FOUNDATION FOR PHYSICAL THERAPY RESEARCH

# 2027 Promotion of Doctoral Studies Scholarships Pre-candidate Students (PODSI) APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

**You must use the Foundation's online application platform on ProposalCentral.com to submit your application by 4:59 p.m. EST, January 20, 2027**

**Program name on ProposalCentral.com: Promotion of Doctoral Studies I**

## 1. GETTING STARTED

### 1.1. Set up an Account

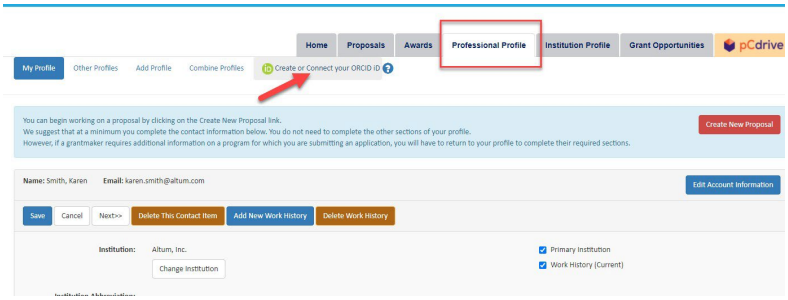
Applicants who already have a ProposalCentral account may skip this section. Select the "Applicant or Awardee" tab before you log in via the ProposalCentral.com website page.

If you do not have an account, go to the ProposalCentral.com website page. Choose the "Applicant or Awardee" tab. You have two options to create your account. One is to click on "Need an account," then enter your first and last name, email address, create a password, choose a challenge question, and provide the answer to it. The other option is to create an account using your existing ORCID ID.

### 1.2. Navigate to the Application Form

#### 1.2.1. Click on the Applicant tab

If you have not linked your ORCID ID to your ProposalCentral account, click on the Professional Profile tab and connect your ID.[1] If you are all set, skip this step and proceed to click on the "Grant



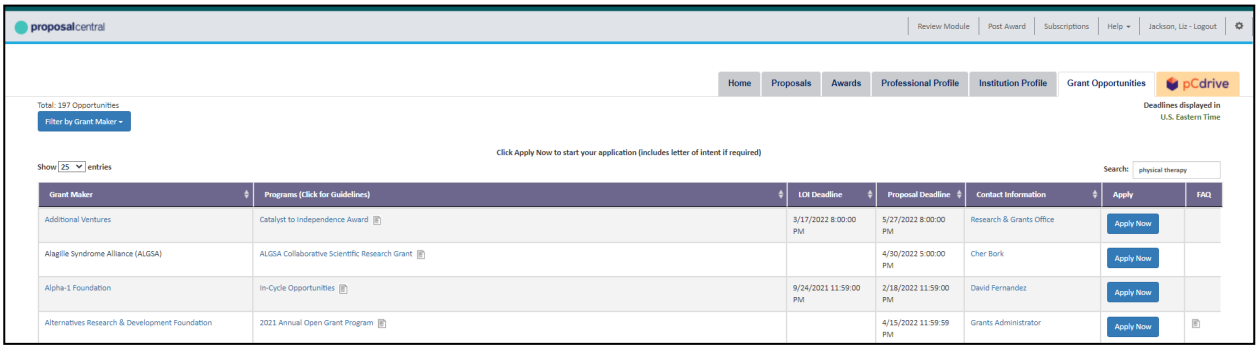

[1] You will be required to have an ORCID ID if you are awarded a Foundation grant. If you want to create one while creating your ProposalCentral account, click on "Login with ORCID" button as your sign in. You will land on the ORCID sign in, where you will click on this link, "Don't have an ORCID ID yet? Register now." Once you have your number, you still need to create your ProposalCentral account and link your ORCID ID before you can use it to log on.

Opportunities" toward the right on the main tabs menu.

