

PhD Students and Early Career Academics Research Grant Programme

Objectives, rules and
guidelines
2026 Award

June 2025



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The Olympic Studies Centre (OSC) organises an annual research grant programme intended for PhD Students and Early Career Academics engaged in scholarly research on the Olympic Movement, its history and ideals, and the impact of the Olympic Games on the various aspects of contemporary society and culture.

1. Objectives

The objectives of the programme are as follows:

- Support PhD Students and Early Career Academics and foster excellence in research on any aspect of the Olympic phenomenon with a humanities and/or social sciences perspective. Project proposals dealing with any aspect related to the Olympic Movement and/or the Olympic Games will be considered.
- Facilitate a research and study visit at the Olympic Studies Centre in Lausanne, Switzerland (the Olympic Capital), and the consultation of the OSC's collections (including primary sources and the IOC historical archives).
- Support the next generation of scholars in the field of Olympic studies.

The OSC values applications from candidates with diverse backgrounds and regions.

2. Eligibility

The following researchers are eligible to apply:

- Students enrolled in a PhD degree programme with a humanities and/or social sciences perspective with Olympism, the Olympic Movement or the Olympic Games as, at least, one of the research foci.

Candidates can apply if the literature review, theoretical framework and methodology for their study are already clearly defined.

The project presented should demonstrate a clear contribution to the candidate's doctoral thesis.

- Academic staff and postdoctoral fellows who completed their doctorate or equivalent highest degree (including masters, depending on the field) in or after 2023 (named or referred to in this programme as "Early Career Academics" (ECA)).

ECA applicants must hold a university appointment covering the period of the grant (from submission of the application to delivery of the final report).

Applicants may apply for this grant with the same research subject on only two occasions. However, on the second occasion, they must clearly explain how the application has improved and/or differs from the first proposal.

The following researchers are not eligible to apply:

- Candidates who have already been awarded a grant under the PhD Students and Early Career Academics Research Grant programme;
- Candidates submitting collective application;
- Candidates submitting application within natural sciences perspectives (e.g. biomechanics, physiology, medicine, neurosciences, etc).

These eligibility criteria will be strictly applied.

3. Application procedures and deadline

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

Completed application files must include the following documents:

- [Official application form](#) duly completed (see “[Instructions and tips](#) for completing the Research Grant Programmes application forms”).
- Current proof of registration as a university doctoral student from the administration of the university (for PhD students) or current recognition of university appointment (for ECA) on the institutional letterhead (Appendix 1).
- Letter of recommendation written on institutional letterhead, signed and sent by the applicant’s supervisor (for PhD students) or mentor (for ECA). The Selection Committee is particularly interested in the supervisor’s/mentor’s assessment of the following points: the scholarly significance of the research project; the methodology and original nature of the study; the impact of the project on the Olympic Movement; the candidate’s training, abilities, achievements to date and motivation for the research proposed; and the likelihood that the applicant will complete the project on time.
- If the research proposal includes interviews, surveys or any other methodologies that involve human subjects, human data and/or fieldwork, or as required by the applicant's home institution, a certificate stating that the project has been approved by the university’s ethics committee must be included (Appendix 2).
- 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, including the appendices and the recommendation letter, is **22 September 2025, 23.59 p.m. CEST**. It is the candidate's responsibility to ensure that the recommendation letter is received by the OSC on time. After the deadline, incomplete or new applications will not be accepted.

A candidature acceptance confirmation email will be sent to the applicants by 3 October 2025.

4. Grant awards

Successful applicants will receive a research grant of a maximum of USD 6,000. 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 only if linked to the project and/or for those who need to come to consult the IOC Historical Archives and / or OSC's collections in Lausanne;
- Translation costs for essential research materials;
- Web hosting and content development;
- Software not provided by the university;
- Data collection (workshops and/or focus groups);
- Other relevant research expenditure.

Research assistance and transcription costs will normally not be covered unless sound justification is provided.

Expenses contributing to knowledge mobilisation of the applicants' research results (e.g. publication fees, participation at conferences, podcasts, blogs, etc.) are accepted, **with an upper limit of USD 1,500**.

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 start date of the grant;
- Purchase of technological material or hardware (laptop, camera, etc.).

The grant will be awarded to successful applicants according to the following schedule: 50% on formal contract confirmation of the grant awarded and 50% on receipt of the final research report. This schedule may be adapted on an exceptional basis if most of the expenditure related to the research is planned during the first six months of the project.

5. Selection criteria and notification

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

Successful award decisions are based upon the quality of the application file, the significance and originality of the proposed research, the feasibility of the project and the candidate's 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 and that the grants will be awarded at the discretion of the funding body.

Applicants will be notified of the results of their application by the end of December 2025. For those selected applicants who have requested to consult the IOC Historical Archives and/or the OSC collections, the Centre will schedule their research visits between February and December 2026 in consultation with them.

6. Publications and commitments

All grants are conditional upon the signature of the "Research Project Agreement" ("The Agreement") by the successful applicant. The Agreement describes the terms and conditions of the collaboration between the Olympic Studies Centre and the grant holder (and his/her university in the case of ECA's applications or PhD students employed by a university).

All applicants are requested to take note of the Agreement before submitting an application. In the event of ECA's application or of PhD Student being employed by a university, the candidate must, additionally, inform his/her university about its terms (for subsequent agreement purposes) before submitting the application.

- The Agreement between a PhD Student grant holder and the Olympic Studies Centre is available [here](#).
- The Agreement between the University of the ECA/PhD Students employed by a university grant holder and the Olympic Studies Centre is available [here](#).

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

1. A [progress report](#) six months after notification of the award, describing the development of the project (2,000 words maximum) and giving a general overview of the expenses incurred thus far.

2. A [final research](#) report before 31 December 2026. The final report, which may be used by the OSC for publication on the [Olympic World Library](#), will consist of two documents with the following content:
 - First document:
 - An abstract (250-300 words maximum) and a list of key words;
 - A 10-15-page (4,000-6,000 words) report including:
 - a. the research subject and objectives; the academic significance of the project; the methodology applied; the key information sources consulted for the project; (5 pages maximum) and;
 - b. the results and conclusions (5-10 pages)
 - The appendices, including the raw data, if applicable, and any additional information or dissemination material of interest for the project.
 - Second document:
 - A [financial accounting report](#) for all funds provided by the OSC. This last part must be sent as a separate document.

Grant holders will undertake to publish/disseminate their research results within recognised high quality academic outlets. 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 PhD Students and Early Career Academics Research Grant Programme. All related outputs should be shared 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 2025 PhD Students and Early Career Academics Research Grant Programme, the Olympic Studies Centre received 35 candidatures and awarded 4 grants. The Selection Committee was composed of OSC representatives, as well as of the following experts: Mahfoud AMARA (Qatar University, Qatar), Dikaia CHATZIEFSTATHIOU (Canterbury Christ Church University, Great Britain), Angela SCHNEIDER (Western University, Canada), Tracy TAYLOR (RMIT University, Australia) and Paul WYLLEMAN (Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium).

AWARDED RESEARCH PROJECTS

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

SECRETARIAT

For any additional information concerning the PhD Students and ECA 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 Olympic Studies Centre, please consult [our website](#).