



1927 — 2027

THE CENTENNIAL CLASS OF DISTINGUISHED FELLOWS

Frequently Asked Questions

DFACOS — Distinguished Fellow Designation · 2027 Application Cycle

Applications open **September 1, 2026** and close **November 16, 2026**. Approved applicants are recognized at the 2027 Ceremonial Conclave during the Centennial Annual Clinical Assembly in Orlando — the College's hundredth year.

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Eligibility

What are the eligibility requirements for DFACOS?

To be eligible for the Distinguished Fellow designation, you must:

- Have been a Fellow of the ACOS (FACOS) for 10 years or more
- Have been an active member of an ACOS committee, an ACOS Mentor, or a lecturer for an ACOS educational program within the last 10 years
- Be certified by an AOA or ABMS-recognized certifying board
- Be a member in good standing of ACOS and your local and state osteopathic societies
- Demonstrate commitment to the practice of surgery through participation in teaching programs and on hospital, local, state, and national surgical society committees
- Demonstrate a continued pursuit of knowledge through participation in continuing surgical education programs
- Adhere to the professional and ethical standards established by the ACOS

How many points do I need to qualify?

You must earn a minimum of 300 points overall, having:

- Fulfilled a minimum of 100 points in Category I — National, AOA, and ACOS Appointments
- Demonstrated activity in both Category II (Educational) and Category III (State and Local Contributions)

There is no separate minimum for Category II or Category III individually. Activity must be shown in both, but the points beyond the Category I minimum may come from any combination of the two.

Point accumulation begins in the year you became an ACOS resident member.

I have questions about my board certification or OCC requirements. Can ACOS help?

Board certification and Osteopathic Continuous Certification (OCC) requirements are administered by the American Osteopathic Board of Surgery (AOBS), which is part of the AOA — not ACOS.

For questions about certification status, OCC requirements, or case log requirements, contact AOBS directly at osteopathic.org or (312) 202-8000.

ACOS can confirm that certification by an AOA or ABMS-recognized certifying board is required for eligibility, but the certification process is managed entirely by the certifying board.

Points and the Rating Guide

How do I work out my point total?

The *DFACOS Professional Activities Rating Guide* assigns a point value to every qualifying activity. Work through it once and enter the points you have earned in the right-hand Points column of the application.

What is the self-calculating worksheet, and do I have to submit it?

The worksheet is an optional Excel tool that mirrors the Rating Guide. You enter your points in the blue tally cells and it adds your category subtotals and overall total for you.

It is a working aid only. You do not submit it, and it is not reviewed. The Membership Committee scores your application from the application form itself.

Some activities show a maximum. How do those work?

Several rows in the Rating Guide are capped. An activity marked *one time* earns its points once, no matter how many years or instances you can document. Rows marked with a maximum — for example, *2/item (4 points max)* — stop at that ceiling however many items you submit.

IMPORTANT WHEN COMPLETING YOUR APPLICATION

Neither the application nor the worksheet enforces these caps. Please apply them yourself when you enter your points.

A total that exceeds what the Rating Guide allows will be corrected during review — which can move an application below the threshold that appeared to have been met.

Help with your ACOS record

Can ACOS tell me how many membership years I have, or which committees I served on?

Yes. The membership team can provide a report showing your ACOS membership years, the committees you have served on, and the ACOS meetings you have attended that count toward your application — the Annual Clinical Assembly, the In-Depth Review, and the Urological Discipline Mid-year Meeting. Much of what earns points in Category I comes from this record, so it is worth having in front of you before you start entering points.

How do I request the report, and how long does it take?

Write to fellowship@facos.org using

[Last Name], [First Name] | Request for ACOS Membership Activity History

as the subject line. Including your name in the subject line lets staff pull your record without a further exchange.

REQUEST THIS EARLY

Please request the report as soon as you begin your application. It can take 7 to 14 days to be processed.

Application materials and deadline

What must be included in my application packet?

Your complete packet must include all of the following:

- Completed DFACOS application form
- Current curriculum vitae
- Three letters of recommendation
- Personal statement explaining why you should receive the Distinguished Fellow designation
- Hospital endorsement, if applicable — signed on page 7 of the application, or a separate letter from the hospital
- \$650 nonrefundable application fee
- Signed release authorization — page 8 of the application

What is the deadline?

All application materials must be received by ACOS no later than **November 16, 2026**. Submissions are accepted through 11:59 PM ET on that date. Incomplete applications will be returned.

What is the application fee, and when is it due?

The fee is \$650 and is nonrefundable. It covers the cost of review and processing. **Payment is due on or before submission — an application cannot be processed or reviewed until the fee is paid.**

If your application is not approved and you choose to reapply, a \$100 reapplication and processing fee applies.

What should my personal statement include?

Your personal statement explains why you should receive the Distinguished Fellow designation. There is no prescribed length or format. A few well-written paragraphs capturing the breadth of your career and your connection to the College is appropriate. You may wish to address:

- Your sustained engagement and service to ACOS and the osteopathic surgical community
- Leadership roles held at the local, state, and national level
- Contributions to surgical education, mentoring, or research
- Your professional and ethical standing within the profession

Completing and signing the application

Does my application need an electronic or a handwritten signature?

Either is acceptable. **Print and sign upon completion, or submit an electronic signature. A signature is required.**

Complete the application first, then sign it. If you are working in the fillable PDF, you may apply an electronic signature in the signature field on page 8, or print the completed form and sign by hand.

Why does the application ask for gender?

As part of every fellowship review, ACOS queries the National Practitioner Data Bank (NPDB). The query identifies a practitioner using name, date of birth, gender, and an identifying number, so gender is required to run it.

