



Award for Excellence Handbook

Purpose

The Award for Excellence recognizes sustained, career-long contributions to perioperative nursing. This handbook provides guidance for completing and submitting a nomination, including eligibility requirements, required materials, endorsement procedures, and submission deadlines.

Eligibility Requirements

Applicants must:

- Hold an earned nursing degree at the baccalaureate level or higher.
- Have at least five years of perioperative nursing experience.
- Hold an active, registered nurse license.
- Be an active AORN member for at least five years.
- Hold an active CNOR certification or CNOR Emeritus designation.

Award Criteria

- Applicants must demonstrate a comprehensive body of work in all three areas:
 - **Nursing Practice**
 - **Nursing Education**
 - **Nursing Research**
- Applicants must also demonstrate involvement and leadership in the following two areas in the national, state, or local levels:
 - **AORN activities**
 - **Contributions** to perioperative nursing outside of AORN

Understanding the Three Categories

Applicants must demonstrate accomplishments in *nursing practice*, *nursing education*, and *nursing research*. Although these areas are presented separately for evaluation purposes, contributions may overlap and support one another. For example, a clinical practice initiative may lead to research, which subsequently informs educational programs and practice improvements. Applicants are encouraged to describe these connections while demonstrating accomplishments within each of the three required categories.

Important: Applicants must demonstrate accomplishments in all three categories. The strongest applications illustrate how practice, education, and research activities have worked together to advance perioperative nursing and improve patient care.

Required Submission Materials

Curriculum Vitae and four specific narratives are needed.

- **Curriculum Vitae (CV)** Template is provided on the Award for Excellence [webpage](#).
 - Maximum length: 20 pages. Applicants should include accomplishments and experiences most relevant to the Award for Excellence. Additional pages included will not be reviewed.
 - Minimum font size: 11-point
 - Recommended fonts: Arial or Calibri
- **Narratives & Activities Statement**
 - Nursing Practice Narrative (500-word maximum)
 - Nursing Education Narrative (500-word maximum)
 - Nursing Research Narrative (500-word maximum)
 - AORN Activities Statement (500-word maximum)
 - Contributions for perioperative nursing outside of AORN (500-word maximum)

Each narrative should describe specific accomplishments, outcomes/impact, and evidence of outcomes relevant to that category. While the narratives should be submitted separately, accomplishments may be discussed in more than one category when appropriate. Examples should describe your accomplishments and leadership at the local, state, and/or national level.

- **Examples of what to include to demonstrate impact may include and should be quantified with data when possible.** Outcome measures such as:
 - improved patient satisfaction,
 - clinical practice implementation and improvement,
 - new knowledge generation,
 - policy advocacy and change,
 - decreased patient safety events,
 - improved employee satisfaction and retention ,
 - financial sustainability.

Endorsement Requirements

The endorsement must be provided by a qualified individual familiar with the applicant's work. The endorser may be a supervisor, leader, colleague, volunteer coordinator, chapter leader, or other professional reference and may or may not be an AORN member.

Endorsement Process

1. Obtain an endorsement letter.
2. Enter the endorser's contact information.
3. Upload the endorsement letter.
4. Select "Send for Review."
5. The endorser reviews the complete application package.
6. The endorser may approve, request edits, or deny approval.
7. Once approved, then finalize and submit the application.

Applications remain incomplete until endorsement approval is received.

Applicant Submission Checklist

- ☐ Nursing Practice Narrative
- ☐ Nursing Education Narrative
- ☐ Nursing Research Narrative
- ☐ AORN Activities Statement
- ☐ Contributions outside AORN Statement
- ☐ Curriculum Vitae
- ☐ Endorsement Letter
- ☐ Endorser Contact Information
- ☐ Endorsement Approval Received
- ☐ Final Application Submitted

Tips for a Strong Application

Focus on measurable outcomes, leadership contributions, dissemination of work, educational impact, influence on perioperative practice, research outcomes, and professional recognition. Use specific examples rather than general statements.

Submission, Deadlines, and Notification

Complete all required fields and submit the online nomination form. Applicants should receive confirmation within 48 hours. Applications are accepted between **July 1 and September 30**. Late submissions are not accepted. Applicants will be notified by email in early December. Award recipients are recognized at the AORN Annual Expo.