Occupational Therapy Australia

Occupational Therapy School of Victoria Clinical Award Guidelines 2026



Background

The Occupational Therapy School of Victoria was established in 1948 as a non-government, fee-paying course in occupational therapy. This was the second school established in Australia, following on from NSW. In the early 1970's the Victorian State Government established the Victorian Institute of Colleges, with responsibility to train health practitioners including occupational therapists, physiotherapists and speech therapists (as the course was known then). The therapy programs were based at Lincoln Institute of Health Sciences located in Swanston Street, Carlton.

When the Occupational Therapy School of Victoria was dissolved in 1974, the Board members of the School set up the Occupational Therapy Trust Fund to promote research and clinical development in occupational therapy in Victoria. In 2019, the Trustees of the Occupational Therapy Trust Fund donated the Trust funds in what was originally the largest bequest made to Occupational Therapy Australia, $350,000, and the Occupational Therapy School of Victoria Clinical Award was established.

Purpose

The Occupational Therapy School of Victoria Clinical Award aims to promote advancement in clinical practice by supporting members of Occupational Therapy Australia across all states and territories to engage in clinical based projects or studies. The Award is in the form of financial assistance to support projects with a clinical focus.

Projects may include but are not limited to:

- Quality Improvement projects which have organisational ethics approval.
- Paid time release to finalise an article for journal publication.
- Developing other forms of documenting improvements in clinical practice.
- Evaluating current clinical practice to ensure it is evidence-based.
- Clinical research that is focused on the development of new clinical approaches.

A key aspect of the Award is that outcomes of the projects are documented, and shared broadly, for instance via National or State conferences or publication in professional journals. OTA retains a copy of the report from the project and the right to publish through OTA channels.

The amount allocated to the 2026 Award, based on the grant's investments, will be approximately $13,000. More than one award can be given.

Criteria for Selection

- Applicants must be a member of Occupational Therapy Australia at the time of the application and during the period of the project.
- Applicants must have at least 4 years of clinical experience. Relevant documentation to this effect must accompany the application.
- Applicants must hold current Australia Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) registration. Relevant documentation to this effect must accompany the application.
- Applicants must be citizens of Australia or have permanent residency status. Relevant documentation to this effect must accompany the application.
- Applicants will submit their proposal to the selection committee on the form required by the committee.
- Recipients of the Occupational Therapy School of Victoria Clinical Award are not excluded from applying to Occupational Therapy Australia Research Foundation Grants and likewise recipients of a Research Foundation grant are not excluded from applying for the Clinical Award.

Responsibilities of Award Recipients

- Award recipients should provide a progress report six months after the receipt of their award that is no more than 1000 words in length.
- Recipients should provide an update of their achievements in relation to the Award at six-month intervals until their project is completed.
- A copy of the final report is to be provided to the committee for their records.
- In any resultant conference presentations or published journal articles, appropriate acknowledgements for the Award must be included and Occupational Therapy Australia advised.
- Copies of any presentation abstracts, policy papers or journal articles are to be provided to Occupational Therapy Australia.

Frequency of Award & Financial Management

- Award(s) is given annually or at the discretion of the selection committee.
- More than one award can be distributed in a given year.
- An upper monetary limit per application may be set by the selection committee during a given year. In 2026, there is up to $13,000 available for distribution.
- Awards are only approved if the selection committee regard the applications meet the criteria of the Award and are relevant and current to clinical practice needs. Non-distributed funds from one year will be added to the capital of the fund.

Application Process

A completed application form is to be submitted via email to awards@otaus.com.au by **5:00pm (AEDT) on Friday, 13 February 2026**.

Attached to your completed application form should be:

- A cover page summating your name, details, title of project/proposal, and a short summary statement, including rationale for your project (<300 words, to be used in media release should the application be successful)
- A headshot (to be used in media release should the application be successful)
- A copy of received ethics approvals (if required)
- Any additional information integral to your application
- Relevant documentation supporting AHPRA registration
- Relevant documentation supporting Australian citizenship/permanent residency status
- A brief CV covering the following headings:
    - Name
    - Qualifications
    - Professional employment dates, employer name, and title of position
    - Affiliations
    - Awards, scholarships, etc.
    - Publications
    - Conference presentations



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