

## **FAQs: 2026 \$40k Research Grants**

*Note: These FAQs cover updates about changes to requirements and include our responses to questions that we receive through [info@foundation4PT.org](mailto:info@foundation4PT.org) that are beneficial for all applicants to know. The FAQs also cover ProposalCentral online application platform functionality. If an issue is urgent, we send an update immediately to the mailing list. For applicants accessing the FAQs on our website, we strongly encourage you to sign up for all updates by email [here](#).*

### **Update June 26, 2026**

- **Do I need pre-approval for software licenses?**

A software license is a type of rental agreement. So, it is not considered an equipment purchase where pre-approval is required. However, if the costs are a sizable portion of your total budget, it is better to inform us prior to submission and make sure that we have no concerns.

- **I plan on using the free version of an AI software in my study. Will this be an acceptable use of AI?**

No, but not for the reason you might think. The problem is not using it. The ineligibility is that the free version of an AI chatbot would violate data security and possibly human protections. We rely on institutional IRB exemptions or approvals and use of free chatbots would not likely meet IRB requirements. Failure to secure IRB sign-off would be grounds to rescind a provisional award. So, you must propose to use versions that meet data security and human protections requirements.

- **I am resubmitting a proposal that did not win last year. Do I mention how I revised to address reviewer comments?**

No. Please make no mention that your proposal is a resubmission. We have no restrictions on resubmitting proposals. Identifying it as a resubmission or mentioning previous comments could create an unintended unconscious bias during review this time.

- **Can I change the font or margins in completing attachments?**

You can change the font size or margins and not be disqualified for it during compliance review. There is no mandatory scoring in the review phase for not complying with the directions. However, it could still raise a flag with reviewers if they wonder why an applicant did not comply with the instructions. They can consider it a negligible or minor weakness. These changes cannot result in exceeding the maximum page length. ProposalCentral will not allow attachments to be uploaded that exceed the maximum page length.

## **Update May 29, 2026**

**Clarification on uploading human subjects and animal protection training certificates:** We apologize for the confusing edits to the paragraph about protection training certificates. The upload for them is right there in that part of the applications. Combine all required certificates into one PDF. Do not upload the compiled certificates again in Section 13-Attachments. Provide only one training certificate per team member. The training must cover human protections. The copies must be certificates. Transcripts cannot be substituted for the certificate. The training or refresher needs to be done within the last 3 years. The clarification holds for animal protections certificates if that applies to your proposal.

## **Update May 22, 2026**

- **Does the new Foundation AI policy restricting use in developing my study proposal mean that I cannot use AI in the study itself?**

This is an excellent and timely question. We recognize that AI is being used in the profession and in research. Therefore, for some grants, studying its use might be the focus of a proposal. All other requirements and review criteria aside, a focus itself on a type of AI use would be eligible. Further, we already welcome proposals that have AI in certain tech, such as wearable devices or in using activity-based tech. If using AI in analysis, we would expect to see full transparency in describing its use, including a plan for ensuring that humans fully validate all AI outputs. If you are not sure about your interest in using AI, please contact us. This is a quickly advancing area, and we are working hard to make sure that our grant making is responsive where possible and appropriate.

- **How are rental costs for research equipment treated under the grant budget guidelines? Specifically, does the limitation on "major pieces of permanent equipment is limited to 20% per less of the total award" apply to equipment that is rented for the duration of the project, or only to equipment that is purchased and retained after the grant period?**

Rented equipment is not considered a durable good and therefore is not subject to the 20% limitation. That said, the Foundation aims to support research rather than primarily fund equipment costs, regardless of whether the equipment is rented or purchased. As you plan your budget, we recommend thinking carefully about how much of your total request will be equipment or linked to equipment (e.g., training to use equipment).

If more than 20% of your budget will be allocated to rented equipment and related supplies and/or services, you may want to seek pre-approval. This is typically a quick and straightforward process and can help address any questions well in advance of submission. If granted, the pre-approval should be clearly noted in the budget notes and justification section of your application.

It is important for your application to include sufficient support for personnel, either through in-kind contributions or paid effort (as reflected in the budget section). This helps ensure the

application is the means to help develop PI research skills and experience, which is part of the Foundation's mission.

- **How does the Foundation for Physical Therapy Research define "previous research experience" for an emerging investigator, and is there a specific amount or level of research experience required to qualify?**

'Some previous research experience' means that the PI/applicant must have been either Co-I or PI on at least one study. Our emerging investigator research grants are highly competitive. Research experience must be sufficient to assure reviewers that the PI and the team have sufficient skills, expertise, and experience, in combination, to implement the study successfully.