### 1.2.2. Click on the Grant Opportunities tab

Navigate to the "Grant Opportunities" tab and enter "Foundation for Physical Therapy Research" into the search box. You will get the list of all the Foundation grants.

Scroll down to find **Promotion of Doctoral Studies I** on the list and click the **"Apply Now"** button. You will be taken to the application. *If you scroll down and do not see it, look at the right corner below the list, and click on the right arrow to go to the second page of Foundation opportunities.*




### 1.2.3. Create and Save Your Application

We strongly recommend that you complete the first section, General Information and Title, in case you create multiple versions and need to tell them apart.

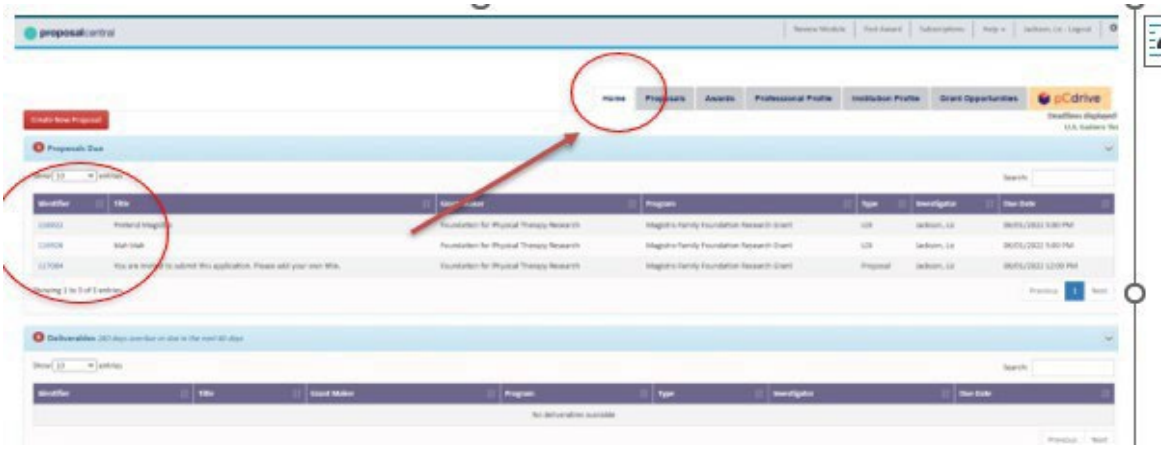
Click on "Save" for the system to create an application form you can revisit as many times as you wish prior to submission. You cannot delete an application once created.

Once you complete the first section and saved it, you will be able to save your content whenever you click "Save" or "Next" on each page. Prior to saving this first section, an exit would not save the application, and you could not proceed to the next sections of the application.

You may exit the application by clicking the "Exit" button.

### 1.2.4. Resume Work on an Unfinished Application

To resume your work, login to ProposalCentral.com. You will land on the "Home" tab page. You will see your application listed. Click on the application identifier number associated with it to access the application.



You are able to work on any portion of the application as many times as you like until you click "Submit."

#### 1.2.5. Quick Access to the 2027 PODSI Guidelines

You can find a link to the 2027 PODSI guidelines in the box beneath the table of contents on the left side of the application.

## 2. Important Points

- **BEFORE YOU START, please review the guidelines, these instructions, and the initial FAQs posted on the scholarships page on the Foundation website, even if you have applied before. The Foundation updates the guidelines and instructions annually.**
- **We strongly encourage applicants to sign up to receive our updates and FAQs via email. Sign up here.**
- We strongly encourage you to **use the validate function** in Section 15 as you complete the application. This function checks required information and lists what is missing. You will not be able to submit an application that has errors in it.
- Be sure your institutional signing official (program director or department chair) will be available to sign the application prior to submission. We STRONGLY advise close coordination, as failure to get the required signature will prevent you from submitting your application.
- The Foundation is very hesitant to grant a late submission when the reason for the failure would allow the applicant extra time to work on their application, especially if the delay is tied to the mentor information or the training or research plans.

