

NDA Research Promotion Scheme 2025-26

Call for Proposals

# Introduction

The National Disability Authority (NDA) is the independent statutory body with a duty to provide evidence-informed advice to Government on disability policy and practice and to promote Universal Design.

The NDA’s Research Promotion Scheme (RPS) aims to promote high quality new research on specific themes aligned to the NDA's strategic priorities.

The NDA is now inviting proposals for research projects from researchers, academic institutions, other research bodies, advocacy organisations, DPOs, service providers and other relevant bodies, under the 2025-26 theme of Disability in Marginalised Groups and Communities.

## Disability in Marginalised Groups and Communities

Given its ongoing relevance, and considering feedback from Disabled Persons Organisations, we are continuing with the theme of - **Disability in Marginalised Groups and Communities**.[[1]](#footnote-1) We are open to proposals for studies that examine the relationship between disability and all marginalised groups. That said, we would like to stress a particular interest in proposals for studies focused disability issues within **Traveller and/or Roma** communities.

The presence, identity and experience of disability cuts across race, gender, transnational location/migrant status, age, sexuality, ethnicity, religion and class/socio-economic status. Historically, research about these marginalised groups and communities have been advanced without meaningful reference to disability. This is problematic because it is evident that disabled people within and across these marginalised groups face even higher levels of social exclusion and discrimination.[[2]](#footnote-2)

In more recent years studies have begun to address this issue by connecting to ‘intersectionality’.[[3]](#footnote-3) Intersectionality is a framework used to understand how societies include or exclude people in unique ways based on their various social or political identities such as gender, ethnicity, age, disability and so on. Disability research with an intersectional lens can, for example:

* inform more equitable real-world policy designs,
* highlight the need for disaggregated data, and
* build connections across different advocacy agendas.

### Disability within Traveller and/or Roma communities

In Ireland, there is specific need to understand the intersection of ‘Disability’ and ‘Traveller’ and/or ‘Roma’ minority ethic groups. Therefore, to help guide better policy decisions to improve outcomes, we are particularly interested in proposals can help to address the historic imbalance in the collection and analysis of ‘disability’ and ‘Traveller/Roma’ data.

## Scope

The scope of the theme is broad to encourage applications from a range of sectors, but some examples of research areas could include:

* Access to health and social support services, housing or education among disabled Traveller and Roma populations.
* Disabled people living in Direct Provision.
* d/Deaf people and ethnicity.
* Disabled people’s access to addiction services.
* Political participation and self-advocacy among people with intellectual disabilities.

## Research Objective and Scope

A range of research methodologies are welcome and may take quantitative, qualitative, innovative, mixed or multi-method approaches. Analyses of secondary data are also welcome.

Applicants should demonstrate that their proposed research topic fills a gap in current research and will add to the existing evidence base. Applicants should also show how their research is of sufficient scale to give findings that could be generalised.

The NDA requires that disabled people are involved in the research process.[[4]](#footnote-4) Applicants can decide the kind of involvement but may see value in disabled people or disabled people’s organisations (DPOs) being meaningfully involved in:

* the funding application process,
* advising on terminology,
* shaping research questions,
* supporting data collection, analysis, and interpretation,
* dissemination, or
* all aspects of the research process.

## Deliverables

Successful applicants will be required to:

* Undertake a piece of research relevant to the theme, with a strong evidence-base and meeting NDA’s Quality Guidelines for NDA Research (Appendix A).
* Write a report of the research, to a publishable standard, that is fully accessible (guidance on making documents accessible will be provided to the successful candidates).
* Develop a strategy for dissemination of the research in accessible formats to key target audiences including policy makers, service providers and academics.
* Give a seminar on the findings in the NDA (via webinar or in-person).

NDA supports the publication of work in academic journals but will not delay publication for such purposes. We strongly encourage publication in open access journals.

# Eligibility

Proposals/applications are invited from the following:

* research institutions and agencies,
* independent researchers,
* academic departments in recognised third-level institutions,
* Disabled Persons Organisations (DPOs),
* representatives of user/advocacy groups, and
* service providers.

Organisations that do not have strong internal research expertise should consider partnering with an academic institution or similar.

NDA encourages proposals prepared by partner organisations who wish to work in collaboration. However, joint applications must indicate clearly the involvement of all different partners and stakeholders in the design, planning, implementation and dissemination of the research.

Project grantees should ensure they have an appropriate supervisory structure in place, where relevant.

**Note:** **This is not a scholarship scheme and is not designed for students.**

# Selection Criteria

Applications received will be divided into two groups as follows:

1. The research aim is focused on disabled Travellers and/or Roma.
2. The research aim is not focused on disabled Travellers and/or Roma (includes research that includes Travellers and/or Roma data but is focused on other marginalised groups).

Both groups will be evaluated separately. Depending on evaluation scores, and interviews where relevant, it is anticipated that at least one project from each group will be funded.

