



# **PROFESSIONAL RESEARCH GRANT PROGRAM INSTRUCTIONS**

General Grant

New Investigator Grant

[Athletic Training Education and Practice Grant](#)

[Thematic Research Grant](#)

# PROFESSIONAL RESEARCH GRANT PROGRAM INSTRUCTIONS

Applicable to all NATA Foundation Professional Research Grant Program categories, excluding Doctoral and Master's Student Grants.

## Introduction

The NATA Foundation invites proposals addressing topics relevant to athletic training practice, education, patient outcomes, and professional advancement. Funding decisions are based on scientific merit, relevance to the profession, and alignment with Foundation priorities.

An investigator may serve as Principal Investigator (PI) on a maximum of two grant applications per funding cycle.

## Pre-Proposal Requirement

All applicants seeking funding through the Professional Research Grant Program must first submit and receive approval of a [pre-proposal](#).

Applicants invited to the full proposal stage must submit their complete application by February 15. Requests for extensions may be considered under exceptional circumstances.

Applicants who do not submit a full proposal during the same funding cycle must submit a new pre-proposal before reapplying.

Resubmissions of previously reviewed full proposals do not require a new pre-proposal. However, applicants must notify the Research Committee Chair of their intent to resubmit by October 1.

## Funding Opportunities (2026-2027 Cycle)

| Proposal Category                                               | Maximum Award (Total Costs*) | Indirect Rate | Project Period |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| General                                                         | \$30,000                     | 10%           | Up to 3 years  |
| New Investigator                                                | \$20,000                     | 10%           | Up to 2 years  |
| <a href="#">Athletic Training Education and Practice (ATEP)</a> | \$20,000                     | 10%           | Up to 2 years  |
| <a href="#">Thematic</a>                                        | \$20,000                     | 10%           | Up to 2 years  |

*\*Total costs include direct and indirect costs. Indirect costs may not exceed **10% of direct costs** and must be included within the total requested budget.*

## Eligibility

### General, ATEP, and Thematic Research Grants

Researchers, educators, and healthcare professionals are eligible to apply. However, either the Principal Investigator (PI) or Co-Principal Investigator (Co-PI) must:

- Be BOC-certified

- Be a current NATA member in good standing
- Hold an active National Provider Identifier (NPI)

## **New Investigator Grant**

The Principal Investigator must:

- Be a current NATA member in good standing
- Be BOC-certified
- Hold an active National Provider Identifier (NPI)
- Have never served as PI or Co-PI on a research grant exceeding \$50,000 in total costs
- Hold an academic rank no higher than Assistant Professor at the time of submission or resubmission

Applicants with questions regarding eligibility should contact the [Research Committee Chair](#) before submitting an application.

## **Submission Instructions**

1. Applications that do not comply with program requirements may be returned without review.
2. Applicants are responsible for reviewing and complying with all policies related to human and animal subjects research.
3. All application materials, disclosures, approvals, and signatures must be submitted electronically through the [NATA Application Manager](#).
4. Current NATA members should log in using their nata.org credentials. Applicants without credentials should follow instructions provided on the Application Manager landing page.
5. Applicants are encouraged to access the submission system early and familiarize themselves with the required components.
6. All application materials must be completed and submitted by 11:59 PM Central Time on February 15.

## **Application Review**

The review panel evaluates proposals solely on the information provided in the application and supporting appendices. Applicants should ensure that all aspects of the proposed project are described clearly, accurately, and completely.

Prior to scientific review, NATA Foundation staff and Research Committee leadership will conduct an administrative review to verify compliance with submission requirements. Applications deemed incomplete or non-compliant may be returned without review.

Applicants may revise and resubmit corrected applications provided that the revised materials are received before the application deadline.

# Application Characteristics

The NATA Foundation Professional Research Grant Program follows an NIH R03-style application format.

