

# BIOS Orthoptic Education Fund

## Guidance for Applicants – Student Hardship Grants

---

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

This guidance is for students facing financial hardship. Orthoptists or members of the orthoptic support workforce applying for support should read the appropriate guidance [here](#).

### What we fund

We provide grants of up to £1,500 to support for students on pre-registration Orthoptics courses facing financial hardship. This hardship must be as a result of a personal change of circumstance, that risks preventing them from continuing their studies.

### What we don't fund

- Support for students whose circumstances have not changed since they registered on the course
- Support for members of the orthoptic workforce facing financial hardship

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 or, for pre-registration students, your academic supervisor.

These should be returned to [oef@orthoptics.org.uk](mailto:oef@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/>)
- **Place of study:** Applicants should provide the name of their university, rather than details of any placements.

### 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.
- **Why do you require support?** This should include details of the change of circumstances that led to you facing financial hardship.
- **Have you made an application to you University's hardship fund?** 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 information on funding pre-registration courses in orthoptics can be found on our website (<https://www.orthoptics.org.uk/become-an-orthoptist/student-finances/>) and from your university.

## 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 academic supervisor:

A letter from your academic supervisor should include a confirmation of other forms of funding applied for, or details on why you are unable to access funds, as well as any other information in support of 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 student on a pre-registration course at a UK University, leading to qualification as an orthoptist. This includes the MSc courses at the University of Liverpool and UCL.
- 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?
- Is the hardship a result of an unforeseen change of circumstances?
- 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.