The NDA will evaluate the eligible research proposals based on the following selection criteria:

1. Experience and qualifications of research team and appropriate supervisory arrangements (40%).
2. Quality and relevance of approach and methodology proposed (40%).
3. Plans for inclusive and impactful research (20%).

Only projects which reach a pass mark (50%) under each of the above criteria will be further considered.

More information in relation to the requirements under each of these is included in the Application Form.

## Short listing

Following initial assessment, the NDA will create a shortlist of applicants based on the above scoring to interview at the second assessment stage. The researcher leading the project must attend this interview, which will take place virtually during the month **October 2025**. Failure to attend for interview will eliminate applicants from further consideration.

# Funding

There is a total funding envelope for this call of €80,000. We anticipate awarding up to three grants and are **open to individual grant applications that are for varying amounts between €15,000 and €40,000** but the total awarded for this call will not exceed €80,000.

## Rights reserved

The NDA reserves the right not to award any funding. Reaching the interview stage, if conducted, is not a guarantee that funding will be awarded.

## Payments

Payment of the grant will be made in three tranches:

* a third on signing a grant agreement,
* a third on receipt of a **satisfactory** draft research report, and
* a third on receipt of a **satisfactory** final report.

# Monitoring and Quality Evaluation

Funded organisations must meet the NDA requirements for the submission of interim, final and other reports and will be required to submit periodic information regarding overall project performance, monitoring and management.

Successful applicants will be required to familiarise themselves with, and follow, the Quality Guidelines for NDA Research (Appendix A of this document).

## Interim Progress Report

To contain a **brief progress note** on the following specific elements of the research (where applicable):

* Methodology – including search terms, scope and sources for literature review.
* Literature review – summary of key arguments and theories, identification of key authors and sources, implications for the research, practice, and policy.
* Description of fieldwork.
* Schedule and timeframe for the completion of the research – identifying any deviation from original plan.

## Draft Research Report

The draft report should be written in line with the Quality Guidelines for NDA Research (Appendix A of this document). A satisfactory draft report is one that requires only minor further editing.

## Final Report

The final report should be of publishable standard, in line with the Quality Guidelines for NDA Research (Appendix A of this document) and written in a style which will be easily understood by a broad audience.

The report shall be delivered as a Microsoft Word document that is readily accessible to the screen-reader technology used by people with disabilities. It shall be fully compliant with relevant clauses in EN 301549, the harmonized European Standard for ICT Accessibility, and all relevant AA Success Criteria from the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.2.

Full performance indicators will be provided at contract stage.

The core report (excluding references and appendices) should not exceed 10,000-15,000 words. A short Executive Summary setting out the key findings should also be prepared.

### Contribution to research

The proposed research must be original and should not duplicate research already conducted.

The research should contribute to the existing knowledge base and advance existing scholarship.

The proposed research must be of relevance to the development of policy or practice

The research should be based on sound evidence, of sufficient scale, to allow some generalisability of findings, or indicate directions for further consideration.

### Ability to complete research in timeframe

Only organisations which can deliver a satisfactory final draft report on the research within 12-18 months of signing the grant agreement will be eligible for consideration.

### Quality monitoring

While the NDA will review the quality of the final report as a condition of payment, we are not in a position to provide ongoing supervision of the work in progress. The NDA expects the final research submitted to meet its Quality Guidelines for Research as set out in Appendix A of this document.

# Application Process and Timeline

Completed applications should be returned by**12 noon on Monday 6th October 2025**. Applications received after this time and date will not be processed.

Applications should be submitted by email to [research@nda.ie](mailto:research@nda.ie). Please use the subject line: **RPS 2025-26.**

Applications for funding are required to use the attached application form. The table below outlines the key milestones in the application process:

| Stage: | Date/Time: |
| --- | --- |
| Call for applications | Monday 11th August 2025 |
| Deadline for completed applications | Monday 6th October (12 noon) |
| Interviewing of short-listed applicants (if necessary) | October 2025 |
| Successful applicants notified | November 2025 |

Applicants should note that the Board of the NDA are the final approvers of the review and may provide some feedback. Further work may need to be completed if the report does not pass accessibility checks.

Please address any queries you have to Damian Haslett [research@nda.ie](mailto:research@nda.ie).

Please see RPS FAQs page [on the NDA Website](https://nda.ie/about/what-we-do/policy-research/funding-schemes).

Appendix A

# Quality Guidelines for NDA Research

## Overall Research Design

* The research has been scoped out following engagement with the external and internal stakeholders as appropriate (e.g. officials from relevant policy area of Govt Dept and other NDA staff as appropriate) to ensure it will cover all relevant issues. A first step is to ensure that the research conforms with NDA's mission and strategy, adds value and does not duplicate work elsewhere.
* The research has value for policy makers and, where appropriate, practitioners. A key goal for NDA research is to guide policymakers and practitioners in the achievement of an inclusive, accessible Irish society in which people with disabilities enjoy equal rights and opportunities to participate in economic, social and cultural life.
* The report contains a clear and comprehensive statement of the aims of the research.
* The research design is appropriate for answering the policy questions which have been developed in consultation with customers and end users of the research, both internal and external to NDA.
* There are no major gaps in the report. It does not omit key data sources, key relevant literature, or key issues.
* The research contributes to our knowledge/understanding of a given field.
* The research conforms to ethical principles and has obtained ethical approval as appropriate.