### 2.1. What if you Miss the Submission Deadline

- **Do not give up.** The important step is that you must log your problem immediately when you have not submitted by the deadline.
- If you think that the problem is with the ProposalCentral application, send an email immediately to **pcsupport@altum.com** AND copy marynusloch@foundation4pt.org. They might not respond or be available to us to discuss the problem until the morning of January 21, 2027.

- Contact **Mary** immediately and no later than 5:30 p.m. EST with a description of the problem. We will also monitor info@foundation4pt.org until 5:30 p.m. EST.
- The Foundation has no obligation to grant extensions. Documenting your problem immediately after the deadline ensures a close review of the circumstances with a possibility that the Foundation might allow a late submission if those circumstances warrant it, especially if the issue is technical.
- If you are missing a required attachment at the time of submission, you may upload a placeholder document to allow the application to validate and be submitted. Then, follow all the steps for notifying the Foundation immediately. Please also see section 13, Attachments, for guidance about what to do if your fall 2026 transcript will not be available by January 20, 2027.
- If your official is trying to sign or there is some reason they cannot by the deadline, they must notify us immediately via email and explain the problem. Your official will need to be available as soon as possible on January 21, 2027 to sign.

## 3. Questions

For questions about the guidelines or these instructions please contact **info@foundation4PT.org.** We are happy to answer by email. If a question would benefit from a call, we will offer to set one up. **We do not take phone calls that have not been scheduled in advance.** When answers might benefit other applicants, we will add the question and our answer to the FAQs.

For any technical assistance in using the Foundation's application platform on ProposalCentral, please contact **pcsupport@altum.com** or call them at or call **800-872-2562** or **703-964-5840** between 8:30 a.m. EDT and 5:00 p.m. EDT.

**The instructions for the application in ProposalCentral continue on the next page**

FOUNDATION FOR PHYSICAL THERAPY RESEARCH

**These instructions are for pre-candidate student applicants only.** They correspond to the **Promotion of Doctoral Studies I** application form on ProposalCentral.com.

**Read these instructions carefully and thoroughly. The Foundation has changed requirements and updated templates since last year.**

**Sign up for the FAQs update mailing on the website to stay abreast of important clarifications, corrections, and more detailed guidance in response to applicants' questions.**

## Introduction

The multiple sections of the application are listed along the lefthand side of the screen once you open the application form. Each section has required information that must be entered or uploaded before your application is considered complete and can be submitted to the Foundation.

**Use the "Validate" button throughout the process to see a list of requirements for submission that still need to be completed.**

**Required fields are marked with a red asterisk** *. If one of these fields are left blank, your application will not fully validate. You will not be able to submit your application until you enter the missing information.

### Section 1: General Information and Project Title

Provide a title that reflects your intended area of research. Pre-candidate student applicants have to provide a short (2-page) summary of their research plan for the scholarship period. Consider a title that will reflect that plan. Once you have entered a title and clicked on save, your application has been created on the ProposalCentral system, and you may exit or continue working on it by clicking next.

### Section 2: Download Templates

This section provides all the Word® templates and their detailed instructions that you need to complete each one. Required templates have been pre-formatted.

**DOWNLOAD THE TEMPLATES TO ENSURE YOU ARE USING CORRECTLY FORMATTED AND THE MOST UP-TO-DATE VERSIONS.**

## Section 3: Enable Other Users to Access Your Application

Because your program director or department chair is required to sign your application, you will add them in this section. Add their email in the box under "Give user permission" and click save that is above that heading. ProposalCentral will confirm that the name has been added under "Proposal access rights". You must choose **edit** from the pulldown Permissions box and **click save again.** Since you must accept funds directly as of 2027, you do not need to add a financial officer. Please note, if your program director is a mentor, they cannot sign your application. You must add your department chair as the signing official with edit permission.

