

AOA Research Foundation PhD Scholarship Program

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1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy outlines the terms and conditions of the PhD Scholarship offered by the AOA Research Foundation. This program is available to AOA Fellow Members only.

2. ABOUT THE PHD SCHOLARSHIP

2.1 Purpose of Scholarship

- 2.1.1 The purpose of the Scholarship is to provide financial support for AOA members who wish to reduce their clinical work in order to undertake a PhD.
- 2.1.2 The Scholarship provides a stipend which is paid to recipients through an administering institution.
- 2.1.3 The Scholarship does not cover any costs related to enrolment in the PhD program or any university fees associated with the PhD.

2.2 Scholarship Value

- 2.2.1 The Scholarship has a current value of AU\$50,000 per annum (including GST). This consists of a \$45,000 stipend and \$5,000 in departmental maintenance.

2.3 Scholarship Duration

- 2.3.1 The Scholarship may be awarded for a maximum of three years, subject to satisfactory progress reports and the availability of funds.

Funding for Years 2 and 3 will be subject to an annual review by the AOARF Board, which will assess the recipient's progress reports and the availability of funds before confirming continued support.

Although a PhD program may extend beyond the funding term, scholarship funding will not be provided for any period exceeding three years.

2.3.2 Scholarship Frequency

- 2.3.3 One PhD scholarship will be awarded every three years, subject to available funding and the number of continuing awardees.

3. ELIGIBILITY AND APPLICATIONS

3.1 Eligibility

- 3.1.1 The Scholarship is open to current AOA Fellows who wish to pursue a PhD, whilst working at a reduced clinical load.
- 3.1.2 AOA Affiliate members, Associate members (i.e. trainees) and honorary Fellows are not eligible to apply.

AOA trainees wishing to apply for a PhD scholarship whilst in training may do so via the John Owen PhD Pathway Scholarship.
- 3.1.3 Applicants must be enrolled or intending to enroll in a PhD program of study at an Australian university.
- 3.1.4 Applicants must nominate at least one supervisor who is an AOA member. The supervisor will be required to submit a letter of support as part of the application.

3.2 Application Process

- 2.3.1 Applicants must submit a completed online application by the due date as specified on the [AOARF website](#). Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted.
- 2.3.2 In addition to the written application, applicants will be required to submit a Curriculum Vitae and supporting references.

3.3 Selection Criteria

- 3.3.1 The successful applicant will be selected on the basis of their academic record, research experience, publication and presentation history, and the strength of the proposed research topic.
- 3.3.2 The successful applicant will also need to demonstrate excellent interpersonal communication skills, the ability to work in a multi-disciplinary team environment, and the ability to manage the demands of research and clinical work. This will be evidenced by the applicant's written application and supporting references.
- 3.3.3 All eligible applications will be reviewed by the AOA Research Advisory Committee and AOA Research Foundation Board. The award decision will be made by the AOA Research Foundation Board.

4. SCHOLARSHIP TERMS AND CONDITIONS

4.1 Program of Study

- 4.1.1 Scholarship recipients must be enrolled in their approved PhD for the full duration of their award.

- 4.1.2 Scholarship recipients must satisfactorily undertake the program of study as specified in their successful application.
- 4.1.3 Any alteration(s) to the approved program of study must be approved by the AOA Research Foundation in writing prior to the change.
- 4.1.4 Scholarship recipients must submit documentary evidence of ethical approval from the relevant institution prior to commencement of the research.

4.2 Leave

- 4.2.1 All scholarship recipients are entitled to take up to four weeks of leave in each calendar year.
- 4.2.2 If a scholarship recipient wishes to take a leave of absence from their studies of more than four weeks in a calendar year, a formal request for a leave of absence must be submitted to the AOA Research Foundation for approval.
- 4.2.3 If the leave of absence is approved, scholarship payments may be suspended during the period of leave unless you are entitled to one of the following paid leave provisions:
 - a. up to 8 weeks FTE additional sick leave which may also be used to cover leave for family caring responsibilities where there are compassionate circumstances
 - b. for each (multiple) birth or (multiple) adoption, up to 8 weeks FTE maternity leave for students who are giving birth or are the main carer of a recently adopted child
 - c. for each (multiple) birth or (multiple) adoption, up to 4 weeks FTE parenting leave at the time of the birth or adoption for students whose partner has given birth or is the main carer of their adopted child
 - d. up to 8 weeks FTE leave for jury duty if the jury duty requires absence of 1 week or more.
- 4.2.4 Requests for paid leave must be supported by relevant supporting documents, e.g. a medical certificate or statutory declaration setting out the reasons for the leave.
- 4.2.5 The duration of the scholarship will be extended by the duration of the scholarship leave, unless the recipient continues to be enrolled during the scholarship leave.