## The Research Report

* For contracted reports, the research aligns fully with all the specifications contained in the contract. The research is completed within agreed timescales and budget.
* The report is presented in a logical structure (e.g. executive summary, context, relevant literature, aims and objectives, methods, findings, discussion of findings, conclusions). The report includes a title page, executive summary, contents page, lists of tables and charts, acknowledgements, glossary of specialist terms, list of abbreviations and acronyms, list of references, relevant appendices. Contracted work includes the appropriate disclaimer.
* The report includes a concise review of the methodology employed in the research within the body of the report with a more technical description (e.g. search methods and terms for literature) outlined in the appendix.
* The report contains appropriate signposting that guides the reader through the commentary, with key messages being highlighted or summarised throughout the report.
* The report is accurate with regard to quotations, data, references, etc., and has been proofread for spelling, grammar and syntax.
* The writing style is clear, focused and to the point, taking account of the target audience. It is temperate in tone, not emotive. Authors refrain from personal opinion/editorial and focus on the evidence. Technical terms when used are adequately explained.
* The report is rigorously objective and factual. The report contains no plagiarism. Direct quotations are labelled as such and duly referenced.
* The report contains no libellous or abusive comments.
* All tables give the original source and show appropriate units of measurement.

## Literature Review

* There is evidence of a systematic approach to the review of literature which should summarise and evaluate the knowledge base to date.
* Databases and search terms are clearly outlined to allow for replication of literature searches.
* The report sets out clearly the size of samples used in studies reviewed and any conclusions are appropriate to the limitations or otherwise of same.
* The report distinguishes empirical findings from opinion.

## Methodology

* The research methodology is appropriate to address the research question.
* The methodological choices are discussed within the report and the limitations of the methodology are acknowledged. The value of the evidence is weighed by reference to the methodology used and size of sample.
* The methodology is valid, reliable, replicable and (as appropriate) generalisable.
* A description is provided of any formalised appraisal criteria used to support the methodology.
* Any modifications made to the methodology during the course of the research are explained and justified.
* All necessary details of the methodology are outlined (e.g. research instruments used, number of participants, size of sample, response rates, tests of significance). Where a sample has been taken for the study, the number of respondents should be shown in any tables using the data.
* The selection criteria of the sample are detailed and justified and any difference between planned and actual sample (e.g. non-participation) explained.
* Informed consent has been given by research participants and management of confidentiality/anonymity is documented.
* The safety of participants and researchers has been assured and potential risks explained.
* Data collection methods are appropriate for the type of data required and are clear and replicable.

## Data Analysis

* A rationale is provided for the data analysis methods chosen (quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods, etc.).
* Data analysis is clear and valid, and synthesised to make sense of data.
* Evidence of how descriptive categories, classes, labels, and coding frames were constructed is provided for qualitative analysis.
* Analysis involving the comparison of data (e.g. international data) includes a determination as to whether extraneous variables (e.g. policy, legal or contextual differences) allow a fair comparison to be made.
* Storage and protection of data, according to established protocols and legislation, is referenced in the report.

## Interpretation of Findings

* The findings are clearly linked to the aims of study.
* Clear links are identified between data, interpretation and conclusions such that others can follow a coherent, convincing and objective 'decision trail'.
* There is a synthesis and analysis of data, in such a way that conclusions clearly emerge for the reader.
* Findings have a coherent logic, 'make sense' and are resonant with other knowledge.
* Areas where findings concur or differ from those in the literature are noted.
* There is convincing discussion of the generalisability of findings and limitations of findings relating to aims & objectives (e.g. certain groups not represented etc.) and what remains unknown.
* There is a credible and clear discussion as to how findings contribute to knowledge/understanding and their applicability to current and/or new policy developments, practice.

1. The NDA RPS 2023/24 theme of - **Disability in Marginalised Groups and Communities** produced research on homelessness and disability and disability, diversity and identity in Ireland’s Local and European Elections 2024. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Goodley, D. (2024). Disability studies: An interdisciplinary introduction. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Wolbring, G., & Nasir, L. (2024). Intersectionality of Disabled People through a Disability Studies, Ability-Based Studies, and Intersectional Pedagogy Lens: A Survey and a Scoping Review. Societies (2075-4698), 14(9). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. [Collaborative research with disabled people: Guidance for researchers](https://nda.ie/uploads/publications/NDA-Collaborative-Research-Report_final.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)