## Section 4: Applicant

Contact information from your Professional Profile on ProposalCentral, including your primary institutional affiliation, is pre-loaded into this section of the application.

**Note:** If the required fields are incomplete or incorrect in this section, changes must be made in your Professional Profile in ProposalCentral, not in this section. You can go directly to it by clicking the button "Edit Professional Profile." Alternatively, you may exit the Applicant section and use the Professional Profile tab in your ProposalCentral management window (located in a different ProposalCentral browser window than the application).

## Section 5: Institution Information

The institution is the one at which you are enrolled for your doctoral studies. By default, the one you chose in the Applicant section will appear here automatically.

To change the Institution, choose from the list of institutions and press the button "Change Institution." The initial list contains only the following: the current institution, the institutions that you listed in your Professional Profile, and any other institutions that include your UserID in their access list. Use the Search option to search the other institution profiles available in ProposalCentral. Results of the Search will be added to the list of institutions. To change the Institution, choose from the new list of institutions and press the button "Change Institution." If, after changing the Institution, you need to update the contact information that appears below it, you can click "Edit Institution Profile" to go directly to that Institution Profile (this button is only available if you have Edit access to the selected Institution Profile). If you cannot access that field, you must ask your institutional official for assistance.

## Section 6: Key Personnel

You are required to add at least one mentor (if adding more than one, add all that you will be listing in your Mentor Information and Support template) and program director or department chair. The

system should allow you to proceed after adding at least one mentor **and** program director or department chair.

Do not add the person(s) providing a blinded letter(s) of recommendation.

Anyone providing any type of training support must be added as a mentor and a biosketch uploaded for them. The Foundation considers advisors or collaborators to be mentors if they are providing percent time in your training plan, and/or are listed in 5.1. in the Mentor Information and Support template. Labeling them as anything other than mentor, if they are providing mentoring support, does not obviate the requirement to list them here as a mentor, provide a biosketch, and have them provide a letter or support.

PT mentors must be licensed in the United States. All mentors must have some type of academic doctoral degree. MDs are considered equivalent degrees for meeting this requirement.

If your program director is a mentor, then add them here with that role. If you only added them in section 3 as the signing official, you must go back and amend that information. They cannot be both mentor and signing official on your application. Choose your department chair instead as the signing official in section 3.

### 6.1. Adding a Key Personnel Entry

To start an entry, enter their email address and click the "Add" icon.

**Each person you add will need to have the following information provided:**

**Role:** Select the person's role from the list
**Other Role:** For a role not listed in the drop-down list
**Effort:** % mentoring effort this individual will provide
**First Name**: Enter first name.
**Middle Name or initial**: Enter middle initial or name (optional)
**Last Name**: Enter last name. PUT ONLY THE LAST NAME HERE.
**Degrees**: Here is an example of what goes in this field: PT, DPT, PhD. **DO NOT** ADD THESE ABBREVIATIONS IN THE LAST NAME FIELD!! At least one mentor must be a licensed PT in the U.S.

**Position Title**: Enter current position title
**Institution**: Search and Select or manually enter their current employer
**Department:**
**Street Address**:
**City:**
**State:**
**Zip Code**:
**Day time Phone:** xxx-xxx-xxxx
**Key Personnel Biosketch:** Attach completed biosketches (required for all mentors supporting your training who are listed in this section and in the Mentor Information and Support template).

Click Save and Close window once each person's information is complete.

> Do **not** upload biosketches for yourself or your program director or department chair
> You will upload your biosketch in the Attachments, section 13. You do not upload a biosketch for your program director or chair.

## Section 7: Blinded Letter(s) of Recommendation

You must enter at least one person to provide this letter. The maximum number allowed is two.

Do not ask any mentor to provide a blinded recommendation.

Please enter the e-mail address of the person who will provide the blinded letter of recommendation in the "enter email address" box. Then click the plus sign to add them. If this e-mail address is already in the system, an immediate option to 'Send E-mail' will appear. Click 'Send E-mail.'