## **Update April 14, 2026**

### **Summary of major changes effective with this funding cycle**

- J-1 and H-1B visa holders are not eligible to apply for Foundation research grants.
- The requirement to hold permanent resident status through the life of the grant has been clarified to mean that an applicant may have to get a renewal or may submit a naturalization application as part of maintaining validity. The requirement does not mean that the current visa must remain valid itself throughout the grant period.
- Exemption from data-sharing requirements has been further tightened so that data that are not restricted must be shared and lack of an institutional policy is not grounds for exemption.
- Only one protection certificate per team member will be accepted, and the training must include subjects protection.
- PIs will no longer include a short description of their role in the technical abstract. This information needs to be included in their research team information in Section 7.
- Citations are not allowed in the technical abstract.
- Review criteria in the guidelines have been updated as the result of a review of Foundation criteria for alignment with 2025 NIH revised review criteria. Research plan template guidance reflects these changes.
- Equipment purchases greater than 20% of the total budget must be pre-approved prior to submission.
- The instructions have been updated in a number of instances to be clearer about what to do or what is required.
- We added a section to the instructions that explain what to do if you are trying to submit and miss the deadline.
- Either AMA or APA citation style is allowed, and no application is disqualified based on the citation style used.

- **I am from [x] country and have had my green card since 2018. It expires 19 months from now. I want to apply for a 2-year grant. Can I apply?**

Yes, you may apply. If someone holds a valid green card with validity far enough into the future that they cannot apply for a renewal, they are eligible to apply. The Foundation will check country of citizenship to make sure that it is not one where the federal government has created restrictions that might affect the applicant's current or future right to live and work in the U.S.

- **My green card will expire in December. I will apply for a renewal in July. Can I apply?**

Yes. We will ask you to upload the acknowledgement of receipt of your I-90 (Form I-797C) with your passport page application submission.

- **My green card expires in 3 months. I have not reapplied because I have applied for citizenship. The way your eligibility is worded, I am not eligible.**

We apologize for not addressing this scenario explicitly. We know that you do not have to renew your green card if you have applied to be naturalized. You will need to upload your biometric passport page and the acknowledgement of receipt (Form I-797C) of your Form N-400.

- **Does being a citizen or having a green card eligibility requirement apply to research team members?**

No. It applies only to the PI. Research team members who are not citizens, but who hold valid residency and work visas may be named to the team.

- **I am a Dutch citizen employed as an associate professor at a U.S. university and working with a H1B visa. I have a PT license in Massachusetts. Can I apply?**

Unfortunately, no, as of this funding cycle.

- **Can I apply if I will be an academic doctoral candidate as of September 1, 2026?**

No. To be clear, the issue is not whether or not the applicant has a doctorate or not. This degree is not a requirement to be PI as long as the PI fulfills the requirements to ensure adequate research design and methods training. In this case, ineligibility is because the person is considered a student until the degree is conferred.

- **I am a licensed PT in a foreign country but not in the U.S. I am a member of APTA. Can I apply?**

No. While you meet the APTA membership requirement, you do not meet the requirement to have a U.S. PT or PTA license.

- **Can I name a co-PI in my application?**

No. The Foundation does not recognize co-PIs. It does not matter if the other person is also a PT. An important part of the Foundation's mission is to support PT researchers who have not yet been a PI to be one and clearly establish their credentials in that role.

- **Can a postdoc fellow apply for a research grant?**

Yes. A postdoctoral fellow is considered a professional researcher. You may apply as long as your fellowship is not funded in any way by the Foundation.

- **Can a team apply for a grant?**

No. The application must be submitted by one principal investigator employed by a U.S. institution that formally agrees to sponsor the research project by having an official sign the application.

- **Is a co-I on a current research grant funded by the Foundation eligible to apply for a grant as a PI?**

Yes. The Foundation does not consider “co-PI” a formal term for the purposes of eligibility. PI eligibility and restrictions on eligibility pertain solely to the individual applying as the PI.

- **I am a licensed PT, but I am not affiliated with any university or research institution. Can I still apply?**

Yes. But any research involving human or animal subjects will require necessary approvals or exemptions, which can be very difficult if the applicant does not have access to IRB or IACUC processes. Applicants who want to research human or animal subjects should consider partnering with a sponsoring institution that can meet the Foundation requirements concerning protections for human or vertebrate animal subjects. Another consideration is to be able to show that you have access to satisfactory resources and research environment.

- **I have applied twice and have not been successful. Can I apply again?**

Yes. An applicant can apply for one grant each year.

- **Can I apply for more than one research grant in the same year?**

No. But a number of grants allow the applicant to indicate up to three other grants for which they would like to be considered. The Foundation is not obligated to consider an application beyond the original submission.

- **What if I know now that I will be changing my employment to a new institution by the time grants are awarded?**

The Principal Investigator must apply with a current employer at the time of the submission deadline. Even if they have accepted a job offer, until they are actually onboarded as staff, the new employer would not qualify to sponsor the grant. If the change happens after applying but before the Foundation finalizes a contract with the existing sponsoring institution, there is a process the provisional grantee can undertake to request a change in institutions prior to the award being finalized. The Foundation reserves the right not to agree to a change in institutions.

- **Do I have to use the NIH biosketch template you provided?**

No. If you have the required information in a PDF generated using the SciENCv application, we will accept it. We will accept “old” versions of the NIH biosketch.