

AOA OWL ESSAY 2026

Terms & Conditions

1. The promoter is: Australian Orthopaedic Association (AOA) ABN 45 000 759 795, whose registered office is at Level 26, 201 Kent Street, Sydney, NSW 2000.
2. Employees of AOA or their family members or anyone else connected in any way with the OWL Essay or helping to set up the OWL Essay shall not be permitted to enter the competition.
3. There is no entry fee and no purchase necessary to enter the OWL Essay. Route to participation for the OWL Essay is those who identify as female and are medical students from Australian medical schools, interns and junior doctors who are working in Australian hospitals and not yet on the AOA training program.
4. The closing date for entry to the OWL Essay 2026 will be 5pm, 1 May 2026 AEST. After this date, no further entries to the OWL Essay will be permitted. No responsibility can be accepted for late submissions or submissions not received for whatever reason.
5. The rules of the OWL Essay and details regarding the prize for the overall winner are as follows: complete the relevant questions that you are asked to provide (full name, current career stage, gender, state of current residence, mobile phone number, email address), the relevant consents and along with your submitted essay having a 750-word count excluding references which is in response to the essay topic: "Balancing the Scales for the Next 90 Years: innovation, inclusion, engagement and excellence in orthopaedics".
6. The one overall OWL Essay 2026 winner will receive the following prize:
 - Complimentary registration at the AOA ASM 2026 in Cairns or at a state ASM of choice in 2026 or 2027. The registration will also include access to the social components to allow networking and engagement opportunities with the orthopaedic community.
 - The overall winner will have access to up to two nights' accommodation, and return economy flights if required (i.e., the AOA ASM meeting is 4-days in duration) to allow the overall winner to participate in other parts of the meeting. One night's accommodation will be provided for State ASMs that are 1 day's duration.
 - The overall winner may have the opportunity to present or showcase their essay in person or by video recording (if unable to attend in person) at the selected ASM (optional).
 - The overall winner's essay may be published (with consent) in an agreed AOA Bulletin publication, publication in our AOA member e-newsletter, publication on our AOA webpages (for public access) and promotion in AOA socials (for public access).
7. The promoter reserves the right to cancel or amend the OWL Essay and these terms and conditions without notice in the event of a catastrophe, war, civil or military disturbance, act of God including pandemic or any actual or anticipated breach of any applicable law or regulation or any other event outside of the promoter's control. Any changes to the OWL Essay will be notified to entrants as soon as possible by the promoter (*see force majeure clause*).
8. The promoter is not responsible for inaccurate prize details supplied to any entrant by any third party connected with this OWL Essay.
9. No cash alternative to the prize will be offered. The prize is not transferable. The prize is subject to availability and the promoter reserves the right to substitute the prize with another of equivalent value without giving notice.
10. The winning submission will be based on the following:

Marking Criteria & Points:

Essay submissions will be marked, and allocated points as follows:

Criteria	Number of points allocated
Relevance to the topic	5 points
Strength of arguments	5 points
Creativity	5 points

Marking Process:

- Generally, essays will be marked in two rounds but is dependent on the number of submissions.

- Essays will be de-identified and distributed amongst a minimum of six 'official markers' consisting of OWL Committee or OWL membership consultants and at least two male orthopaedic consultant members. Additional markers may be added if a large submission of essays are received.
 - In 'round 1', all essays submitted by the due date will be marked. Each surgeon will mark their proportion of the essays (for example, in the setting of 100 essay submissions, each surgeon will mark 10 essays). The top three essays following the receipt of aggregated results will then be distributed for marking in 'round 2'.
 - In 'round 2', the final essays will then be marked and ranked.
 - A final overall winner will be selected and then the highest-ranking essay from each state (depending on the number and distribution of entries received) will be selected as – a highly recommended nomination for that state.
 - It is noted that not all states may have a highly recommended nomination.
11. All entries received will be verified by Promoter and/or its agents.
 12. The overall winner of the OWL Essay 2026 will be announced by email within 28 business days of the closing date (1 May 2026). If the winner cannot be contacted or does not claim the prize within 14 days of notification, we reserve the right to withdraw the prize from the winner and pick a replacement winner.
 13. Details of the prize will be sent to the overall winner once the overall winner has been contacted and provided by the nominated email address.
 14. The promoter's decision in respect of all matters to do with the OWL Essay will be final and no correspondence will be entered into.
 15. By entering this OWL Essay, an entrant is indicating their agreement to be bound by these terms and conditions.
 16. The OWL Essay and these terms and conditions will be governed by Australian law, and any disputes will be subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of the courts of Australia.
 17. The overall winner agrees to the use of their name and image in any publicity material. Any personal data relating to the winner, or any other entrants will be used solely in accordance with current Australian data protection legislation and will not be disclosed to a third party without the entrant's prior consent.
 18. The overall winner's name will be available 28 days after closing date by sending an email to owl@aoa.org.au.
 19. Participation into the OWL Essay will be deemed as acceptance of these terms and conditions.
 20. The OWL Essay is in no way sponsored, endorsed or administered by, or associated with, Facebook, Twitter or any other Social Network. You are providing your information to AOA and not to any other party. The information provided will be used in conjunction with the following Privacy Policy found on the [AOA website](#).

FORCE MAJEURE

Definition. Force majeure event includes acts of God, epidemic, pandemic, disease or public health alert, hostilities, war (declared or undeclared), act of terrorism or other threatened acts of violence, hijack, blockade, national strikes, riots, civil commotion or disturbance, a governmental restraint, a court order, an act or omission of a government agency, fire, flood, storm, cyclone or earthquakes.

- 1.1 **Responding to force majeure events.** If the promoter is affected by a force majeure event we will give written notification to the Essay entrants as soon as reasonably possible, providing details of the force majeure event and (to the extent reasonably ascertainable) the obligations from which the promoter is prevented from undertaking.
- 1.2 **Suspension of obligations.** If a force majeure event prevents or delays the promoter from undertaking our obligations in relation to the Essay, we will not be obligated to continue with the for so long as the force majeure event continues.