



TRAVEL BURSARIES 2025-26

INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

Introduction

1. To further the objects of its Research Fund Trust Deed, the College of Optometrists encourages and supports appropriate research into optometry and related subjects through a number of Scholarships, Bursaries, Awards to recognise research excellence and grants towards practice-based research.
2. This guide sets out the Travel Bursaries offered by the College from 1 October 2025 to 30 September 2026. **Please note: College-funded Postgraduate Scholars are not eligible for these Bursaries and are instead able to apply for a specific Travel Bursary for the purposes of disseminating their College-funded work.** Further information about this process is available on request.

Purpose and scope

3. The aim of this Travel Bursary programme is to provide financial assistance to postgraduate students (who are not funded by the College) to enable them to present papers on their research at conferences. Bursaries are awarded for either poster or oral presentations. As part of the application process, applicants are asked if they have explored other avenues of funding prior to applying for a College Bursary.
4. Please note that the Travel Bursary may not be used to attend the College of Optometrists' annual conference, Optometry Tomorrow.

Conditions

5. The Travel Bursary must be used solely for the purposes set out in the application, approved by the College and confirmed in the awarding decision.

Eligibility

6. To be eligible for this Bursary programme, students must be Fellows or Members of the College and must be undertaking a postgraduate course approved by a UK university for the award of a higher degree. They must not be funded by a College Postgraduate Scholarship, as Bursaries for the dissemination of the work of these Scholars are available through a separate process (information about which is available on request).
7. An applicant may receive only one Travel Bursary. If you have previously received a Travel Bursary then you are ineligible to apply for another one.

Number and location of scholarships

8. The College is offering up to four Bursaries between 1 October 2025 and 30 September 2026.

Acknowledgement

9. The successful applicant's presentation or poster should make reference to the College's support, as follows: 'Supported by a Travel Bursary from the College of Optometrists, UK'. Successful applicants are requested to submit a copy of their presentation or poster to the College to ensure that the College is receiving appropriate acknowledgement of its sponsorship of applicants.

Financial provision

10. The maximum Bursary granted in 2025-26 will be £2000. Payment will only be made to those successful applicants whose abstract is subsequently accepted by the relevant conference organising body (if they have not already been accepted).
11. Applicants may request funding for any of the following: travel, accommodation, event costs, food and subsistence while attending the event.

Selection and award process

12. The selection of Travel Bursary recipients is based on the scope and content of the project detailed in the Application Form completed and submitted by the applicant. Decisions will be made by the College Research Committee and its decision is final.
13. The research being presented is expected to adhere to the College's Research Principles, as described in [section D45 of the College's Guidance for Professional Practice](#). If the research involves a clinical trial then that trial must be registered (or an adequate reason given for why it is not registered) and the trial number should be given in both the Travel Bursary application and in the final presentation.
14. Preference will be given to applicants in the third (and final) year of their PhD.
15. Applicants must apply no later than one month prior to the date of travel. Flexibility may be possible to review late applications (in certain circumstances).
16. Applicants applying after the event will not be considered.

Submission of applications

17. Travel Bursaries will be available on a 'first-come, first-considered' basis between 1 October 2025 and 30 September 2026. There is no deadline for applications and instead the Research Committee will evaluate each application in time for the conference being applied for. Please note, Bursaries will be grouped for a collective review where feasible, so the timescale of decision making may not be the same for all applicants.
18. Application Forms are available from the College (email researchteam@college-optometrists.org or can be downloaded from the College website (<https://www.college-optometrists.org/professional-development/research-awards-and-grants/research-grants>).
19. Application Forms should be submitted to researchteam@college-optometrists.org.

Notification of outcome

20. All applicants, whether successful or not, will be notified of the outcome by the College.

Further information

21. Assistance with any of the above may be obtained from the College at the following:

Email: researchteam@college-optometrists.org