

Advanced Olympic Research Grant Programme

Objectives, rules and guidelines 2025/2027 Award

October 2024



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1. Objectives

The main objectives of the Olympic Studies Centre (OSC)'s grant programme are to promote advanced humanities or social sciences research by experienced researchers in priority fields of research identified annually by the IOC and to foster the collaboration between the academic community and the IOC.

For the 2025/2027 edition, the priority fields of research are:

AI AND SPORT

1. AI and prevention of corruption in sport

- Leveraging AI for integrity and prevention of corrupt practices by sports organisations and Olympic Movement stakeholders.
- How to identify and mitigate AI risks of corruption.

ELITE YOUTH ATHLETES

Priority is given to the following two fields of research:

2. Elite youth athletes' voice

- Consultation and engagement of sporting organisations (NOCs, IFs, NFs) at national or international level with youth athletes (under 18s).
- Themes of interest: topics included in the consultations, child-friendliness consultation approaches, periodicity, diversity of population group consulted (based on gender, minority or other vulnerability status), typology of engagement channels and reporting mechanisms regarding dual careers.
- A preference is given to research projects undertaking a comparative analysis across countries and continents.

3. Young athletes: prevention of corruption in sport and competition manipulation – Sport integrity policies

- Tailoring anti-corruption and prevention of competition manipulation awareness-raising initiatives to target young athletes.
- Accessibility of current anti-corruption and prevention of competition manipulation reporting mechanisms to young athletes. (E.g. IOC [Integrity and Compliance Hotline](#)).

ESPORTS AND E-GAMES

Priority is given to the following two fields of research:

4. Esports integrity

- Identification and mitigation of the threats related to sports integrity, including corruption and competition manipulation, in all relevant e-games (including physical, simulated and traditional esports games) taking into consideration the [Code of Ethics](#), the [Basic Universal Principles of Good Governance](#) and the [Olympic Movement Code on the Prevention of the Manipulation of Competitions](#).
- Tailoring anti-corruption and prevention of competition manipulation awareness-raising initiatives to target gamers, entourage members and relevant stakeholders.

5. Women's participation in e-games

Strategies and initiatives to enhance female engagement in the e-gaming community, focusing on barriers to entry, promotion of inclusive gaming environments, and the development of female-centric gaming content and events.

SAFE SPORT: ATHLETE SAFEGUARDING AND (MENTAL) HEALTH

Priority is given to the following four fields of research:

6. Culturally informed safeguarding and mental health initiatives in sport

- Developing culturally sensitive strategies for promoting safeguarding and/or mental health practices, taking into account local contexts, cultures, and resources, particularly in the Global South.
- Implementing effective safeguarding and mental health initiatives.

7. Shifting from policy-based to culture-based safeguarding in sport

Facilitating cultural change within sports organisations by examining case studies where a safeguarding culture was successfully implemented.

8. Understanding and addressing online abuse in sport

Impact of online abuse on athletes' mental health and performance, and good practices to create a healthier digital environment.

9. Female elite athletes' health

- Perceptions and experiences of female adult athletes (over 18s) around their health needs and the extent to which these needs are covered by the provision of health care in the elite sport setting, both when attending competition events such as the Olympic Games and in the year-round medical follow-up.
- Supporting health care provision at the Olympic Games and/or specific initiatives for female athlete health between the Games as well as in retirement.

SPORT COACHES

10. National coaching programmes in Olympic sports and in countries from different regions of the world, including the Global South

Priority is given to proposals focusing on at least two of the following aspects:

- Successful strategies, policies and programmes for coaches at national level.
- Educational path followed by the coaches (e.g. from grassroots to elite level) and pedagogical approach of the programmes.
- Increasing the presence of female coaches.
- Transition from amateur to professional coaches.

THE CONTRIBUTION OF SPORT AND OLYMPISM TO THE UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Priority is given to the following two fields of research:

11. Contribution of community sport and sport for development projects, programmes and policies towards the achievement of the following outcome areas prioritised in the IOC's [Olympism365 strategy](#):

- Sport, education and livelihoods
- Sport, equality and inclusive communities
- Sport, health and active communities
- Sport, peace and safe communities
- Innovation
- Urban sport and social good

We encourage proposals that:

- include in the scope emerging economies and developing countries;
- consider innovative and creative solutions leveraging social enterprise, technology and sport to contribute to sustainable development; and
- compare sport-based approaches with other types of interventions.

12. Strengthening policy procedures and institutional capacity, particularly national/regional community sport systems or sport for development initiatives with national or regional scale in the following areas (with a focus on emerging economies and developing countries):

- Safeguarding and prevention of harm and abuse in sport
- Equitable, inclusive and accessible approaches as a prerequisite to strengthen the role of sport as an enabler of sustainable development
- Environmental sustainability

2. Eligibility

All university professors and researchers who have completed their doctorate and who currently hold an academic/research appointment/affiliation covering the period of the grant (from submission of the application to delivery of the final report) are eligible to apply.

