sample size, and participant recruitment, but are clearly described.
Confidentiality	<input type="checkbox"/> Fails to clearly identify how the confidentiality of the participants will be safeguarded.	<input type="checkbox"/> Attempts to describe how the confidentiality of participants will be safeguarded; key details about collecting participant data are unclear.	<input type="checkbox"/> Adequately describes how the confidentiality of participants will be safeguarded; disclosure details, where applicable, are clearly identified.

Quality of Research Proposal Components	Inadequate	Needs Improvement	Sufficient
Data Security	<input type="checkbox"/> Fails to clearly identify how data will be secured and maintained during the length of the study and disposed of after the study.	<input type="checkbox"/> Attempts to describe how data will be secured and maintained; Key details about data location and accessibility during the length of the study and disposal of data after the study are unclear.	<input type="checkbox"/> Adequately describes the methods for securing and maintaining data. Clearly identifies a location and accessibility of the data during the length of the study and disposal after the study.
Conflict of Interest	<input type="checkbox"/> Fails to describe any financial or other relationships of the researcher(s) or the institution that could be perceived as affecting the objective conduct of the research.	<input type="checkbox"/> Attempts to describe any financial or other relationships of the researcher(s) or the institution that could be perceived as affecting the objective conduct of the research, but is somewhat unclear.	<input type="checkbox"/> Adequately describes any financial or other relationships of the researcher(s) or the institution that could be perceived as affecting the objective conduct of the research.
Comments: 			

Requestor Name: _____

Proposal Submission Date: _____

Review Date: _____