

AO Short-term international fellowship program

Host center application guidelines

1 Introduction

The AO Spine short-term international fellowship Program aims to enhance global collaboration, share knowledge, and foster professional development within the field of spine surgery. By providing a structured and supportive environment, host centers play a pivotal role in advancing the fellows' clinical skills while contributing to the overall mission of improving trauma and musculoskeletal care worldwide. AO Spine intends to develop a global clinical network of fellowship host centers. Applicants that fulfill the criteria as defined below may be granted the status of AO Spine host center. The AO Spine host center status indicates that a center provides an AO Spine-approved standard of training, education or research.

2 Goals

The intended goals are the following:

- Develop a worldwide network of AO fellowship host centers
- Induce collaboration across this network
- Deliver high quality AO fellowships that benefit the entire AO community

3 Role of AO fellowship host center

- Host and teach fellows for a set period.
- Assign an AO Faculty surgeon to mentor the fellows.
- Provide teaching resources and equipment.
- Encourage involvement in research and offer access to facilities and mentorship, if applicable.
- Communicate with fellows after receiving signed documents and guide them on administrative and medical requirements to be completed before the arrival.
- Assist with visa applications and accommodation options.
- Inform AO if the fellow is not meeting responsibilities.
- Complete the online end-of-fellowship evaluation for each fellow.
- Keep AO updated with accurate information about the host center.

These duties are performed without compensation.

4 Application

Interested centers must complete the online application form on the AO Spine website, demonstrating that they meet the selection criteria. Please access the application form [here](#). Download the [example pdf](#) to see what information will be required and collect this data **before** starting to fill in the form.

5 Certification process

Following completeness check by the AO Fellowship team, the validation process is initiated with the various AO Spine officers and governing bodies at country level, followed by a review at regional level. The review process may include a site visit. The certification process may take several months. Applicants will be notified of the decision via email and will get access to their certificate and guidelines with further explanation on AO fellowship process, roles and responsibilities of all parties. Once approved, a host center is subject to recertification every three years.

6 Selection criteria and documentation required

Personnel

- 1 AO Spine faculty who has completed at least an official AO Faculty Education Program (FEP), with an active paid membership
- 2 Spine surgeons with an active paid AO Spine membership

Amount of surgical interventions

- Adequate surgical case load, for details please refer to your region's details on the next page

Clinical opportunities, accommodation, and program length

- Opportunities for the fellow to scrub-in, except where prohibited by local legislation
- Opportunity for the fellow to be called for emergencies and on weekends
- Affordable local accommodation close to the center
- Minimum duration of fellowship 4 weeks up to 12 weeks

Other resources

- Picture of host center for use on website
- Picture of head of department for use on website

Please also refer to the additional regional selection criteria and more details on the next page.

If you have any questions, please contact us at hostcenter@fellows.aofoundation.org

Regional requirements Asia Pacific

Area/item	Requirements
Outpatient spine clinics sessions per week	2
Multidisciplinary program, incl. non-surgical disciplines	✓
Wide spectrum of spine surgery	✓
Research activities	✓
Established educational program	✓
Number of cases per year	200
Applied, basic or clinical research publications in the past x years	3 in past 3 years

Regional requirements Europe and Southern Africa

Area/item	Requirements
Outpatient spine clinics sessions per week	2
Established educational program	✓
Number of cases per year	300 or at least 3 days/week 190 Degenerative diseases 20 Tumor Metastasis 10 Inflammatory diseases 50 Injuries (Trauma) 30 Deformity
Applied, basic or clinical research publications in the past x years	6 units per year in the past 3 years

Regional requirements Latin America

Area/item	Requirements
Research activities	✓
Established educational program	✓
Number of cases per year	At least 300/year, including degenerative, trauma, deformities, tumors, with at least 50 surgeries/year in the 3 of the 4 main groups
Number of instrumented cases per year	150 surgeries/year performed with modern surgical instrumentation
Hospital based seminars	2 per year

Regional requirements Middle East and Northern Africa

Area/item	Requirements
Number of cases per year	200
Number of instrumented cases per year	100
Applied, basic or clinical research publications in the past x years	2 in past 3 years