Applicants must submit a proposal directly linked to at least one of the priority fields of research listed above. Research projects will be accepted only if the applicants clearly demonstrate that the results will be relevant to the current situation of the priority field concerned.

Applications within a natural science focus (e.g. biomechanics, physiology, medicine, neurosciences, etc.) fall outside the scope of this programme.

Other eligibility criteria to be fulfilled are as follows:

- Applicants must be fluent in either English or French.
- Applicants may apply on an individual basis or as a team.
- In the case of team applications:
 - one academic member of the group should be nominated as the Principal Investigator (PI) and remain the main contact person for the OSC;
 - all research group members have to fulfil all the eligibility criteria. However, in special circumstances, a maximum of one project member may be a representative of a sports organisation, government body or another non-academic institution if their contribution is essential to the project and is clearly justified;
 - interdisciplinary and intercultural team applications are encouraged.

These eligibility criteria will be strictly applied.

3. Application procedures and deadline

Applications and all supporting documentation must be submitted in either English or French, the two official languages of the Olympic Movement.

Completed application files must include the following documents:

1. [Official application form](#) duly completed (see "[Instructions for completing the Research Grant Programmes application forms](#)").
2. Current and official recognition of employment (appendix 1), including the academic/research status validated by the applicant's university using the institutional letterhead. In the event of a team application, a certificate is needed for each member.
3. A brief curriculum vitae (maximum 2 pages) of the applicant and, in the event of a team application, of the research team members, providing basic information about education, former and current academic responsibilities, as well as employment history and research experience and awards related or relevant to the application (appendix 2).

4. If the research proposal involves collaboration with other partners/organisations, letter(s) of support confirming their commitment (appendix 3).
5. If the research proposal includes interviews, surveys or any other methodologies that involve human subjects and/or human data, a certificate stating that the project has been approved by the ethics committee of the university of the PI (appendix 4).
6. Applicants are requested to take note of the Guidelines concerning the use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools (see section 7) and disclose if they have used an AI tool to develop their application.

The absolute deadline for submitting applications is midnight CET on **Monday 27 January 2025**. After the deadline, incomplete or late applications will not be accepted. The OSC will send a candidature acceptance confirmation email by Monday 3 February 2025.

4. Grant awards

Successful applicants will receive a research grant of a maximum of USD 40,000 per project. The total amount to be awarded will be decided by the Grant Programme Selection Committee after full consideration of all elements of the application.

EXPENSES COVERED

Research expenses directly related and essential to the project as follows:

- Travel (economy class) and living expenses when outside the applicant's place of residence and other expenses related to essential field research;
- Translation costs;
- Web hosting and development;
- Software not provided by the university;
- Workshops and focus groups;
- Expert third-party services;
- Activities aiming to ensure that the final outcomes / recommendations of the research project are shared with the relevant Olympic Movement stakeholders.
- Other relevant research expenditure.

Research assistance and transcription costs will be funded when essential and properly justified. The applicants' time devoted to the project should be at least equal to or exceed that of the research assistant(s). Details of the number of days and tasks to be performed at a daily rate must be provided.

Expenses related to the dissemination of the applicant's research results within the academic world are accepted up to a maximum of 15 per cent of the total budget.

EXPENSES NOT COVERED

- Applicant’s salary and/or fringe benefits, including insurance;
- Tuition and study fees;
- Institutional overheads or institutional support;
- Expenses incurred prior to the effective date of the grant;
- Purchase of technological material or hardware (laptop, camera, etc.).

The grant will be paid through the academic institution of the successful applicant (PI) with the following schedule: half when the Research Project Agreement has been signed, one-quarter after submission of the second progress report, and one-quarter on receipt and validation of the final research report.

5. Selection and notification

The Grant Programme Selection Committee is composed of academic experts who are internationally renowned for their involvement in Olympic studies and a representative of the OSC.

Other representatives of the IOC administration and a selection of [academic peer reviewers](#) are also involved in the [selection process](#). Decisions are based on the quality of the application file, the significance of the proposed research to at least one of the priority fields of research, the relevance of the expected outcomes for the IOC’s programmes and/or activities, the feasibility of the project and the candidate’s/ candidates’ ability to carry out the research satisfactorily.

Note that this is a competitive programme with a set amount of funds to be awarded for each edition.

Applicants will be notified of the results of their application in June 2025.

To find a detailed description of the evaluation and selection process and the pool of peer-reviewers who have contributed to the programme in the past, please consult [our website](#).

6. Publications and undertakings

All grants are conditional upon signature of the “Research Project Agreement” (“Agreement”) by the successful applicant, or the PI in the event of a team application), and his/her university. The Agreement describes the terms and conditions of the collaboration between the grant-holder, his/her university and the Olympic Studies Centre. Applicants, or the PI in the event of team application, are requested to read the [Agreement](#) and inform their university about its terms before submitting an application.

Grant-holders must schedule three meetings with the IOC administration involved in the project:

1. one at the beginning of the research, to ensure a common vision on the research to be conducted and share any relevant information;
2. one in the middle of the project, to review preliminary findings; and
3. a last one after submission of the final report, to comment on the outcomes.