## Page Limits

- Specific Aims: 1 page
- Research Strategy: 6 pages
- Total narrative section: 7 pages
- Resubmissions: additional 1-page Response to Comments
- References, appendices, budget documents, biosketches, and supporting materials do not count toward page limits

## Formatting Requirements

- Minimum margins: 0.5 inches
- Font size: 11-point or larger
- All proposal components must be combined into one PDF document for submission

## Preliminary Data

Preliminary data are not required but may be included when available and relevant.

# Proposal Instructions

All application materials must be combined and submitted as a single PDF document through the NATA Application Manager.

## ABSTRACT (200-word limit)

The Abstract is reviewed as a stand-alone document and does **not** count toward the 7-page proposal limit. Applicants should provide sufficient detail for reviewers to understand the project's purpose, methods, and potential impact.

The Abstract should briefly describe:

- The problem or rationale for the proposed research
- The study objective(s) and hypothesis(es), when applicable
- The specific aims
- The study design and methodology
- Planned statistical analyses
- Expected outcomes and significance

## SPECIFIC AIMS (1-page limit)

The Specific Aims page should provide a concise overview of the proposed project and include:

1. Relevant background and rationale
2. The overall project objective

3. Specific aim(s) and associated hypotheses, when applicable
4. The general approach to addressing each aim
5. The anticipated impact on athletic training practice, education, or patient outcomes
6. Alignment with the NATA Foundation Research Priorities and the Athletic Training Research Agenda

A strong Specific Aims page should clearly identify:

- The athletic training-related problem being addressed
- The current gap in knowledge
- Why the proposed work is needed
- How the project will address the identified gap
- The potential significance and long-term impact of the findings

Whenever possible, aims should be complementary but not dependent upon one another. Hypotheses should be included, when possible, though it is recognized that not all aims will require hypotheses. References cited in the Specific Aims page should be included in the proposal's reference list.

## **RESPONSE TO REVIEWER COMMENTS (1-page limit)**

*Required for resubmissions only.* Applicants submitting a revised proposal must include a one-page response addressing comments from the previous review. The response should summarize major revisions made to the proposal, address reviewer concerns directly, and identify where substantive changes have been incorporated.

Major revisions should be clearly highlighted using formatting such as bold text, italics, or margin indicators to facilitate reviewer evaluation.

## **RESEARCH STRATEGY (6-page limit)**

The Research Strategy should be organized using the following sections:

### **Significance**

Describe the importance of the problem being addressed and the project's potential contribution to athletic training research, education, or clinical practice.

Reviewers will consider:

- The significance of the research question
- The strength of the scientific premise
- The potential impact of the proposed work
- The extent to which the project advances the NATA Foundation Research Priorities and the Athletic Training Research Agenda

### **Innovation**

Describe the novelty of the proposed project.

Reviewers will assess whether the project:

- Challenges existing paradigms

- Applies novel concepts, methodologies, technologies, or interventions
- Introduces meaningful refinements or new applications of existing approaches
- Advances athletic training practice, education, or research through innovative methods

## **Approach**

Describe the overall study design, methods, and analytical plan. The application should clearly demonstrate that the proposed methods are capable of achieving the stated aims.

Reviewers will evaluate:

- The appropriateness of the study design and methodology
- The rigor and feasibility of the proposed approach
- Potential challenges and alternative strategies
- Project timeline and milestones
- Statistical methods and justification of sample size
- Consideration of relevant biological variables (e.g., sex)
- Plans for human subjects protection, when applicable
- Inclusion of diverse populations consistent with the study aims

## **Environment**

Describe the resources available to support successful completion of the project.

Reviewers will consider:

- Institutional support
- Available facilities and equipment
- Access to study populations
- Collaborative resources
- Any unique characteristics of the research environment that enhance project success

## **Investigator(s)**

Although not a required section heading within the Research Strategy, reviewers will evaluate the qualifications of the investigative team, including:

- Relevant expertise and training
- Prior accomplishments
- Contributions of collaborators
- Leadership and organizational structure for multi-PI projects

Applications do not need to be equally strong in every review category to be considered highly impactful. Reviewers will assess the proposal's overall scientific merit and potential contribution to the profession.

