



**The AOFAS Research Grants Program
Description, Policies, and Guidelines
for Applicants and Institutional Representatives**

Updated October 2016 for the 2017 Grants Cycle



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ABOUT THE AOFAS RESEARCH GRANTS PROGRAM

Objectives

The objective of the Research Grant program is to advance foot and ankle investigation by providing seed and start-up funding for promising research projects and encourage supplemental submissions to national funding sources.

Application Deadline

Application Submission Deadline

Friday, December 30, 2016

(online system closes at 11:59 pm Central Time)

Apply online – application portal link is found at: www.aofas.org/researchgrants

Awards Announcement

Award decisions are announced at the AOFAS Specialty Day after the application deadline, with email notification to the Submitting Applicant only following. Announcements for the 2016 cycle will be made at AOFAS Specialty Day on Saturday, March 18, 2017.

Period of Grant

The period of research grants is from May 1 after the application deadline through April 30 of the following year.

Review Process

Grant applications are reviewed and scored by the AOFAS Research Committee and its ad hoc reviewers on a blind basis using an NIH-style process. The committee makes recommendations to the AOFAS Board, which makes the final decision on funding. The Board decision also is made on a blind basis, with Board members knowing only project titles and requested award amounts.

Grant Categories

Subject to the levels of philanthropic support and quality of applications received, **Pilot Project Research Grants of up to \$5,000** each and **Small Project Research Grants of up to \$20,000** each may be awarded in each cycle.

In a new initiative being piloted for the 2016 and 2017 cycles, one **Established Project Research Grant of up to \$50,000** will be available each cycle.

The AOFAS Research Grants Program
is funded by generous donations from individuals and corporations to

The Orthopaedic Foot & Ankle Foundation
“The Foundation”

Grant Categories (continued)

The **Pilot Project Research Grant** category was introduced with the 2015 cycle to:

- Encourage new investigators, especially residents and fellows to participate in research, to:
- Promote the development of new lines of research, and
- Improve the quality of research grant applications by providing seed funding for new pilot projects.

It is expected that the data obtained from funded Pilot Projects will be used to develop future grant applications. Pilot Project Research Grants may not exceed \$5,000, and no more than four Pilot Project Research Grants may be awarded in one cycle.

The **Small Project Grant** category is intended to provide start-up funding for promising research projects and to encourage supplemental submissions to national funding sources.

The **Established Project Research Grant** category, being piloted in the 2016 and 2017 cycles, provide an opportunity to support innovative research for basic science, clinical trial, or pre-trial work that could be used to obtain additional grants from national funding sources. To be competitive, applications **must** be backed by preliminary work, data, publications, and/or abstracts to demonstrate feasibility of projects and capabilities of the research team.

In order to be competitive in the Established Project category, applications must provide background on preliminary work, publications, and/or presented data to demonstrate feasibility of projects and capabilities of the research team.

Eligibility

Access to Research Grants is a benefit of AOFAS membership. Either the principal investigator or co-investigator on an application must be an AOFAS member in one of the following membership categories:

- Active Member
- Candidate Member
- International Member
- Associate Member-Basic Science

Additional eligibility policies include:

- Investigators, including the principal investigator and co-investigator(s), may not be awarded more than two grants in any four consecutive years.
- Investigators may submit applications on more than one research topic; however, no more than one grant in each cycle will be awarded to any one institution.
- Projects based on the same topic or research question may not be submitted in more than one grant category (Pilot Project, Small Project, and Established Project categories) in any one cycle.
- Pilot Project grant category eligibility is not limited to AOFAS Resident Members or AOFAS Fellow Members, but applications from a Resident Member or Fellow Member must include a co-investigator from one of the above four AOFAS membership categories (Active, Candidate, International, or Associate Member-Basic Science).
- Members of the Research Committee and its ad hoc reviewers may not apply for grants in the year in which they review applications.
- Eligibility for Pilot Project grants is not limited to AOFAS Resident or AOFAS Fellow members; however, applications from Resident or Fellow members must include a co-investigator or principal investigator from one of the above four AOFAS membership categories (Active, Candidate, International, or Associate Member-Basic Science).

INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

Application Procedure

The application is now exclusively online, and the application process is described below in the following sections, and detailed instructions for completing the application can be found in the relevant sections throughout the online application system. Latest information and a link to the online application system appears on the AOFAS Research Grants web page: www.aofas.org/researchgrants

Important Reminder to Applicants:

When completing the online application, please keep in mind that the AOFAS Research Grants Program review process is blinded. **Do not** include information that would “unblind” the application:

- The names of the investigator(s), names of their institution(s), and any other information that would identify the applicants or their institution should **not** appear anywhere in the application **except** in the sections specifically designated for investigator and institutional information.
- Identifying information may include the names of collaborating bodies or organizations such as labs, vendors, partner institutions that, by association or geographical proximity, might “unblind” the application to reviewers. Applicants should take care to remove such specifics or refer to them generically to maintain application blinded status.

Disclosures and Signatures

Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest (COI)

Potential conflicts of interest for each investigator, whether an AAOS member or not, must be disclosed by updating disclosure information on the AAOS website:

<http://www7.aaos.org/education/disclosure/verifyUser>.

Disclosures must have been updated within the 12 months preceding grant submission. **NOTE:** Each investigator must obtain a receipt of his/her AAOS COI disclosure showing date and details (verification screen after completing or updating disclosure), save that receipt as a PDF file, and upload it to the AOFAS online grant application system.

E-Signatures Required

Signatures are required for principal investigator, co-investigators, department chair, the institutional representative authorized to sign for the institution, and the financial officer of the institution. No “per” signatures are permitted.

Applications may be prepared by the principal investigator or a co-investigator or another designated person on behalf of the principal investigator. Before beginning the application, if the person submitting the application (the “Applicant”) is not the Principal Investigator, please consider the Applicant’s availability to serve as primary contact through the grant award term.

The Applicant is responsible for: 1) Completing the online application content; 2) Designating the names and e-mail addresses of the other related persons (all investigators and institutional representatives, including institutional grants officer and financial officer and departmental chair) whose signatures are required; and 3) Triggering an email invitation in the online system to those persons to complete their required reviews of the program description, policies and guidelines document and the application content before signing via a time- and date-stamped e-signature.

Disclosures & Signatures (continued)

NOTE: Applicants should complete the application and related persons information and trigger email invitations to the other associated persons **well in advance** to allow time for any delays due to institutional review processes or requirements, holidays, personnel absences, etc. Other associated persons must review the application and sign **after** the Applicant completes the online application and **before** the **Friday, December 30, 2017 application deadline**. The associated persons signatures must be complete before the Applicant may submit the application.

Notification of Award and Research Funds

The AOFAS will notify the designated contact person (the “Applicant” who submitted the application in the application system) by email following announcement of the award at the Specialty Day program. The Funding Agreement acceptance statement must be signed by the principal investigator, co-investigators, and institutional financial officer within thirty (30) days following notification.

Seventy percent (70%) of the grant award is distributed upon receipt of the signed Funding Agreement acceptance statement. Payment of the remaining 30% is contingent upon receipt of the final project report (including financial expenditures) and will be distributed upon verification of submission of an abstract based on the work to the AOFAS Annual Meeting or AOFAS Specialty Day **and** submission of the paper to the AOFAS journal, *Foot & Ankle International* (FAI), for review.

Funding requests made later than 18 months after the initial Funding Agreement acceptance letter will not be honored. Failure to produce a final report will result in a request to the grant awardees to refund to AOFAS the initial funding allotted.

At expiration of the grant, any unexpended balance of \$100 or more must be refunded to the AOFAS within sixty (60) days.

