



Sydney and J.L. Huffines Institute for Sports Medicine and Human Performance 2024-25 Graduate Student Research Grant

Purpose

The purpose of the Huffines Graduate Research Grant is to provide limited financial support for graduate student research that contributes toward the student's education as well as the Institute's mission (see below mission statement). Funds will not be provided for experiments already funded by other sources within the lab and if awarded, will be revoked if duplicate funds exist.

Eligibility

To be eligible, a graduate student must be:

- Enrolled as a full-time graduate student during the time the research will be completed.
- Be a Huffines Student Affiliate member and working under the direct supervision of a Huffines Faculty Affiliate member. Our eligible Faculty Affiliate members are listed on the website. If your faculty member is not on the website, they need to apply.
- Be in good academic standing with a university within the Texas A&M System.
- Have not received a Huffines Student Research Grant in the past year. Students are eligible to receive a grant every other year.

Limitations

- Students under the direct supervision of the Huffines Director or Associate Director are not eligible to apply.
- Doctoral and Master's students in the last year of their studies will receive priority for funding, but all graduate students may apply.
- Funding is limited to direct costs associated with conducting research. Costs associated with the production of the research report or for computer equipment and software are not allowable.
- Travel requests must be clearly justified and linked directly to data collection. Requests for travel to professional meetings to present a paper will not be considered.
- Each request is limited to \$2,000. Funds **must** be spent in the fiscal year in which they were awarded. Progress will be determined on Jan. 30, 2025; projects that have not started will be subject revocation of funding. Unspent and unencumbered funds will revert to the Huffines Institute general budget the last day of the Institute's fiscal year, August 31, 2025.
- **A total of \$12,000 has been allocated to this grant program;** however, a lack of quality applications may result in less than the full budget being allocated to this grant program.

Post Award Requirements

- Submit a written report of the research results, along with resulting publications (including published abstracts) and grants submitted from the data no later than December 1, 2025.
- All publications and presentations resulting from the funded research must credit the ***Sydney and J.L. Huffines Institute of Sports Medicine and Human Performance.***

Submission Procedures

- Deadline for submission is **5 pm Central Time, September 1, 2024**. Late submissions will not be accepted.
- Grantees will be notified by letter as to the outcome of their application by October 1, 2024.
- Handwritten applications will not be accepted (the form is a fillable pdf).
- Email the application file to: huffines@tamu.edu. Compile all documents into one .pdf file and title the file: "your_last_name"_student_research_2025.pdf

Our mission: to be the bridge between scientists, practitioners, and the lay public in all aspects of sports medicine and human performance, with a particular focus on athletic performance.

Project Description Sections: **These guidelines should be considered requirements and conformance to these guidelines are a requirement for review.**

Grants are to be single space with 0.5 inch margins. Arial, font size 11 should be used throughout the grant. Section headers should be bolded. The format of references is AMA.

Title – Self-explanatory and should clearly describe the project. No more than 75 characters, including spaces.

Purpose – One sentence explanation of the goal of the research proposed. This purpose can be stated in the form of the hypothesis being tested.

Role of this Project and your PI in your education – This should be 1-2 sentences indicating the role that this project plays in your educational curriculum and the extent of overlap with other projects in your lab. A couple of examples are:

1) “This project makes up the core of the preliminary studies that I am completing to establish preliminary data for my dissertation proposal. These studies are also being completed by Quinton Smith for his Master’s thesis. Further, my PI is supporting Quinton’s studies through other research funds.” Or

2) “This project contains 2 of the 3 experiments approved for the completion of my dissertation. The remaining experiment not funded by this proposal will be funded by research funds from my Advisor.”

Significance (~1 page) – In short, this section should define the positive effect that the proposed research will have on the knowledge base in this area. As NIH defines it, this section answers the following questions: “Does the project address an important problem or a critical barrier to progress in the field? If the aims of the project are achieved, how will scientific knowledge, technical capability and/or clinical practice be improved? How will successful completion of the aims change the concepts, methods, technologies, treatments, services, or preventive interventions that drive this field?” (*SF424, Application Guide for NIH and Other PHS Agencies*). Whichever of the questions you answer in describing the significance of your project, you should understand that this section is critical in letting the reviewer know how your project ‘fits’ within current knowledge.

