



Initial Date: 9/27/12
Revised: 8/21/13
Revision Due: 8/2014

GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCTING RESEARCH AT THE NATIONAL

VETERANS SPORTS PROGRAMS AND SPECIAL EVENTS (NVSP&SE)

- 1) **General.** The mission of the VA National Veterans Sports Programs & Special Events Office is to motivate, encourage and sustain participation and competition in adaptive sports among disabled Veterans and members of the Armed Forces through partnerships with VA clinical personnel as well as national and community-based adaptive sports programs. The Office achieves this mission by providing information and resources to disabled Veterans, their support networks and those in the adaptive sports community. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) annually sponsors six National Rehabilitation Special Events: Creative Arts Festival, Golden Age Games, Summer Sports Clinic, Training-Exposure-Experience (TEE) Tournament, Winter Sports Clinic, and the Wheelchair Games.
- 2) **Research Funding:** No research funding is available through the NVSP&SE. Although grants may be applied for through the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) Paralympics Grant process under public law, the intent of Congress is for creation of Paralympics and adaptive sport opportunities for disabled Veterans and disabled Service members. Applications are submitted through the USOC. In addition, the USOC and Lakeshore Foundation co-host the U.S. Paralympics – Research & Sport Science Consortium designed to facilitate research in subjects related to Paralympics and adaptive sports.
- 3) **Research and Development Relation to the National Veterans Sports programs and Special Events (NVSP&SE).** Research Groups, internal and external to VA, may conduct studies at any of the six VA NVSP&SE as long as there is no impact on the Veteran or NVSP&SE to improve the quality, impact or delivery of rehabilitation services. VA may both conduct and provide support for this research and development. Research and Development efforts at the Special Events may cover a wide spectrum of approaches to rehabilitation such as:
 - a) Request to review Research Study form
 - b) Studies and research concerning the physical , psychological, educational, vocational, social and economic aspects of rehabilitation;
 - c) Projects which are designed to increase the potential for accomplishing the rehabilitation of veterans; and
 - d) Projects, which demonstrate a benefit to veterans
- 4) **Proposals for Research and Development.** Investigators wishing to conduct research at the VA NVSP&SE will submit research proposals to the NVSP&SE Research Committee for review. All proposals must be in 12 point font, one inch margins, with no more than 10 pages as described in section 5a- 5h. Proposal along with all attachments should be sent to Carla Carmichael, Director, National Veterans Golden Age Games; Office of National Veteran Special Program and Special Events; 90K Street; Suite #4, 7th floor (Mail code 002C); Washington, DC 20002. See Table 1 for timeline of submissions. If an IRB approved protocol exists, which addresses all the points



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requested in item 5, the investigators are welcome to submit that document, in lieu of a separate document for items 5a-5f.

5) Research and Development Proposal Information. The following information should be included in proposals for research and development at the Special Events. Failure to include any of the information may result in the proposal not being reviewed.

- a) Project Title
- b) Statement of overall rehabilitation goal and how the goal meets the mission of the NVSP&SE
- c) Project objective: State the objectives of the research, clearly defining its content and scope, how the project will benefit the event, and how the project impacts clinical care
- d) Research Methodology – describe the specific methodology, which will be used to complete research. Specific information should be included as described below:
 - i) Specify the research questions and/or hypotheses
 - ii) Specify the Research design
 - (1) Qualitative (e.g. focus groups)
 - (2) Descriptive
 - (3) Experimental
 - iii) Sample
 - (1) Inclusion/Exclusion criteria
 - (2) Total number of subjects to be recruited for the research study and number that will be recruited at the Special Event
 - (3) Justification (e.g. power calculations) for number of subjects
 - iv) Recruitment strategy
 - (1) Specify how Veterans will be informed about the research study
 - (2) Specify how participation in the study will not impact their participation at the Special Events
 - (3) The approved IRB protocol must include language that states that data will be collected at the Special Event
 - v) Protocol
 - (1) Describe the specific tasks that will be completed to accomplish the research. For example, if completing focus groups, one should describe the process that will be used. If a experimental study, describe intervention, whether blinding is used, etc
 - (2) Describe the data to be collected including what measurement tools (e.g. survey instruments) will be used
 - (3) Specify the methods of how the variables will collected (e.g. questionnaire, force plate, heart rate monitor)
 - (4) Describe at what time points data is collected, ensuring that if study design specified matches data collection efforts (e.g. cross-sectional design would suggest one time point for data collection).

- vi) Describe how data will be analyzed
 - (1) Statistical methods if appropriate
 - (2) If qualitative research – describe methods for transcription, coding and assessing the outcome.
- e) Describe how data and informed consents will be stored while at the Events (which is off-site from VA offices) and how confidentiality of Veterans information will be preserved.
- f) Describe any safety issues that may exist and how safety will be ensured (e.g. if completing a wheelchair skills test, that the tester is trained as well as a spotter is available for high risk tasks)
- g) Describe how findings will be disseminated
- h) Provide a timeline for the study; specify whether the study is funded and by whom
- i) Investigative team
 - i) Names of principal investigator and all key personnel; indicate who the contact person is for all communication
 - ii) For each person listed as key personnel, provide a summary of the persons expertise and role in the research study (e.g. functional statement)
 - iii) Provide proof of research training (e.g. Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative; <https://www.citiprogram.org/default.asp>) and statement concerning conflict of interest
- j) Provide all approvals from all relevant regulatory boards including Institutional Review Board (IRB) Committee on Human Studies and VA Research & Development. If study team includes personnel from multiple VA Hospitals, Universities, or Department of Defense locations, approvals from those entities are required as well. Please see Office of Research Oversight regarding details of Regulatory Review <http://www.va.gov/ORO/index.asp>.
- k) Response to comments if relevant (see section 6.f)
- l) A copy of the approved informed consent document
- m) A copy of the approved consent to allow audio and/or pictures for research