## **APPENDICES**

Appendices do not count toward the 6-page Research Strategy limit.

Appendices should provide supporting documentation only. Information essential to evaluating the research approach must be included within the main application and not solely in the appendices.

## **Appendix A: Project Timeline**

Provide a detailed timeline outlining major project activities and milestones from project initiation through completion. The timeline should include anticipated dates for each project phase and demonstrate project feasibility within the proposed funding period. Submission of materials for Institutional Review Board (IRB) review is permissible prior to submission; however, participant recruitment and data collection may not have commenced.

## **Appendix B: Additional Materials**

Include materials that support the proposed methodology, when applicable.

Examples include:

1. Informed consent documents
2. Survey instruments
3. Interview or focus group guides
4. Multi-PI or multi-site management plans
5. Power analyses and sample-size justification
6. Evidence supporting measurement validity and reliability
7. Additional supporting materials (e.g., randomization schedules, technical specifications, study forms, or design schematics)

Supporting materials should supplement, not replace, descriptions provided within the Research Strategy.

## **Appendix C: Budget and Budget Justification**

Appendix C must include a complete project budget and budget justification using the NATA Foundation Budget Template.

The budget should clearly identify all project costs and indicate which expenses are requested from the NATA Foundation. Any additional sources of support, including external funding, institutional support, in-kind contributions, donated equipment, or donated effort, must also be disclosed.

The following must be addressed:

**Salaries and Wages:** All monies that will be used to provide salaries, hourly wages or assistantships for this project. If salary is requested, identify the percentage of effort and base salary used for the calculation. For example: 10% effort and a salary of \$40,000 per year = \$4,000 requested for salary support. If salary support will be donated, this must be stated along with the effort percentage.

**Fringe Benefits:** The current percentages and amounts of money that will be used to pay fringe benefits and other payroll expenses for those persons receiving salaries, hourly wages or assistantships.

**Equipment and Supplies:** Include all equipment and supplies necessary to complete the proposed project. For equipment purchases, provide the manufacturer and model (if applicable), estimated cost, and justification for the purchase. General consumable supplies do not need to be itemized.

**Travel Costs:** Funding may be requested for travel necessary to conduct the proposed research. In addition, the principal investigator (PI) or a pre-approved co-PI will be contractually obligated to present the results of the study at a future NATA Annual Meeting. Therefore, the presenter's travel cost to and from the convention is a bona fide budget item. Two nights lodging and per diem

expense for two days are allowed, in addition to transportation costs. Travel expenses for data collection are also allowable.

**Indirect Costs:** Grant funds may be used to support indirect (overhead) costs. Indirect costs may not exceed 10% of direct costs, must be included within the total award amount, and will not be funded beyond the approved award limit

## **Appendix D: Personnel**

Appendix D must include a biographical sketch for all key personnel involved in the project.

Applicants may use either:

- The NATA Foundation Biosketch Template; or
- The current NIH Biosketch Format.

Key personnel generally include individuals with doctoral or other professional degrees who contribute substantially to the scientific development, design, conduct, or oversight of the project. Individuals at the master's or bachelor's level should also be included when their contributions are integral to the project's execution.

If you are using the NATA Biosketch, please limit it to **two pages** and include:

- Name
- Current position and institutional affiliation
- Role on the proposed project
- Educational background and training
- Employment history
- Relevant publications, including work from the previous three years and earlier publications directly related to the proposed project
- Current and prior research funding

## **Appendix E: Facilities and Resources**

Provide a description of the facilities, equipment, resources, and institutional support available to complete the proposed project successfully.

If project activities will occur at facilities that are not directly controlled by the Principal Investigator's institution (e.g., schools, clinics, hospitals, community organizations, or external laboratories), a letter of support from the facility director or authorized representative must be included confirming access to the site for the duration of the project.