Why does the application ask for my Social Security number?

The Social Security number is the identifying number ACOS uses to run the NPDB query described above. Without a matching identifier, the data bank cannot return a practitioner record.

Should I enter it on the application?

No. Please leave the Social Security number field blank. A completed application travels by email, mail, or fax and is handled by more than one person on its way to review. We would rather that document not carry your Social Security number.

If the number is not already held on your secured membership record, Membership Services will telephone you to obtain it. It is never requested by email.

Which program should I use to open the fillable PDF?

Adobe Acrobat or the free Adobe Acrobat Reader gives the most reliable result. The form will also open in a web browser or in Preview, though some features behave differently. If you would rather not complete it on screen, print the form and complete it by hand — both routes are equally acceptable.

Letters of recommendation

How many letters do I need, and who can write them?

Three letters of recommendation are required:

- One letter must come from a member of the ACOS who has been a Fellow (FACOS) for at least 5 years
- Two letters may come from any D.O. or M.D. who can vouch for your skills, achievements, and character — these may be non-members, including a hospital administrator, an elected official, or a chief executive officer

All three letters should attest to your qualifications as a surgeon and to your professional and ethical standing.

Where should my recommenders send their letters?

We recommend that your letters come in with your completed package. It keeps your file together and lets Membership Services review a complete submission in one pass.

If that is not possible, your recommender may send the letter directly to fellowship@facos.org with *[Last Name], [First Name] | Fellowship Application — Recommendation* as the subject line. We will match it to your file. All materials must be received by November 16, 2026.

Do letters need to be dated?

Yes — please ensure every letter is dated, whether it arrives by email or on paper.

Do letters need to be on organizational letterhead?

Letterhead is recommended but not required.

Should I name my recommenders on the application?

Yes. Page 7 has a field for the names of the people submitting letters on your behalf. Completing it lets staff match letters to your file as they arrive and avoids follow-up correspondence.

Hospital endorsements

What is the hospital endorsement requirement?

For every hospital appointment or committee activity you list under Category III, you must provide an endorsement from the hospital medical staff administrator or department verifying your participation. An activity without its endorsement cannot be counted toward your points.

If you have held appointments at more than one hospital, you need an endorsement from each.

How do I get the endorsement completed?

Complete your application first, then take the completed form to your hospital administrator or department chair for signature. If you are working in the fillable version, print the completed, pre-filled form and obtain the signatures on that copy — not on a blank one.

The endorsement signature must come from the person verifying your service. That field is not fillable on the form for exactly this reason; it is signed by hand.

What if the hospital prefers to send its own letter?

A separate letter from the hospital may be submitted in place of completing the page 7 section. **We recommend it be on hospital letterhead and included with your completed package.**

If the hospital prefers to send it directly, it may be sent to fellowship@facos.org with *[Last Name], [First Name] | Fellowship Application — Endorsement* as the subject line. All materials must be received by November 16, 2026.

Submitting your application

Where do I send my completed application?

Submit everything together as one complete package wherever possible — it keeps your application moving.

THREE WAYS TO SUBMIT

By email — send the complete package to fellowship@facos.org using *DFACOS Application — [Last Name], [First Name]* as the subject line.

By mail — American College of Osteopathic Surgeons, Attn: Membership Department, 1680 Duke Street, Suite 500, Alexandria, VA 22314.

By fax — (703) 684-3280.

BEFORE YOU SEND

Please do not enter your Social Security number. Leave that field blank. It is needed to run the NPDB query, but not on the application itself — if it is not already on your secured membership record, Membership Services will telephone you for it.

Pay the application fee on or before submission. An application cannot be processed or reviewed until the fee is paid.

How do I know whether I have enough points before I submit?

Start with the self-calculating worksheet. It mirrors the Rating Guide and totals your points as you enter them, so you can see where you stand before you complete the application.

Every application is then reviewed by Membership Services on receipt. If anything is missing or incomplete, we will contact you.

If you are still unsure after working through the worksheet, write to fellowship@facos.org or call (800) 888-1312, Monday through Friday, 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM ET. We would rather hear from you before the deadline than after it.

Review and recognition

When will I hear back?

Membership staff review each submission for completeness on receipt and will tell you whether anything is outstanding. ACOS also makes inquiries to state licensing boards and federal data banks.

Applications meeting all requirements are reviewed and acted upon by the Membership Committee at its Q1 2027 meeting.

One of two outcomes follows: the application is approved and the designation is bestowed, or it is not approved. If it is not approved, you will be told which requirements were not fulfilled, and you may submit a new application one year after the Committee's decision.

What happens after my application is approved?

Approved applicants will be notified by ACOS of their decision. If an applicant is not approved, they will be notified as next steps.

ACOS Distinguished Fellows are recognized in a ceremony at the Ceremonial Conclave during the 2027 Centennial Annual Clinical Assembly in Orlando. You may choose a person to escort you to the stage. The award is presented by the ACOS President and the Chair of the Membership Committee.

Attendance is required. If you do not participate in the ceremony, the pending designation will be withdrawn, except for good and sufficient reason as determined by the Membership Committee.

Where can I find the application and the Rating Guide?

Both are available at facos.org/dfacos. You may also contact Membership Services at fellowship@facos.org or (800) 888-1312.

STILL HAVE QUESTIONS

Membership Services · fellowship@facos.org · (800) 888-1312

Monday–Friday, 8:30 AM–4:30 PM ET

1680 Duke Street, Suite 500 · Alexandria, VA 22314

Your Recognition | Your Credentials | Your Legacy

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