

RARF—What kinds of questions to expect

The Research Approval Request Form (RARF) is an online form which should be completed and submitted in one session. Gathering the required information and perhaps writing applicable summaries ahead of time is recommended.

Below are the types of questions the form asks—some are copied directly from the form. Please adhere to limitations regarding response length where indicated, which will aid the Research Review Committee in processing research requests more accurately and more quickly. We place a high value on researchers expressing a desire to conduct research in the Department. The Committee welcomes and encourages supplemental information in addition to what is submitted through the online form—CVs, full research proposals, etc.—please email documents to RA-CRPADOCRRC@pa.gov.

The RARF is comprised of six sections. Sections I, II, III, and V are largely administrative. Sections IV and VI ask for summaries about the researcher and the proposals. It is important to provide clear summaries on the form and not simply refer to or point to supplemental documents.

I. Research Director

- A. Researcher name and contact information.

II. Title

- A. Title of proposal.

III. Academic Requirements

- A. Research or Academic Advisor contact information.
- B. Acknowledgement of State, DOC, and IRB affiliations.

IV. Background Information

- A. Summary of qualifications (<300 words):
 1. Please briefly summarize your qualifications to conduct the proposed research (e.g., relevant research projects, academic background), or other related information that documents your qualifications. A complete research project and publishing history is not necessary here.
 2. Additionally, submit a complete curriculum vitae, if available, to RA-CRPADOCRRC@pa.gov.

V. Background Verification

- A. You will need to provide three references who can verify your credentials along with their contact information.

VI. Research Proposal Summaries

Summarize your research overview, research design, and expected outcomes below. While the Research Review Committee welcomes and even encourages the submission of supplemental material—CVs, full proposals, etc.—in addition to these summaries, please help the Committee to evaluate your proposal more accurately and more quickly by providing clear, concise summaries below. Summaries must address each point requested below.

- A. Research Overview Summary (<250 words):
 - a. Please identify the specific topic, issue, or problem under study, its significance, and describe the overall research approach. Please mention:
 - i. the purpose of the research,
 - ii. the specific research questions and hypotheses, and
 - iii. briefly review previous research and theory on the topic and how your study relates to previous work.
- B. Research Design Summary (<350 words):
 - a. First, please describe how the study will be conducted, commenting on:
 - i. research subjects (e.g. inmates, staff),
 - ii. the specific research methods to be employed, such as surveys, interviews, observation, etc. Please pay particular attention to sample selection and instrumentation (provide a copy of any instruments to be used), and
 - iii. a brief review of proposed methods of data analysis and reporting.
 - b. Second, please provide a breakdown, by source (researcher vs. Department) of the costs/resources required to successfully conduct the proposed project.
 - c. Third, please outline a projected research time frame as well as any other pertinent information necessary to adequately describe the project.
- C. Expected Outcomes Summary (<300 words):
 - a. Please discuss the expected outcomes of your study, as well as how and by whom this research will be used. Additionally, please explain the anticipated benefits of the research to the Department of Corrections.