For those grant-holders not requiring consultation of the OSC collections, the meetings will be organised online. For those planning to consult the OSC collections, it is highly recommended that they combine one of the meetings with the IOC staff and their visit to the OSC in a single trip to Lausanne.

Grant-holders will undertake to provide the OSC with the following documents (electronic version), in either English or French:

- Two progress reports every seven months after signature of the agreement, describing the project’s development (2,000 words maximum) and a financial accounting report of the expenses incurred thus far.
- A final research report before mid-June 2027. The final report, which the OSC may use for publication, will consist of three documents with the following content:
 1. First document (approx. 8,000 – 12,000 words):
 - An abstract (200 words maximum) and a list of key words;
 - An executive summary including a short description of the research topic and objectives, and highlighting the main findings, conclusions and, if appropriate, recommendations (approx. 1,200 – 2,000 words);
 - The report including the research topic and objectives; the methodology applied; and a detailed presentation of the findings, conclusions and, if appropriate, recommendations of the research project;
 - The annexes, including any additional information of interest for the project.

2. Second document:
 - An infographic summarising the objectives, methodology and findings of the research project.
3. Third document:
 - A final financial accounting report for all funds provided by the OSC. This last part must be sent in a separate document ([template](#) provided by the OSC).

Grant-holders are encouraged to publish/disseminate their research results within the academic world. They will also undertake to ensure that all subsequent publications or productions, using all or part of the results obtained under the auspices of the research grant, will appropriately acknowledge the IOC Olympic Studies Centre and the Advanced Olympic Research Grant Programme. In addition, they will share any such publications or productions with the OSC.

7. Guidelines concerning the use of artificial intelligence tools

The OSC acknowledges the increasing use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools in academic research and publications. While AI can significantly enhance research efficiency, innovation and impact and reduce potential language considerations, use of AI tools must be balanced with ethical considerations and academic transparency and integrity.

Based on the above, these guidelines provide a framework for the appropriate use of AI tools in research funded by the OSC and aim to enable the opportunities that AI brings to academic research while ensuring that 1) the work remains the product of the academics' own intellectual endeavours and 2) there is a protection against potential risks.

All candidates and grant holders must comply with the following guidelines:

1. Transparency and acknowledgement
 - **AI assistance disclosure:** Any use of AI tools, including for drafting, proofreading, summarizing, or data analysis, must be explicitly acknowledged in the candidate's applications and / or all research reports.
 - **Authorship integrity:** AI-generated content should not replace the original thought and critical analysis expected from applicants and grant holders. AI should be a tool for assistance, not a primary source.
2. Data protection and privacy
 - **Sensitive information:** AI tools must not be used by to process sensitive, confidential or proprietary data.
 - **Compliance with Data Laws:** Ensure compliance with all relevant ethics, data protection and privacy laws and regulations, particularly when handling personal data.

3. Intellectual property (IP) and originality
 - **Respect for IP rights:** Use AI responsibly by not infringing on intellectual property rights. This includes avoiding the generation of content that mimics proprietary works.
 - **Plagiarism prevention:** Applicants and grant holders are responsible for the originality and integrity of their work. Grant holders are responsible to verify via an appropriate plagiarism online tool that AI-generated content included in the final report does not result in plagiarism.
4. Ethical use and bias awareness
 - **Ethical considerations:** Be aware of and address any ethical implications and/or national ethics requirements of using AI in research.
 - **Bias and accuracy:** Recognise that AI tools may have inherent biases or accuracy limitations. Applicants and grant holders should critically evaluate and corroborate AI-generated information with other relevant sources.

8. Additional information

SELECTION COMMITTEE

For the 2023/2025 Advanced Olympic Research Grant Programme, the IOC Olympic Studies Centre (OSC) received 42 applications and [awarded 7 grants](#). The Selection Committee, responsible for recommending to the OSC which projects should be awarded a grant, was composed of the following experts:

- Mahfoud AMARA (Qatar University, Qatar)
- Dikaia CHATZIEFSTATHIOU (Canterbury Christ Church University, Great Britain)
- Marion KEIM LEES (University of the Western Cape, South Africa)
- Sigmund LOLAND (Norwegian School of Sport Sciences, Norway)
- Hisashi SANADA (Tsukuba University, Japan)
- Tracy TAYLOR (RMIT University, Australia)
- Paul WYLLEMAN (Vrije Universiteit, Belgium)

FULL LIST OF AWARDED RESEARCH PROJECTS

The full list of research projects funded by the IOC Olympic Studies Centre since the creation of its grant programmes in 1999 is available [here](#). The list is organised by theme, with links to the full text versions online when available.

SECRETARIAT

For any additional information concerning the Advanced Olympic Research Grant Programme, please contact the OSC [via email](#) or phone (+41 21 621 6611).

To find out more about the activities and collections of the IOC Olympic Studies Centre, please consult [our website](#).