## **Appendix F: Supporting Materials (Optional)**

Applicants may include materials that provide additional context or support for the proposed project.

Examples include:

- Published manuscripts
- In-press publications

- Pilot data reports
- Supplemental figures or tables
- Other supporting documentation relevant to the proposed work

A maximum of three published or in-press manuscripts may be included.

Materials included in this appendix are intended to support the application and should not be used to circumvent page limits or provide additional details regarding the research approach.

## **Appendix G: References**

Provide complete bibliographic information for all references cited throughout the proposal. AMA format is recommended.

## Budget Template

The budget table template below is to be used with the grant application. Please modify as needed to address the needs of each application, but the overall categories and annual categorization should remain.

| Personnel                  | Base Salary | Total Effort | Year 1    | Year 2    | Year 3 | Total     |
|----------------------------|-------------|--------------|-----------|-----------|--------|-----------|
| Researcher 1               | \$ 75,000   | 5%           | \$ 3,750  | \$ 3,750  |        | \$ 7,500  |
| Researcher 2               | \$ 68,000   | 5%           | \$ 3,400  | \$ 3,400  |        | \$ 6,800  |
| Researcher 3               | \$ 92,000   | 5%           | \$ 4,600  | \$ 4,600  |        | \$ 9,200  |
| Hourly support             | \$10/hour   | 50hours      | \$ 500    | \$ 500    |        | \$ 1,000  |
| Consultant                 |             |              | \$ 1,000  | \$ 1,000  |        | \$ 2,000  |
| <b>Fringe</b>              |             |              |           |           |        |           |
| Researcher 1               |             | 30%          | \$ 1,125  | \$ 1,125  |        | \$ 2,250  |
| Researcher 2               |             | 30%          | \$ 1,020  | \$ 1,020  |        | \$ 2,040  |
| Researcher 3               |             | 30%          | \$ 1,380  | \$ 1,380  |        | \$ 2,760  |
| <b>Other Costs</b>         |             |              |           |           |        |           |
| Supplies                   |             |              | \$ 1,200  | \$ 1,200  |        | \$ 2,400  |
| Stipends (50 participants) | \$25 each   |              | \$ 1,250  | \$ 1,250  |        | \$ 2,500  |
| Travel - NATA meeting      |             |              |           | \$ 2,500  |        |           |
| <i>Direct Costs</i>        |             |              | \$ 19,225 | \$ 21,725 |        | \$ 40,950 |
| <i>Indirect Costs</i>      |             | 10%          | \$ 1,923  | \$ 2,173  |        | \$ 4,095  |
| <b>TOTAL</b>               |             |              | \$ 21,148 | \$ 23,898 |        | \$ 45,045 |

**BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH**  
**(DO NOT EXCEED TWO PAGES)**

|      |                |
|------|----------------|
| NAME | POSITION TITLE |
|------|----------------|

|                          |
|--------------------------|
| Role in Proposed Project |
|--------------------------|

|                                                                                                                           |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| EDUCATION/TRAINING <i>(Begin with baccalaureate or other initial professional education, such as nursing, and include</i> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

| INSTITUTION AND LOCATION | DEGREE<br><i>(if applicable)</i> | YEAR(s) | FIELD OF STUDY |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|---------|----------------|
|                          |                                  |         |                |

