

2025 AO Spine Asia Pacific Fellowship Guidelines

As the leading global academic community for innovative education in spine care, AO Spine not only organizes courses and forums suited for different participants but also supports many of our members to international, regional and national observational fellowships.

AO Spine fellowships provide the following benefits:

- Additional experience in surgical techniques for fully trained orthopaedics and neurosurgeons interested in spine surgery
- Sponsor stipend from AO Spine
- Exposure to the professional network of AO Spine Spine Centers
- Additional clinical experience for fellows
- Obtain a fellowship certification upon completion of the fellowship program

Short Term Fellowship Duration

Short-term fellowship period: 4 weeks (20 working days)

After being selected as a fellow, if you wish to extend your fellowship, you need to communicate with AO individually. The extension of the fellowship depends on the availability of the host center. The stipend for the extension depends on the availability of funding at that time. Alternatively, you can extend it with self-funded fellowship.

Fellowship Criteria

Basic Requirements:

1. Be a graduate of a spine program or be in an orthopaedic or neurosurgery residency for at least two years
2. Have some previous experience on spine surgery and its related or AO TK-approved implants
3. A list of publications and/or lectures written or delivered by the applicant (Preferably published at least one to two spine/orthopaedics/neurosurgery related articles in peer review journal)
4. Preferably 45 years of age or younger

AO Related Requirements:

1. An AO Spine member and an applicant with one full year of membership will have higher priority (Mandatory for all awarded fellows to have at least one full year of membership in the fellowship year.)
2. Did not attend any similar AO Spine fellowship during the last two years (except self-funded)
3. Attended one AO Spine event (face to face) within the last two years. (For applicants who did not attend any AO Spine event before, they are required to register and attend at least one AO Spine event in the coming year.)

Documents to be submitted upon applications:

An AO Spine fellowship applicant must provide the following documents:

1. Resume with details of
 - a. Professional trainings
 - b. A list of publications and/or lectures being written or delivered by the applicant (Preferably published at least one to two spine/orthopaedics/neurosurgery related articles in peer review journal)
2. Motivation letters in Spine Surgery
3. Copy of a valid practicing license
4. Copy of professional training certificates
5. English Proficiency Test Result (e.g. IELTS, TOEFL etc.) for applicants from non-English speaking countries and apply for regional and international fellowship
6. Two letters of recommendation with referrer institution letterhead and referrer signature:
 - a. At least one from a current AO Spine member
 - b. One preferably from a senior surgeon affiliated with an institution
7. Proposed research plan (max. 500 words)
 - a. mandatory for applicants who apply for 9 weeks or above fellowship.
 - b. Successful applicants are required to submit a research project after the fellowship.
 - c. AO SAP Spine Center – List of research topics:
https://aofnd.my.salesforce.com/sfc/p/680000028WDN/a/TG000000UJLN/taGvyeK/WbGQZVd8LU3txnlo_hrRDIMyH_bi2poaH30

Application

If you would like to apply for the AO Spine Fellowship, please complete the online application form only during the official application period and submit it along with the supporting documents listed online. Applications submitted outside of the official application period will not be processed or considered.

Please only start completing the online application form until you have all this information ready, as you cannot save the form until all information has been entered and ALL mandatory documentation uploaded. Please submit your application for one time only.

You can read more information on the list of AO Spine Spine Centers in AP and worldwide on the fellowship website.

Please refrain from contacting host centers to inquire about acceptance or availability until you receive approval from AO.

During the Fellowship

The fellow must agree to and participate in the in-League (AO SAP Webinars), Research Project (long-term fellowship), and AO SAP Fellows' Reading List.

The fellow is expected to follow the daily routine of the clinic and should be available for emergency call at night and on weekends.

Temporary leave of absence needs approval from the head of the clinic. If for some reason, the fellow wishes to change the placement or leave before the completion of the allotted period, permission must be sought from the head of the clinic, and the AO Spine Regional Board.

Fellowship mandatory steps

Fellows are required to complete the following activities through the fellowship portal in order to obtain a certificate:

- Step 1—Learning objectives
- Step 2—Reflection journal
- Step 3—Host center questionnaire
- Step 4—Fellowship certificate
- The fellow is obligated to deliver a presentation about the fellowship experience, at least once, in an AO Spine Asia Pacific event upon request.