4.3 Finances

- 4.3.1 The Scholarship funds will be paid to an administering institution on behalf of the recipient. The administration of the expenditure should be undertaken as per the usual policies of the administering institution.
- 4.3.2 Payment of the scholarship value will be made in a single instalment prior to 1 February in the relevant year. Payment will only be made upon receipt of a valid invoice from the administering institution.
- 4.3.3 Scholarship recipients may secure additional funding for their research in the form of additional scholarships, Fellowships, and awards. If additional funding is secured, the recipient must notify the AOA Research Foundation as soon as practicable. If the recipient is awarded a stipend from another source, the Scholarship may (in part or in full) instead be paid towards research direct costs.
- 4.3.4 Scholarship recipients may apply for an AOA Research Foundation grant while receiving the Scholarship but may not direct any AOA Research Foundation grant funding towards their own stipend costs.
- 4.3.5 Recipients must work at a reduced clinical load during their scholarship period. Evidence to support this should be provided in the online application.

4.4 Reporting and Presentation

- 4.4.1 Scholarship recipients must submit two reports each year to the AOA Research Foundation (every 6 months from the commencement of the scholarship period). If reports are not submitted by the relevant deadline, the recipient may not be awarded any further funding from the AOA Research Foundation and may be required to refund the full amount of the scholarship.
- 4.4.2 Scholarship recipients must present their research at the national AOA Annual Scientific Meeting (ASM) or AOA Annual Branch Meeting within 12 months of completing their PhD.
- 4.4.3 Scholarship recipients agree to participate in promotion of their research in AOA communication channels, including the Bulletin and on the AOA website.
- 4.4.4 Scholarship recipients should aim to publish their research in a peer-reviewed journal, such as the ANZ Journal of Surgery.
- 4.4.5 Scholarship recipients are strongly encouraged to apply to join the AOARF Research Advisory Committee on completion of their PhD.

4.5 Acknowledgements

- 4.5.1 The AOA Research Foundation must be formally acknowledged in all relevant publications, presentations, advertising and other material related to the Scholarship.

5. TERMINATION

5.1 Termination of a PhD Scholarship

5.1.1 The AOA Research Foundation, in its absolute discretion, may choose to suspend scholarship payments or terminate a scholarship early if:

- The recipient ceases to meet the Scholarship eligibility criteria;
- The recipient withdraws or is terminated from their approved program;
- The recipient, in the opinion of the AOA Research Foundation, does not demonstrate that they have carried out the approved program of study with appropriate competence and diligence;
- The recipient commits serious misconduct, including but not limited to the provision of false or misleading information.

5.1.2 In the event that a Scholarship is terminated, it will not be reinstated unless the termination was due to an AOA Research Foundation error.

6. ACCEPTANCE OF TERMS AND CONDITIONS

6.1 Scholarship Acceptance

The Acceptance of Offer form must be signed by the scholarship recipient, the nominated supervisor and a representative from the administering institution. By signing the form, all signatories acknowledge acceptance of the above terms and conditions. The form must be returned to the AOA Research Foundation prior to the commencement of the Scholarship.

7. ADMINISTRATION OF THE PHD SCHOLARSHIP

The AOARF PhD Scholarship is funded by the AOA Research Foundation. On occasion, additional scholarships may be funded by external organisations and administered through the AOA Research Foundation.

For further information, please contact:

Australian Orthopaedic Association Research Foundation
Level 26, 201 Kent Street
Sydney NSW 2000
Ph: +61 2 8071 8000
E: research@aoa.org.au