



NATA Research & Education Foundation Professional Grant Program Review Process

The Professional Grant Program is active from August to May:

October:

Call for Pre-Proposals August 1 – September 1

September - November:

1. By September 1, committee members report known Major COIs to Chair or Vice-Chair for Professional Grants
2. Chair assigns two committee members to review each pre-proposal submission. Applicants identify the specific grant category for their pre-proposal at the time of submission.
3. Pre-proposal review decisions submitted
 - a. If decisions agree, applicant notified of decision
 - b. If decisions disagree, a third committee member is assigned to review the pre-proposal to arrive at a final decision (simple majority)
4. Applicants with accepted pre-proposals are invited to submit a full proposal to the grant category specified at the time of pre-proposal submission. Applicants invited to submit a full proposal may only do so during the same grant cycle.

January-February:

Full proposals submitted by deadline (generally February 15th)

Mid-February:

1. NATA Foundation staff creates and disseminates to all committee members a summary table of submitted proposals including primary institution and names of PI(s), individuals with major professional roles, and individuals providing a letter of support
2. Committee members identify and [declare conflicts of interest \(COIs\)](#) using the annual COI disclosure form
3. NATA Foundation staff creates a summary table of major and minor COIs and disseminates this to Chair and Vice Chair for Professional Grants
4. Chair calculates committee member reviewing workload per grant category after accounting for member COIs and shares with Vice Chair for Professional Grants
5. Chair reports disclosed COIs and mitigation actions to all committee members

February-March:

1. Chair and Vice Chair for Professional Grants create review teams for each proposal. Review teams are composed of:

- a. A committee member (or Chair-designated *ex officio* member) who serves as the lead reviewer
 - b. Two external reviewers or one external reviewer and one additional committee member
2. Review team members charged with:
 - a. Independently reviewing and scoring the proposal
 - b. Submitting review comments and scores into the Application Manager by the specified deadline

April:

1. Vice-Chair for Professional Grants
 - a. Reviews scores for all proposals
 - b. Identifies proposals to be discussed at the committee's annual proposal review meeting (generally those in the top 50% of each grant category)
 - c. Disseminates to committee members a preliminary list of proposals to be discussed at the proposal review meeting
2. Lead reviewers
 - a. Notify the Chair and Vice-Chair of Professional Grants if they wish to discuss any proposal that was not initially identified for discussion (*e.g.*, lead reviewer believes that an unfairly harsh external review(s) has contributed to a strong proposal being ranked in the bottom 50% of the grant category)
 - b. Assign a decision to proposals that will not be discussed
 - i. Generally, new proposals that rank in the bottom 50% should be assigned *Do Not Recommend for Funding- Resubmission Not Allowed*
 - ii. Revised and re-submitted proposals that that rank in the bottom 50% must be assigned *Do Not Recommend for Funding- Resubmission Not Allowed*
 - c. New proposals that rank in the bottom 50% but address a research priority as established by the Foundation and whose approach can be satisfactorily revised to achieve the aims may be assigned *Do Not Recommend for Funding- Resubmission Allowed*
 - d. Notify the Vice-Chair of Professional Grants of any proposal(s) ranking in the bottom 50% of a grant category for which a *Do Not Recommend for Funding- Resubmission Allowed* decision is recommended
3. Vice-Chair for Professional Grants disseminates to committee members the final list of:
 - a. Proposals to be discussed at the proposal review meeting
 - b. Proposals ranking in the bottom 50% for which a *Do Not Recommend for Funding- Resubmission Allowed* decision is recommended

April/May (Proposal Review Meeting):

1. Meeting Preparation
 - a. Committee members are charged with reviewing all application documents for proposals to be discussed prior to the meeting
 - b. The proposal and the independent reviews submitted to the Application Manager should be reviewed

Approved: May 2021

2. Proposal Discussion

- a. Lead reviewer provides the three overall impact scores submitted by the review team members
- b. Lead reviewer gives a <5min summary of the proposal, emphasizing strengths and weaknesses of the proposal, and any major review findings and discrepancies
- c. Prior to the meeting, the time limit for discussion will be set to assure that each proposal is allotted equal time for open comments and/or questions from the committee. Discussion should be:
 - i. limited to only the proposal on the table
 - ii. focused on:
 1. the research design and ability of the team to complete the investigation,
 2. the potential impact of the proposed investigation, and/or
 3. the alignment between the proposal and the Foundation priorities or relevant RFP

3. Proposal Scoring

- a. Immediately following the discussion period, each eligible committee member confidentially casts an overall impact score (1-9) for the proposal. Scoring should be informed by the committee member's review of the proposal; the three independent reviews; and the content of the committee's discussion. Scores that do not fall within the range are allowed but require committee member(s) to explain their scores.
- b. Committee member scores are averaged to arrive at the final overall impact score for the proposal

4. Proposal Recommendation

- a. Vice-Chair for Professional Grants presides over a final discussion of the grant category. The purpose of the discussion is to approve one of the following committee actions for each proposal:
 - i. Recommend to the NATA Foundation Board for Funding
 - ii. Do Not Recommend for Funding- Resubmission Allowed
 - iii. Do Not Recommend for Funding- Resubmission Not Allowed
- b. After all proposals within a grant category have been discussed and scored, committee members will be provided with the final overall impact score for each proposal
- c. Any lead reviewers that recommended *Do Not Recommend for Funding- Resubmission Allowed* for a proposal ranking in the bottom 50% of the grant category will:
 - i. Briefly summarize the rationale underlying the recommendation (<2 min)
 - ii. Answer any questions raised by committee members (<3 min)
- d. The final disposition for each proposal is determined by a vote of committee members with a simple majority necessary for the motion to pass

May:

1. No more than two weeks following the proposal review meeting, lead reviewers complete the following:
 - a. For proposals that were not discussed

- i. Download the three reviews submitted by the review team members from the Application Manager
 - ii. Review for inappropriate or inaccurate comments and remove them, if necessary
 - iii. Merge the three independent review forms into a single PDF file
 - iv. Submit the final PDF file to the Foundation staff
 - b. For proposals that were discussed
 - i. Download the three reviews submitted by the review team members from the Application Manager
 - ii. Review for inappropriate or inaccurate comments and remove them, if necessary
 - iii. Complete the committee summary statement. This should include:
 1. the final overall mean impact score from the committee
 2. the final action as determined by the committee vote
 3. A summary paragraph that supports the committee's overall impact score by highlighting the points raised in the committee's discussion
 - iv. Merge the committee summary statement and the three independent review forms into a single PDF file
 - v. Submit the final PDF file to the Foundation staff
2. Submitted PDF files are reviewed for accuracy (final decision, score, etc.) and approved by the Chair or Vice-Chair for Professional Grants

May-July:

1. Chair sends list of proposals recommended for funding to the Board for approval
2. Notification letters and final PDF review files are sent to primary investigators
3. Chair notifies review team members of the outcome of the proposal and provides them with the final PDF review file