Innovation (~1/2 page) – This section really should describe how the approach you are taking is different/novel from the past attempts to answer this question. What is/are the new and different way(s) that this project approaches the fundamental question you are addressing? Again, NIH says: “Does the application challenge and seek to shift current research or clinical practice paradigms by using novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions? Are the concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions novel to one field of research or novel in a broad sense?”

Approach (~1 page) – This section should describe how you are going to fulfill the purpose you put forward earlier (or test the hypothesis you described). It has to be brief, succinct, and concise. In general, you want to focus more on your experimental design (i.e. how are you going to test your hypothesis?) versus details of your methods. Given that your Research Advisor must sign off on the proposal, the reviewers will probably trust that someone in your lab can do the methods you propose and that you will learn how to do those methods. Thus, it would be adequate just to reference previous work from the lab you work in that has done the same methods. IMPORTANTLY, this section should indicate the status of this protocol with the appropriate compliance committee (e.g. IRB, IACUC,

IBC). Given the extended length of time that compliance approvals require, experiments with currently existing IRB/IACUC approval will be given preference. If your protocol already has approval, please provide a copy of the approval notification (not counted in the grant page limit). If your project is still pending approval and you are awarded a grant, you will not be able to expend any funds until you have final approval from the appropriate compliance committee.

Dissemination/funding plans (~1/2 page) –This section should lay out very specifically how you intend to disseminate the results (e.g. presentations, papers to what journals), an itemized timeline for this dissemination, and what external funds are going to be sought with these results.

Biosketch (2 pages) - This is an abbreviated ‘scientific resume’ and in most cases, has a specific format. For the purposes of this grant program, you should use the format for an NIH-biosketch, but limit it to two pages.

Application of project (Not included in the 5 page maximum) - Each applicant, as part of the application, will submit a 500 word lay-level paragraph regarding the topic of their grant for potential subsequent publication on the Huffines’ website. These articles should be written in a manner that increases interest in the topic and should focus on the “real-world” applications and ramifications of the topic. **This 500-word article will be a major review criterion for deciding on which applications to fund.**

Budget (separate page) - Provide an itemized budget not to exceed \$2,000 listing proposed expenditures in the following categories: 1) Equipment, 2) Supplies & Expendables, 3) Essential Travel for Data Collection, 4) Other.

References - Please provide a list of references.

Reviewer Guidelines:

It is always nice to understand by what guidelines your effort will be judged. The reviewers of these applications are all external to Texas A&M and thus, do not have conflict of interests. The reviewers will be asked to comment on the following core criteria of each proposal:

- a) **Adherence to Instructions:** Did the applicant conform to all guidelines? This is an incredibly important review criterion because if the applicant cannot follow directions, there is doubt as to whether the proposed research design will be successfully completed.
- b) **Significance:** Does the project address an important problem or a critical barrier to progress in the field?
- c) **Investigators:** Can the individual do the project?
- d) **Innovation:** Are the concepts, approaches or methodologies novel to the field?
- e) **Approach:** Does the approach proposed provide the best chance for success?
- f) **Application:** Does the included lay article indicate a full understanding of the research and provide an avenue of transferring knowledge of the results to the lay public?

The reviewers will score each of these core criteria on a scale of 1 (exceptional) – 9 (poor).

The reviewers will also give an overall priority score ranging from 1 (exceptional) – 9 (poor). This overall priority score ***will not be*** an average of the core criteria scores, but will be an overall score that considers the complete package and likelihood of success. Overall priority scores from the reviewers for each application will be averaged to give each grant an overall priority score and that average score will be multiplied by 10 for the final score.

The grant applications will be ranked based on their final priority score with funding beginning with the proposal with the **lowest** priority score. Awarding of grants will continue until the budgeted funding for this grant program is depleted.

This scoring system is based on those in use at NIH and other federal agencies.

Important: The account for each awarded grant will be audited January 30, 2025. The lack of expenditures from an account will be considered 'non-progress' and may lead to the award being revoked. Take home message: If you get a grant, you should start on the project immediately.