The grant recipient may terminate a grant prior to the normal expiration date by notifying the AOFAS in writing and stating the reasons for termination. Unexpended funds must be returned to the AOFAS within sixty (60) days, together with a final report of expenditures. The AOFAS reserves the right to terminate grants at any time upon three months written notice.

If the grantee has not completed the project prior to expiration for just reasons, he/she may submit a written request (30 days prior to expiration) for a no-cost extension stating the reason and requested period of extension.

Policy on Animals in Research

Use of animals and institution must justify the number of animals requested for the project. If applicable, provide IACUC approval and OLAW assurance approval, regarding use of and number of animals requested for project.

All animals used in research supported by AOFAS grants must be acquired lawfully and be transported, cared for, treated and used in accordance with existing laws, regulations and guidelines. Scientists and institutions must make decisions as to the kind and sources of animals that are most appropriate for particular studies. AOFAS policy requires that such decisions be subject to institutional and peer review for scientific merit and ethical concerns and that appropriate assurances be given that NIH principal governing the use of animals are followed.

Policy on Human Subjects in Research

Use of human subjects and sample size must be justified. If applicable, IRB statements from your institution's human subjects committee must be provided. IRB approval is required for patient X-rays.

AOFAS grant recipients are entrusted to assure adequate protection of human subjects. NIH regulations regarding human subjects should be followed.

Interim Progress Report and Final Report

The report formats for the Interim Progress Report and the Final Report will be sent with notification of the grant award. Reports should be sent to the AOFAS via e-mail to: research@aofasinfo.org. Report deadlines are:

- Interim Progress Report – October 1 of the year the grant is awarded
- Final Report – May 1 of the following calendar year

Seventy percent (70%) of the grant award is distributed upon receipt of the signed funding agreement. Payment of the remaining thirty percent (30%) is contingent upon:

- Receipt of the completed Final Report (including financial expenditures) **and**
- Submission of an abstract based on the work to AOFAS Annual Meeting or AOFAS Specialty Day
- Submission of a paper based on the grant work to *Foot & Ankle International* for review.

For Applicants Awarded Grants

An **Interim Progress Report** is due **October 1** of the year the grant is issued.

A **Final Report** is due **May 1** of the following year.

Policy on Delinquent Financial/Research Reports

The AOFAS reserves the right to deny additional grants to any institution, where after proper notification, an investigator has not submitted his/her final report within 18 months of the acceptance letter date. This policy will be enforced when reports are one year past the final due date. Upon receipt of these reports, the institution shall again become eligible for AOFAS grants.

Policy on Changing Aims of Grant

If the principal investigator and collaborators find that the original aims of the grant cannot be accomplished, and that to continue the project substantial changes in aims or methodology must be considered, the principal investigator must request permission from AOFAS to modify the aims. This request must be made in writing and must include the reasons for the change.

Budget

The budget for the project should include direct costs only. No salary or wages amount may be allotted to the principal investigator or co-investigators. Funds may not be used for travel. Equipment purchases over \$5,000 are generally not permitted. Budget items taking a significant portion of the budget, particularly equipment and personnel costs, require explanation with rationale in the Budget Justification section.

Budget (continued)

Additional guidelines for completing the Budget section of the application include:

- Please provide budget justification for each expense and category listed in the budget.
- Budget justification depth and detail should be commensurate with the grant category and level of funding requested.
- Provide specifics about other funding sources that have been secured including organization providing funding, dates of funding and dollar amount.
- While the total budget may exceed \$5,000 for Pilot Project Research Grants, \$20,000 for Small Project Research Grants, and \$50,000 for the new Established Project Research Grants category, only \$5,000, \$20,000 or \$50,000, respectively, can be provided by AOFAS.
- The AOFAS funding will not be released until other sources of funding needed to meet the total budget have been secured.

Presentation and Publication

Grant recipients are **required** to submit an abstract for presentation of their research at the AOFAS Annual Meeting or Specialty Day Program within one year of the end of the term of the grant.