(If the e-mail is not in the ProposalCentral system, enter a first and last name when requested. Then click 'Send E-mail'). After 'Send E-mail,' click 'Close Window.'

The table below will refresh listing the new person. An email will be sent to that person that will include a link to the ProposalCentral website and instructions for how to provide the recommendation letter for your scholarship application.

At least one person must respond for your application to be complete. When they submit their letter, the Response column will update to Submitted. You will not be able to view the letter, but you can monitor here whether a person has sent the letter.

If the person clicks on the upload link more than three times without uploading their letter, the link expires. The link also expires two weeks after you send them the invitation. In either case, you must resend the invitation by repeating these steps.

## Section 8: Eligibility

You must respond to all 10 questions. Answers to 1-9 must be yes for you to be eligible to apply for a scholarship. The answer to number 10 can be no. It is not a requirement to apply.

1. Will you possess a U.S. PT or PTA license by September 1, 2027?
2. Provide your license number and issuing state or date it will be issued and the issuing state.
3. Are you enrolled in an eligible[2] accredited academic doctoral program?

[2] An eligible doctoral program is one that is fully accredited and provides an academic doctoral degree that provides the research knowledge and skills to conduct physical therapy research, for example, a PhD, DSc, or EdD. DPT degrees are not eligible.

4. In your research plan, do you explicitly identify one or more bulleted priority in the APTA Research Agenda or in a publicly available APTA academy research agenda AND describe how your research relates to it? Failure to meet this requirement explicitly will result in disqualification from review.
5. Do your listed mentors meet the eligibility requirements?
6. Are you in good standing with the Foundation?[3]
7. Do you intend to pursue a career in physical therapy-related research in the United States?
8. Are you a U.S. citizen, U.S. permanent resident, or are enrolled on a F-1 visa?
9. You will NOT have passed the requirements for doctoral candidacy before September 1, 2027?[4]
10. Do you intend to teach in a PT education program? You may answer no. It is not an eligibility requirement, and your teaching intentions are not scored. It is a requirement to be considered for the Bella May and the Mildred L. Wood awards.

## Section 9: Progress Report

This section must be completed by all applicants who have finished their first year of doctoral studies at the time they are applying for this pre-candidacy scholarship. Anyone who is in their first year as of January 20, 2027 will not complete this section. First-year applications should enter "N/A, first-year applicant" in #1, click save, and proceed to the next section. 2026 PODSI awardees should note that fact in #1.

1. Provide a brief summary of major knowledge and research skills building you completed during the previous year. You must answer or enter "N/A, first-year applicant" in this box for the form to validate prior to submission.
2. Summarize the training and research objectives you accomplished, highlighting notable achievements or milestones.
3. Describe any objectives you did not complete. Indicate if the objective has been delayed, changed, or dropped and explain why.
4. For 2026 PODSI awardees only: explain any major changes to your training or research plan and the reasons.

## Section 10: Abstracts and Research Keywords

**Lay Abstract.** Please describe your research area in simple, non-technical, non-jargony terms for a professional audience that may not be familiar with research. This one may be posted on the Foundation website and should not contain proprietary information. **This field has a character limit of 2,000 (approximately a half page).**

**Technical Abstract.** Describe where you are in the educational process and your proposed area of research concentration. Be as specific as possible given the current phase of your education.

[3] Good standing applies to any applicant who has held an award or grant from the Foundation. It means they have satisfied all obligations associated with that funding according to the terms and conditions of the contract.
[4] If you expect to have passed all candidacy requirements by September 1, you must apply for a PODS Candidacy (PODSII) scholarship. You must use the application form provided for that award, not this form. If in doubt, contact the Foundation.

