

**The Orthotic and Prosthetic
Education and Research Foundation, Inc. (OPERF)**

Fellowship Award Program Overview
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Fellowship Awards

[The Orthotic and Prosthetic Education and Research Foundation \(OPERF\)](#) provides funding to support clinically relevant research in orthotics and prosthetics (O&P). Fellowship Award funding is designated for students who are currently enrolled in a master's and/or PhD educational programs.

The OPERF Fellowship Award Program is designed to support quality graduate education research related to the orthotics and prosthetics (O&P) profession. One-year fellowships of up to \$5,000 are given on an annual basis. Fellowships will be awarded based on the scientific merit of the proposed research project (see OPERF Review Form, available on [OPERF website](#)). OPERF has arranged for award recipients to present their research at the American Academy of Orthotists and Prosthetists (the Academy) [Annual Meeting & Scientific Symposium](#). The Academy has donated complimentary registration and speaking slots for Fellows to present their OPERF-sponsored research.

Requirements

- The student must be currently enrolled in a master's and/or PhD education program within the United States.
- The project must be clinically relevant to the O&P profession.
- A Letter of Intent (LOI) is due in advance of the research proposal (see Funding Cycle, below).
 - Maximum of one page in length (12-point font, 1-inch borders, single spaced).
 - Must briefly describe the proposed research.
 - The LOI is used only to assemble a review committee with appropriate topic area expertise. Feedback is not provided in response to the LOI, and you do not need to await an invitation to submit. However, your application will not be reviewed if a LOI is not submitted.
- The research proposal should be a maximum of five pages in length (12-point font, 1-inch borders, single-spaced). The research proposal must include the following components:
 - Application cover page (available on [OPERF website](#))
 - Abstract (up to 300 words)
 - Specific aims*
 - The Specific Aims section of a grant application typically provide a concise statement of the goals of the proposed research and summarizes the expected outcome(s), including the impact that the results of the proposed research will have on the research field involved. List succinctly the specific objectives of the research proposed (e.g., to test a stated hypothesis, create a novel design, solve a specific problem, challenge an existing paradigm or clinical practice, address a critical barrier to progress in the field, or develop new technology).
 - Background and significance*
 - With regards to background, provide the rationale for the proposed research project, the relevant background history, and the need for the proposed project. Indicate how the proposed project relates to current literature on the topic. This is your opportunity to demonstrate your understanding of the published literature in the topic area.
 - With regards to significance, explain the importance of the problem or critical barrier to progress that the proposed project addresses. Explain how the proposed project will improve scientific knowledge, technical capability, and/or clinical practice in O&P. Describe how the concepts, methods, technologies, treatments, services, or interventions that drive O&P will be changed if the proposed aims are achieved.

- Previous research (if appropriate)*
 - This section can be used to highlight and describe previous research you have conducted that supports the proposed application (e.g. pilot data).
 - Methodology*
 - Describe the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses to be used to accomplish the specific aims of the project. Include how the data will be collected, analyzed, and interpreted. Discuss potential problems, alternative strategies, and benchmarks for success anticipated to achieve the aims.
 - Project timeline (including milestones and deliverables)*
 - This section is usually best served by a graphic representation of the timing and duration of each aim and task within your proposed project. Be sure to indicate when you will achieve a milestone or deliverable.
 - Anticipated results*
 - This section allows you to summarize the expected outcome(s) of your proposed project, including the impact that the results of the proposed project will have on the O&P field.
 - References
 - This section should be used only to cite references used within the application to support the need, rationale, and approach for the proposed project. Format your citations and references using an accepted citing/referencing style (e.g. AMA or Vancouver).
 - Budget and facilities description
 - Provide a budget that itemizes the cost of each item to be paid for with the award. This is usually best presented in the form of a table.
 - A budget justification should accompany the budget. A budget justification should provide a narrative description of the costs included in your budget. Explain what each line item is for and how you arrived at the total cost indicated in the budget.
 - Provide a detailed description of the institutional facilities and resources available to the student to conduct the proposed project.
 - List of current/pending support related to the proposed research
 - Indicate for the student, faculty advisor, and each collaborator any current or pending funding support related to the proposed research. Pending support refers to any applications for funding that have been submitted and for which the outcome is not yet known.
 - List of collaborators (including a short biosketch for each)
 - Biosketch for the student
 - Letter of faculty support (from the student's advisor)
- Note: Page limit applies only to those sections marked with an asterisk (*).*

Award Specifics

- Fellowship funds are intended to be used for expenses related directly to the conduct of the proposed research project and are not to be used for tuition, books, or supplies required for the student's coursework.
- Award funds will be paid directly to the student as the award recipient. No indirect (i.e., facilities and administrative) costs will be allowed. Any financial or tax liabilities associated with accepting the award will be the responsibility of the recipient.
- If human or animal subjects are included in the proposed research, the applicant will be required to provide evidence of Institutional Review Board (IRB) or Animal Care and Use Committee

(ACUC) approval from the host institution before funds are disbursed. Approval is not due at the time of submission but will be required to receive award funds.

