

**The Orthotic and Prosthetic
Education and Research Foundation (OPERF)**

Educator Awards Program Overview

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Award Program

The Orthotic and Prosthetic Education and Research Foundation (OPERF) was established in 2008 to serve the entire orthotics and prosthetics (O&P) field. Since its inception, the Foundation has distributed grants, fellowships, and awards to promote and reward orthotics and prosthetics research and education. This awards program is part of the Foundation's commitment to promote education.

Educator Awards

The OPERF Educator Awards Program supports O&P educators who currently hold teaching positions at O&P education institutions that are accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) and who are pursuing advanced degrees to improve their skills as O&P instructors. Educator Awards include a \$2,500 cash grant. Selection of Educator Award recipients will be based upon the merit of the educator's submission. Educators are eligible to receive this award no more than two times.

Eligibility Criteria

- Employed as a faculty member at a CAAHEP-accredited O&P education program.
- Enrolled in an advanced academic degree program.

Criteria for Reviewing Applications

Current Faculty Position:

- Individuals who are graduates of CAAHEP-accredited O&P programs will be given priority.

Degree Program:

- Individuals who are pursuing research-intensive degrees will be given priority.
- Individuals who are enrolled as full-time students will be given priority over part-time students.

Plan of Study and Progress toward Degree:

Applicants must provide academic transcripts*.

- Number of credits completed.
- Grades.
- Qualifying exam passed.
- Proposal defended.
- Higher priority will be given to applicants who have made demonstrable progress

*Official transcripts are not required. However, if unofficial transcripts, such as those available electronically, are submitted, they must be signed by the applicant's academic advisor or program chair.

Letters of Recommendation:

- Letter from the chair of program by which the applicant is employed. This letter should describe institutional support for the applicant to complete his or her degree.
- Letter from the academic advisor where the applicant is enrolled as a student. This letter should assess the plan of study and the dissertation or thesis proposal (if applicable) as well as the applicant's qualifications for graduate study and potential for academic success.
- Higher priority will be given to applicants who have strong support from the program that employs them.
- Higher priority will be given to applicants who receive strong evaluations from their advisors.

Applicant Statement:

- Describe how the student's academic goals will contribute to excellence as an O&P faculty member.
- Describe how the OPERF Educator Award will assist the student in pursuing his or her academic goals.
- Priority will be given to applicants who clearly describe how the degree will contribute to excellence as an O&P faculty member and how the award will help them pursue the degree.

Applicant CV:

- Priority given for professional presentations.
- Priority given for publications.
- Priority given for funded research.

Award Details

- Award funds will be paid directly to the award recipient. All money awarded is considered taxable income.
- Award funds are to be used for direct education expenses, including academic fees/tuition, books, laboratory and material fees, dissertation costs, or other special services (such as computer time or photographic services) directly related to education expenses.
- Applicants are eligible to receive the OPERF Educator Award no more than two times.

Application Review

All OPERF Educator Award applications will be reviewed by a Review Panel comprising OPERF education committee members and ad hoc members as needed. Composition of the panel will be determined by the type and number of award applications. The standing OPERF Education Committee chairperson will serve as the review chairperson.

Function of the Review Panel

The function of the Review Panel is to evaluate the applications, including the relevance, merit, and appropriateness of each application.

Review Process

All applications will be administratively screened upon receipt for completeness and compliance with award requirements. Incomplete applications may be returned to the applicant without review.

Applications will be assigned to two or more Review Panel members for review. All applicants who meet eligibility criteria will be scored based on the review criteria. Each application will be reviewed by two members of the Review Panel. Applications will be scored from 5.0 (highest priority) to 1.0 (lowest priority) based on the review criteria. Reviewers will present the applicants to the full Review Panel for discussion and final scoring.

Conflict of Interest Procedures

Review Panel and OPERF members involved in the Award Program are required to maintain confidentiality regarding all aspects of the award review process and the identity of award applicants. OPERF will strive to review all submissions fairly and without bias. In cases where an award application is submitted by (1) a member of the review panel, (2) a panel member's employee or co-worker, (3) a panel member's student, resident, or protégé, or (4) an individual with any other relationship to a panel member that may constitute a potential conflict of interest, the Review Panel member in question will be recused.

Notification of Applicants

All applicants will be notified in writing of the status of their application following review. Notification will include information about how and when funds will be made available. Funds will be payable as a lump sum.

Resubmission

Applications that do not receive awards may be resubmitted for the next available award cycle provided all award criteria are still met. A maximum of two resubmissions following the original submission will be accepted. The applicant is responsible for resubmitting the application using any updated instructions provided on the OPERF website. A cover letter should indicate that the application is a resubmission and a separate note should likewise indicate any changes made to the application.

Instructions and Form

Instructions and forms for submission of applications are available on the OPERF website at www.OPERF.org. Applicants are responsible for ensuring all materials are received by the due date.

Submission

Applications may be submitted via email or through the mail. Email applications should be sent to submissions@operf.org. The subject of your email should read “OPERF Educator Award.”

Mailed applications should be sent to:

Educator Award Submissions
Orthotic and Prosthetic Education and Research Foundation
P.O. Box 30840
Bethesda, MD 20824

Applicants are responsible for ensuring all materials are received by OPERF by the due dates listed below.

OPERF Educator Awards Program Funding Cycle

The following are key dates and deadlines for the OPERF Educator Awards Program. Applicants are responsible for ensuring all materials are received by OPERF by 5:00 PM, Eastern Time, on the due date.

Educator Awards

- Submission DueOctober 15
- *Anticipated Award NotificationJanuary 15

Contact Information

Address all requests for additional information to:

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