- 6) Investigator Responsibilities:** Investigators conducting research at the NVSP&SE are responsible for:
- a) Conduct of research
 - b) Research materials and equipment
 - c) Travel to and from event
 - d) Hotel accommodations/reservations
 - e) Meals
 - f) Code of conduct becoming for researchers while at Special Events
 - g) Interaction with Special Events Director for assurance of space to complete research
 - h) Research Results: At conclusion of the research study, prior to publication, the investigators will furnish the Research Committee Chair with a research summary.
 - i) Summary of research conducted will include:
 - (1) Title of study
 - (2) Investigators
 - (3) Goal of Study

- (4) Research questions and hypotheses that were to be answered
 - (5) Number of subjects recruited in total and at the Special Event
 - (6) Table of demographic characteristics of the population
 - (7) What the main outcomes were from the study
 - (8) Conclusions and Implications for VA care
- ii) Summary must include what the plan and timeline for dissemination of information and be no more than 500 words
 - iii) Summary must be submitted within 90 days of conclusion of Special Event
 - iv) Summaries will be posted on <http://www.va.gov/adaptivesports/index.asp>
- i) The Research Committee Chair will disseminate research findings summary to Veterans Service Organizations (VSO) or other sponsoring organizations as well as to Director of the NVSP&SE. Should VSO or sponsoring organizers have comments and recommendations, they will be submitted to the Research Committee Chair who will forward to investigators.
 - j) A commitment that when a paper is published using data obtained from the Special Events, the Events acknowledged and a copy of final manuscript provided to Special Events office.
 - k) Availability to provide a poster of the findings to be shown at the next year's event.
- 7) **Committee on Research Responsibilities:** The committee on Research Chair (or their designee) will disseminate research and development proposals to the committee members for review and evaluation. The Research Committee will:
- a) Review proposals to evaluate:
 - i) The relevancy to the mission of the NVSP&SE and approaches to rehabilitation as addressed in section 3.
 - ii) Time commitment expected from the Veteran
 - iii) That the research is compatible with intended experience of the Special Event
 - iv) How the research will contribute to future clinical care of Veterans
 - v) If team is appropriate to conduct research
 - vi) Scientific merit
 - b) Provide recommendations for approval and disapproval to Committee Chair
 - c) Investigators will be notified in writing (email) of the decision to approve and disapprove research proposals.
 - i) Including with the approval/disapproval decision will be the reason why for disapproval
 - ii) Will also include brief comments concerning the study
 - d) At this time, August 2013, no more than five (5) proposals will be accepted per Special Event
 - e) Approved Proposals
 - i) The Research Committee Chair notifies the Event Director regarding accepted proposals
 - ii) Investigators are responsible to work with the Event Director for the actual study conduct
 - iii) Studies conducted at the Special Events are subject to random compliance checks
 - f) Disapproved Proposals
 - i) Proposals may be disapproved because of science, relevancy to mission, or available space



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- ii) May be resubmitted for the next Special Event
- iii) For resubmissions, the proposal must state how the concerns raised due to science and/or relevancy to mission of the NVSP&SE were corrected.
- g) On occasion, the committee may decide to ask a research team to modify study to accommodate the needs
- h) Research Committee chair will keep copies of all research studies submitted for completion at the Special Events.
- i) Research Committee will meet monthly and the quarterly to ensure availability for reviews
- j) Research Committee will consist of clinicians, researchers, Special Events representatives and ad hoc content experts as needed.

Table 1: Submission and Review Dates

Event	Starting Date of Event		Research Submit to Committee	Review Date	Comments & Decision Back to Researchers
	2014 (Location)	2015 (Location)			
TEE Tournament	9/4/14-9/7/14 (Iowa City, IA)	September, 2015 (Iowa City, IA)	4/30/14	6/12/14 (Thursday)	6/26/14
Summer Sports Clinic	9/14/14-9/19/14 (San Diego, CA)	September, 2015 San Diego, CA	4/30/14	6/12/14 (Thursday)	6/26/14
Creative Arts Festival	10/27/14-11/3/14 (Milwaukee, WI)	October, 2015 (TBD)	7/1/14	8/14/14 (Thursday)	8/28/14
Winter Sports Clinic	3/29/14-4/5/14 (Snowmass, CO)	March 2015* (Snowmass, CO)	11/15/13	1/3/14 (Friday)	1/17/14
Golden Age Games	6/29/14-7/2/14 (Fayetteville, AZ)	June, 2015* (TBD)	2/14/14	3/27/14 (Thursday)	4/10/14
Wheelchair Games	8/12/14-8/17/2014 (Philadelphia)	July, 2015* (TBD)	4/1/14	5/15/14 (Thursday)	5/29/14

*Dates unknown at this time

 8/22/13
 Susan Pejoro, RM, MSN, GNP-BC Date

Acting Director, National Veterans Sports Programs and Special Events