- Fellowship Award recipients must submit a two-page final report to the OPERF Research Committee Chair (see Contact Information, below) within 30 days of conclusion of the funding period.
 - The report should be typed and single-spaced, using 12-point type on 8.5-inch x 11-inch pages with 1-inch borders. Legible figures may be included in the report.
 - The report should describe the Fellow's progress over the project period, summarize the expenditure of the award, and include a list of any submitted and/or anticipated presentations/publications that may result from the OPERF-funded research.
- Fellowship Award recipients will be responsible for submitting an abstract (based on the OPERF-funded research) to the Academy Annual Meeting. The abstract should be formatted using the template provided by the Academy when the call for papers is announced (typically in June of the year prior to the Annual Meeting). The abstract should be submitted following the standard instructions provided by the Academy for submission of free papers. A copy of the abstract should be sent to the OPERF Research Committee Chair (see Contact Information, below) by email.
- Upon acceptance of the Academy Annual Meeting abstract, Fellowship Award recipients are required to attend the Academy Annual Meeting and present their OPERF-funded research results.
 - Complimentary meeting registration has been donated for all OPERF award recipients.
 - Airfare and lodging for the Academy Annual Meeting are the responsibility of the Award recipient. Fellowship Award funding may be used for these expenses.
- A no-cost extension period of up to one year may be requested by the award recipient prior to presenting the study results at the Academy Annual Meeting.
- Award recipients are encouraged to submit the results of their work as a manuscript to the *Journal of Prosthetics and Orthotics (JPO)* or another peer-reviewed journal.
- Award recipients are required to acknowledge OPERF funding in any publication or presentation of the funded research by including the following statement: *"This work was supported (or "supported in-part" if the project was also supported by other sources) through funds from the Orthotic and Prosthetic Education and Research Foundation, Inc. (OPERF)."*
- Applicants are encouraged to keep a copy of their original emails containing their LOIs and proposals to verify that they have met the deadlines. OPERF will email receipts when LOIs and proposals are received. If an applicant does not receive a receipt, he or she should call or email the Research Committee Chair (see Contact Information, below) to verify receipt of documents within one week of the applicable deadline. After one week from the deadline, any lost LOIs or proposals will not be considered for funding.

Review Process

All OPERF Fellowship Award submissions will be reviewed by a Review Panel composed of OPERF Research Committee members and ad-hoc members, as needed. Composition of the panel will be determined by the type and number of award submissions. The OPERF Research Committee Chair will serve as the review chairperson and serve as the point-of-contact for the Award Program.

Function of the Review Panel

The function of the Review Panel is to evaluate the applications, including the clinical relevance of the research topic, the merit of the research design, and the appropriateness of the personnel and environment. The Review Panel will score the Fellowship Award applications using the OPERF Review Form (available on the [OPERF website](#)).

Review Process

All proposals will be administratively screened upon receipt for completeness and compliance with award requirements. Incomplete applications may be returned to the applicant without review. Complete applications will be assigned to two or more Review Panel members for review. Proposals will be evaluated and scored on scientific merit and clinical relevance to the O&P profession using the OPERF Review Form (available on [OPERF website](#)). Each submission will be given a numerical score by each reviewer, and a consensus score will be generated. Blinded consensus scores, summary comments, and written reviews will be provided to all applicants upon completion of the review process.

OPERF reserves the right to reduce the terms of the award, both in time and in funds, as deemed appropriate by the scope of the proposed research. The Review Panel may also request that applicants respond to reviewer comments regarding any part of the submission prior to rendering a final award decision.

Conflict of Interest Procedures

Review Panel and OPERF members are required to maintain confidentiality regarding all aspects of the application review process, the proposed projects, and the identity of applicants. OPERF will strive to review all submissions fairly and without bias. In cases where a proposal is submitted by (1) a member of the Review Panel; (2) a panel member's organization; (3) a panel member's student, resident, or mentee; or (4) a panel member's colleague who lists the panel member as having any responsibility or involvement in the project being reviewed or who collaborates or currently associates with the panel member in other capacities, which may or may not involve the application under consideration, the Review Panel member in question will be excused from review of the proposal.

