

BIOS Orthoptic Education Fund

Guidance for Applicants

The Orthoptic Education Fund (OEF) provides small grants to orthoptic professionals and students to support with education and training.

This guidance is for orthoptists or members of the orthoptic support workforce applying for support to fund postgraduate study or to attend conferences. Students facing financial hardship should the appropriate guidance [here](#).

What we fund

- Support for qualified orthoptists to fund postgraduate study supporting their professional development
- Support for those presenting or contributing at conferences

What we don't fund

- Research projects and audits
- Academic fees for pre-registration orthoptics courses, PhDs and other post-graduate qualifications – we will consider funding for individual Masters modules where funding is not available from an applicant's employer, apprenticeship levy, or other charitable fund
- Courses or training that are essential to your role. This should be funded by your employer

You can find more detail in the Terms and Conditions below.

How to apply

Applicants should submit a completed OEF Application Form and any other relevant supporting documentation. This will usually include a letter from your line manager.

These should be returned to ofef@orthoptics.org.uk. The assessors meet to discuss applications in the first week of every month other than August, considering all applications received during the previous month.

Notes on completing application form:

1. Applicant's details

- **BIOS Membership Number:** All applicants are required to be members of BIOS. You can find your membership number under 'My Account' when logged in to the BIOS website (<https://www.orthoptics.org.uk/my-account/>)

2. Grant details

- **Summary of what grant is for:** Try to provide as much detail as possible on what the funds will be used for, including a breakdown of different costs and details of any quotations obtained.
- **How will this grant will advance the study or practice of orthoptics?** The OEF exists to support orthoptic professionals and students to advance the study or practice of orthoptics. Please provide a statement to explain to the Trustees how your grant will achieve this.
- **What funding are you or your employer providing?** In most cases we would expect you or your employer to at least match the funding we are providing. This is to ensure that we make the most impact with the grants we provide.
- **Have you made an application to any other organisation for funding of this project?** BIOS are unable to fund every application that we receive, and we would expect applicants to have explored all other options for funding. If the Trustees feel there is an alternative more suitable form of funding that has not been explored by the applicant, they may suggest an attempt is made to gain funding this way first.

Further supporting evidence:

You should also include with your application form any further documentation that supports your request for funding. This will ordinarily include a letter from your line manager:

A letter from your line manager will include:

- i. whether the course or training is on your appraisal
- ii. whether funding is available from the Trust for the training and, if relevant, why you have been unable to access this
- iii. how funding will benefit the profession or advance the practice of orthoptics
- iv. any other information that supports your application

If you are unable to provide a letter, you should state why on your application.

While no further evidence is required to make an application to the OEF, you are welcome to include any further documentation relevant to your application.

What we're looking for:

All applicants must meet the following criteria for their application to be considered:

- A practising orthoptist, an academic working in orthoptics, a support worker or technician line managed by an Orthoptist
- Working in the UK, Republic of Ireland or Gibraltar
- A member of BIOS

A judgement will then be made by the Trustees based on the following criteria:

- Is the amount requested realistic? Have the costs been fully costed and quotes sought where necessary?
- Will the grant support the applicant or others to advance their orthoptic skills or knowledge?
- Is there a more appropriate source of funding that the applicant should explore?

* The Trustees may appoint a smaller group made up of at least two Trustees as well as non-Trustees with specific relevant expertise.

Reporting back

The Trustees request that all successful applicants report back six months after the grant is awarded, or following the course or conference, demonstrating how the money has been used to advance the study or practice of orthoptics.

This will be used to:

- i. Ensure all funds have been used appropriately and according to the terms of the grant.
- ii. Assess the impact of the grant for reviewing future strategy.

Terms and Conditions for all OEF Grants

1. The decision of the Trustees on the awarding of grants is final.
2. Grants will only be used for the purposes stated in the application.
3. Unspent funds should be returned to the OEF as soon as possible and no longer than one year after the grant was awarded.
4. If the applicant wishes to change how the grant is used, the applicant must inform the Trustees in writing, explaining their reasons and requesting approval. Approval must be granted before the funds can be used.
5. It is the applicant's responsibility to confirm that they are able to attend the course or conference, including that their employer is prepared to sign off on the necessary study leave.
6. Successful applicants will be expected to report back to the Trustees no more than six months after the funds have been used, demonstrating how the money has been used to advance the study or practice of orthoptics.
7. Funding will not be provided for research projects and audits, or for Academic fees for pre-registration orthoptics courses, PhDs and other post-graduate qualifications.
8. Grants to support undergraduate students in the training of orthoptics are to be made for a one-year period only and such grants are to be limited to up to £1,500 for each recipient beneficiary, each year.