Include a description of how your research relates to the science and evidence supporting physical therapy practice. Be as specific as possible while avoiding jargon or abbreviations. Do not include citations in this field. **This field has a character limit of 3,000 (approximately a half page).**

**Research Keywords.** Select at least five (5) keywords that describe the technical aspects, specialty areas of research, populations, and other main characteristics of your program of study and research plan. **The Foundation uses these keywords to match your application to appropriate reviewers.** Click on the + sign to add words. You will be able to remove words that you decide not to keep on the list. **More keywords and ones that are more specific will help you be matched to a reviewer with relevant expertise.**

## Section 11: Budget Period Detail

There are no requirements for how you allocate the budget, only that the total add up to the award amount of $7,500. You will be able to make changes to your budget allocations if you receive an award. Should you be awarded a scholarship, the Foundation will provide you with guidance on costs that require prior approval and costs that require receipts.

Regardless of how you decide to break down your budget, you remain 100% liable for knowing your tax obligations and for meeting them.

You will only complete Period 1. You must enter the following information:

**Start Date:** 9/1/2027
**End Date:** 8/31/2028

**Personnel Costs:** Enter your full name. Choose "Applicant" under Role. Allocate the amount that you expect to take as a stipend. You may allocate the entire amount in this manner. However, the Foundation may require you to provide details about how it is spent. Taking your award as a stipend does not release you from rules governing the use of funds, requirements for prior approval or submission of receipts.

**Non-Personnel Costs:** You can allocate money under any of these headings. The award money will come to you. If you allocate money for tuition or equipment, for example, you will have to make the payments to your school yourself.

**The total amount in your budget must equal $7,500.**

## Section 12: Budget Summary

This is section that ProposalCentral generates automatically. You cannot change any of this information. You do not need to take any action.

## Section 13: Attachments

Please keep these instructions in mind when completing the required templates and any required or

optional attachments that do not have templates (e.g. transcripts). The blinded letter(s) of recommendation are not managed here. They are uploaded directly by the person providing the blinded letter.

- **Attachments must be submitted in Adobe PDF format**.
- **Page limits are set according to the PDF pages, not the Word pages**.
- **Templates** can be found in section 2 of the application.
- **All required templates** have been pre-formatted and contain specific instructions for completing them. Please follow the instructions closely. Failure to follow them could result in your application not advancing to review.
- **Do not change any page formatting.** If you do and it means your attachment exceeds the number of pages allowed, your application will not validate, and you will not be able to submit it until you fix it. You may change the column width in filling in tables in the templates. You can change the width of tables.
- **Always use the templates provided in the online application.**

### 13.1. Required Template Attachments

The following templates are required:

**Confirmation of enrollment.** Have your Program Director or Department Chair complete the form as directed. Since they are a listed user with edit access, either they or you can upload it. If they upload it, please check that it has been correctly completed prior to submission.

**Applicant Biosketch.** This template is set up differently from the mentor biosketch template and from the NIH format. Please be sure to use the template provided.

**Mentor Biosketch.** You must have uploaded a mentor biosketch for each one listed in the Key Personnel section of the application, which should correspond to the mentor's listed in the Mentor Information and Support template. Mentor's may use either the old biosketch form (provided) or the new SciENcv form. Either are limited to five pages.

**Mentor Award Record.** This template is completed by your primary mentor. If you have not named one, it must be the mentor providing the most support. This record is more comprehensive that the information provided in the mentor information and support attachment, which covered only support that had direct bearing on your training.

Do **NOT** provide a biosketch for the following people: (1) the person(s) providing the letter of recommendation; and (2) your program director or department chair.

Do not provide duplicate biosketches. If you uploaded them in the Key Personnel section 6, do not upload them again in Attachments section 13.

**All biosketches except the applicant's are uploaded in the Key Personnel section of the application. The upload button appears at the end of the dialogue box when you are entering their information. You may proceed without uploading a biosketch, but you will not be able to validate and submit your application until it is uploaded in the Key Personnel section.**

**Letter(s) of Support.** You are required to provide letters of support from any mentor listed in section 5.1. of your Mentor Information and Support template. All letters need to follow the instructions that you will download in section 2 of the application. The following people do NOT submit a letter of support: program director (unless a mentor) or department chair, or the person(s) submitting a blinded letter of recommendation. The limit is 2 pages.