|                    |
|--------------------|
| EMPLOYMENT HISTORY |
|--------------------|

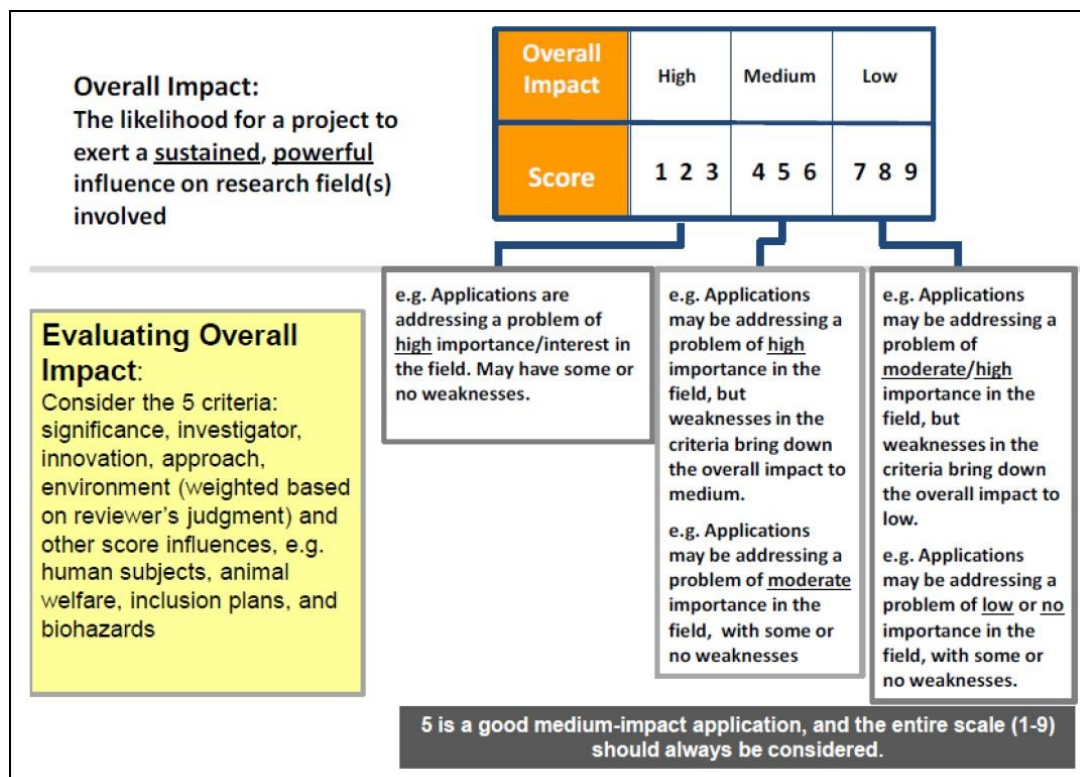
|                                           |
|-------------------------------------------|
| PUBLICATIONS AND SUPPORTING PROPOSED WORK |
|-------------------------------------------|

|                 |
|-----------------|
| FUNDING HISTORY |
|-----------------|

## SCORING

NATA Foundation grant applications are scored using the NIH scoring system, a 9-point rating scale (1 = exceptional; 9 = poor) in whole numbers (no decimals) for each section (ie Significance, Innovation, etc) and Overall Impact for all applications. Scores of 1 or 9 will be used less frequently than the other scores, while 5 is for a good medium-impact application and considered an average score. The Overall Impact score is based on the reviewer's overall impression of the application as they see fit. Note that an application does not need to be strong in all categories to be judged likely to have major scientific impact and thus, deserve a high impact score. See the figure below for an explanation of scoring.

Each grant application will be reviewed by three qualified individuals. Prior to the Foundation meeting review, the Overall Impact scores are averaged and rank ordered. The top 50% of applications will be discussed with score adjustments made as deemed appropriate. Recommendations for funding are based on the rank order of the final Overall Impact scores and funding priorities.



| Overall Impact or Criterion Strength | Score | Descriptor   |
|--------------------------------------|-------|--------------|
| High                                 | 1     | Exceptional  |
|                                      | 2     | Outstanding  |
|                                      | 3     | Excellent    |
| Medium                               | 4     | Very Good    |
|                                      | 5     | Good         |
|                                      | 6     | Satisfactory |
| Low                                  | 7     | Fair         |
|                                      | 8     | Marginal     |
|                                      | 9     | Poor         |