When this situation applies to the Chair of the Research Committee, the Chair will turn over management of the review of the application in question to another Research Committee member. That Committee member will be responsible for identifying suitable reviewers, receiving from reviewers the OPERF Conflict of Interest, Confidentiality, and Non-Disclosure Statement and Review Forms, and chairing the portion of any review meeting in which the application in question is discussed. Furthermore, if the application in question is successfully funded, the Chair of the Research Committee will turn over management of the funded project to another member of the Research Committee. That Committee member will then be responsible for receiving and reviewing reports, confirming the IRB approval (if applicable), handling requests from the award recipient, and handling any issues that might arise with that particular project.

Reviewers for each application are required to complete the OPERF Conflict of Interest, Confidentiality, and Non-Disclosure Statement prior to review.

If a submission includes proprietary or confidential information, this should be noted on the cover sheet and relevant sections of the proposal.

Notification of Applicants

All applicants will be notified in writing of the status of their application following review. Notification will include the blinded consensus scores, summary comments, and written reviews. For successful applicants, notification will also include information about how and when funds will be made available. Funds for Fellowship Awards will be payable as a lump sum.

Final Report

Fellowship Award recipients are responsible for providing a final report to the OPERF Research Committee Chair (see Contact Information below) within 30 days of the conclusion of the funding period. The Fellowship Final Report should be two-pages, typed and single-spaced using 12-point type on 8.5-inch x 11-inch pages with 1-inch margins.

Final Reports should detail the work performed during the study period, summarize expenditures, and include a list of any submitted and/or anticipated presentations/publications that may result from the OPERF-funded research. Any questions regarding the content or format of the final report may be directed to the OPERF Research Committee Chair (see Contact Information, below).

Resubmission

Proposals that do not receive funding on the first attempt may be resubmitted for another award cycle. A maximum of two resubmissions following the original submission will be accepted. The applicant is responsible for resubmitting the proposal using any updated instructions provided on the [OPERF website](#). The cover letter should indicate that the proposal is a resubmission, and a separate document should likewise indicate any changes made to the proposal in response to reviewer concerns from the previous submission (limit two pages, not included in the submission page limit).

No-Cost Extension

A student/investigator who has been awarded a Fellowship may apply for a one-year, no-cost extension in the event that his or her project requires additional time to complete or if additional time is required to prepare for presentation at the Academy Annual Meeting. A written request for a no-cost extension must be submitted in writing to the OPERF Research Committee Chair one month prior to expiry of the current award. If the extension affects the timing of an Academy Annual Meeting presentation, the award recipient must inform the Chair at least two months prior to the Academy Annual Meeting.

Complementary Funding/Support

OPERF Fellowship Award applicants are required to identify existing and/or pending funding related to the application. If complementary funding is obtained by the investigator prior to the award announcement or during the award period, award recipients are required to inform the OPERF Research Committee Chair (see Contact Information, below) in writing. When contacting the OPERF Research Committee Chair, investigators are encouraged to submit a modified budget reflecting the complementary support obtained for the proposed research.

OPERF reserves the right to modify the provided funding based on alternative support received by the investigator(s). Decisions regarding the modification of funding will be approved by the OPERF Board of Directors.

Instructions and Forms

Instructions and forms for submission of proposals are available online (www.OPERF.org). Submissions may be made by email only. Applicants are responsible for confirming all materials are received by the due dates.

Ownership of Work

Ownership of intellectual property arising from OPERF-sponsored funding is vested in the award recipient, per the policies of the awardee's host institution. OPERF reserves the right to publicize all materials received while funding a particular project; e.g. proposals, final reports, Academy Annual Meeting abstract, etc., with the exception of those marked "confidential" or "proprietary."

Award recipients are required to acknowledge OPERF funding in any publication or presentation of the funded research by including the following statement: *"This presentation/work was supported (or "supported in-part" if the project was also supported by other sources) through funds from the Orthotic and Prosthetic Education and Research Foundation, Inc. (OPERF)."*

OPERF Fellowship Award Program Funding Cycle

The following are key dates and deadlines for the OPERF Fellowship Award Program. Applicants are responsible for ensuring all materials are received by OPERF by the due dates.

- LOI dueDecember 11
- Proposal due.....January 15
- Award notificationApril 1*
- Funding disbursed.....May 27*

**Award notification date and subsequent dates are based on anticipated number of submitted applications. A greater number of submissions than expected may delay notification. Applicants will be notified in writing if a delay occurs.*

Orthotic and Prosthetic Education and Research Foundation

Requests for additional information may be addressed to:
Fellowship Award Program
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