**Mentor Information and Support.** You and your mentor(s) will complete this template as directed in the template instructions. The limit is 7 pages.

**Training Plan.** You are expected to draft your plan and finalize it with your mentor. This work also informs information to be provided in the Mentor Information and Support attachment.

There are NEW elements in this template:

- must indicate if teaching training is a requirement for your degree. Teaching is not a requirement to apply, and your intentions, whether training is required or not, will not affect your score for your teaching plan.
- If you are part-time, one line in the activity table will indicate your part-time status and the amount of time per week (in percent) that is devoted to work not related in some way to your studies.
- There is an optional section for applicants who have indicated their intent to teach and who wish to be considered for the Bella May award.

This template has a 4-page limit.

**Research Plan.** As a pre-candidate student, you are not required to have a fully developed research plan. You may be primarily working on your mentor's research, in which case please state this role clearly in that context. The template has a 2-page limit.

**References.** Use this template to list references cited in your application. You may also list directly relevant references that you do not cite. If you do not cite any works, then you still must indicate that there are none and upload the attachment. If you do not, you will not be able to validate and submit your proposal. This template has a 2-page limit.

### 13.2. Required Attachment—no template

**Compiled Transcripts and Certificate of Completion of Human Subjects Protection Training.** Please provide an **unlocked** official transcript signed by the registrar for every **academic** institution listed in your biosketch. The transcripts can be copies of official transcripts with seals and registrar signatures. Printouts of grades from student accounts are NOT acceptable. Transcripts that cannot be read will be returned.

Please include a qualifying transcript of your most recent (fall 2026) semester. If it will not be available by the deadline, contact Mary (MaryNusloch@foundation4pt.org. You must still submit

your application on time. We may grant an extension to send us the missing attachment or advise you to put the information in section D of your biosketch. To avoid possible disappointment, contact Mary before the deadline to confirm what to do in time to submit the application itself on time.

**You must compile all official transcripts together in a single Adobe PDF file.** Scan these documents so that the most recent grades are listed first and oldest are listed last. Do not submit a transcript with access date expirations or permission controls.

Please add your CITI **human subjects protection training certificate** at the end of your compiled transcripts. It must be the certificate, and it must be for human subjects protection training. Do NOT include the course transcript.

### Section 14: Demographic Information (optional)

Your information will be deidentified. This section is not shared with reviewers. The Foundation uses this information to monitor its commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

### Section 15: Validate

You may use this function at any time in preparing your application. ProposalCentral will provide a report confirming any required documents or information that you still need to provide in order to submit your application.

### Section 16: Required Signatures and Print

You must have two e-signatures in order to submit. You must e-sign your application to certify and submit it. Your program director or department chair must also e-sign and certify your application in order for it to be submitted. They must be listed in section 3 of the application form and have edit rights (see section 3 above about adding users who will be able to access your application).

### Section 17: Submit

You will be able to submit only when all required documents have been successfully uploaded and required information in the application has been provided. The validate function will identify anything that is missing.

Once you have submitted, you may unsubmit your application and continue to work on it up to the submission deadline. Once the deadline has passed, you will not be able to make any changes unless so directed by the Foundation during the compliance with requirements review.

For any questions about the application requirements, please be sure to check for updates and FAQs. You can sign up to receive them via email by filling out the form on the scholarships page on the Foundation website. If you still have questions, contact Mary

(MaryNuslock@foundation4pt.org). She will respond during normal business hours.

For questions or problems using ProposalCentral, contact PCSupport@altum.com, Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m.– 5:00 p.m. EST. By phone (toll-free): 800 875 2562 (Toll-free U.S. and Canada) or +1 703 964 5840.