"Foot & Ankle International, the official scientific journal of the AOFAS, has the right of first refusal for publication of research findings by grant recipients. The primary paper from the supported research must be submitted to FAI, and any secondary papers from this original research may be submitted to other journals for publication.

The following acknowledgment should be used as a footnote on the first page of the text:

"Supported by a grant from the American Orthopaedic Foot & Ankle Society with funding from the Orthopaedic Foot & Ankle Foundation."

The above credit line must also be included when a grant recipient presents a paper at a professional scientific meeting. The grant award recipient must send reprints of all papers and publications resulting from work done under a grant, including those that appear after the grant has been terminated.

Application Format

Application materials should be submitted via the online application system, per the instructions indicated in this document, *The AOFAS Research Grants Program Description, Policies, and Guidelines for Applicants and Institutional Representatives*, as well as throughout the online application.

The **Project Title** must contain a reference to the clinical relevance of your project.

The **Research Strategy** may be prepared and formatted in Microsoft Word, with figures, tables, and images incorporated. The document should be 6 pages maximum, with a font size not smaller than 10- point. Minimum margins must be 1/2 inch for left and right, 1 inch for top and bottom. Convert to PDF file format for upload into the online system.

Documents that need to be uploaded should be in PDF file format, with files named as indicated in the instructions. Please adhere to page/word/character limitations as indicated in the instructions throughout the online application form.

Graphics (figures, tables, photographs or other image files, medical images, data tables) should be converted to PDF file format, where practical; named as indicated in the application form; uploaded into the online system under Appendices; and referenced by the relevant file name where appropriate in other sections of the application form.

Application Format (continued)

Institutional approval documents (IRB approval, human subjects protection program, institutional animal care and use, site review, etc.) should be named as indicated and uploaded as separate files in the appropriate place in the application according to instructions.

Resubmissions

If the application is a resubmission of an application submitted on the same or a similar topic, with or without the same title, within the past three years, the applicant must select “yes” on application form in the appropriate space to indicate this. An application may be resubmitted twice.

A resubmission must include a statement of how the applicant has responded to previous critique(s) and summarizing changes made from the original application. If extensive changes have been made or the entire application has been rewritten, the main points of change should be summarized.

Submission Instructions

All 2017 AOFAS Research Grants cycle applications must be submitted via the online application system which can be accessed from the link at www.aofas.org/researchgrants. **The application submission deadline is Friday, December 30, 2016 at 11:59 pm CT.**

The “Applicant” may be the Principal Investigator, a Co-Investigator, or another person on behalf of the Principal Investigator. The “Applicant” will be the **only** point of contact for all future correspondence related to this application or any grant awards. All correspondence will be sent only by email to the “Applicant” email address. **IMPORTANT NOTE:** Before beginning the application, if you are not the Principal Investigator, please consider your availability to serve as primary contact through the grant award term.

Besides the Applicant, other persons associated with the application (the PI or one of the up to four Co-Investigators, and the Department Chair, Institution Administrative or Grants Management Representative, and Institutional Financial Officer) will be designated by the Applicant.

These other associated persons must review the application and provide signatures and agreements as indicated in the system, **after the Applicant has completed all sections.** **IMPORTANT NOTE:** Please allow time for these representatives from your institution to provide these signatures by the application deadline, and **after** the application has been completed by the Applicant.

Paper, faxed, or emailed applications **will not** be accepted. The application must be submitted in the AOFAS online system, accessible from www.aofas.org/researchgrants, **by December 1, 2016 at 11:59 pm Central Time.** The online system will close at this time, and later submissions will not be considered.

Specific instructions for each part of the application are provided at the appropriate places throughout the online application.

Questions and Additional Information

Please direct queries about The AOFAS Research Grants Program, the application process, instructions, or the online system to: research@aofas.org or phone: 1- 800-235-4855 or 1-847-698-4654 (outside US).