

## ACFAS 2023 Meet the Fellow Questionnaire



American College of  
Foot and Ankle Surgeons®

Fellow Name:

Joseph Saxon

Fellowship Program:

Balance Foot and Ankle Fellowship

City/State:

Concord, Ohio

Program Director:

Jonathan J. Sharpe

How many Attendings do you work with regularly?

I typically work with 2 attendings on a daily basis.

Describe the diversity of your cases so far in fellowship. (For example, has your experience included TAR? Is there an emphasis on: Pediatrics? Sports Medicine? Deformity correction? Complex reconstruction? What percentage of your cases are trauma? Rearfoot/ankle? Forefoot? Please be as descriptive as you'd like.

Our pathology is full scope, from toes to tibia. There is an emphasis on advanced rearfoot and ankle reconstruction. We have steady trauma cases. We perform implant cases including TAR, total talus and hemi-talar replacement. We are referred several cases per year requiring complex revision surgery. We perform MIS cases as well. Our surgical practice has significant diversity

How many days per week do you typically spend in the OR? In clinic? Do you have your own "fellow" clinic?

Our weekly schedule is consistent with 1.5 days in clinic with an attending, 1.5 days of fellow clinic, and 2 full days of surgery.



How many surgical cases do you typically scrub per month?

We typically average around 10-12 cases weekly so roughly 40 cases per month. Depending on how busy call is, this can change.

What conferences have you attended/are you encouraged to attend?

I have attended ACFAS this year. You are encouraged to attend any conference you have an interest in. There is also great support and encouragement in attending fellowship courses that are held throughout the year.

How would you describe your director's teaching style?

Dr. Sharpe is an excellent educator who adapts his teaching style to meet the needs and goals of his fellows. He is evidence-based in what he teaches and patient and supportive in how he teaches.

How is research incorporated into your experience? What resources are provided/available?

We are expected to publish in a peer reviewed journal and present a poster at the ACFAS annual scientific conference. We perform ongoing research often multi-centered that gets passed on year to year from prior fellows.

Do you take any "call"? If so, how often? What type of call? (general vs. trauma, hospital vs. private practice?)

There is a rotating call schedule at the 2 hospitals our fellowship covers. Usually, call is 10-15 days per month at the hospitals. This includes general hospital call for inpatient routine consults as well as trauma call.

How many hospitals/surgery centers are you credentialed at?

2 hospitals (University Hospitals Lake West Medical Center and Tripoint Medical Center) as well as Mentor Surgery Center.

What is your didactic schedule like? What academic opportunities are available to you during fellowship? (Cadaver labs, journal club, radiology conference, etc.)

We meet twice weekly to discuss our surgical cases where we present and discuss



procedure choice, imaging, surgical approach and rationale, post-operative protocols, and supporting literature. We have routine cadaver labs as well as educational opportunities with our affiliated residency program, Mercy Health.

Is your fellowship affiliated with a residency program? If yes, what are your responsibilities?  
How often are you interacting with residents (What % of cases?)

Yes, we are affiliated with Mercy Health based in Northeast, OH. We work alongside residents in both clinical and surgical settings. Roughly 80% of cases have resident involvement. We assist in training as well as learning from our residents.

Are you able to collect cases for board certification?

Yes. Cases booked under the fellows name as primary surgeon can be used for board certification.

When should interested applicants visit? What does a visit look like?

We offer formal visits following a first round of zoom interviews. We then reach out to our top candidates and invite them for a formal visit usually consisting of a day in clinic as well as surgery.

What is the interview process like at your program?

We first offer zoom interviews following review of each application. This typically occurs in July of the application cycle. We then offer our top candidates formal site visits including a day in clinic and a day in surgery. We typically choose our fellow in August of the application cycle.

Do you have a co-fellow? What percentage of your cases are scrubbed with them?

I do not have a co-fellow.

What support is available for finding post-fellowship employment?

There is wonderful support. Balance Foot and Ankle Wellness Center has 8 doctors, all of who are open and willing to assist in supporting the fellow in their job hunt.

What qualities make an applicant a good fit for your program?

Empathy, integrity, honesty, hard-working, teachable; these are all characteristics we look for in our next fellow.



Why did you apply for fellowship? And why did you choose your fellowship program?

I had spent several weeks with Dr. Sharpe as well as all Balance faculty as a student and resident. I had an inside look at how Balance faculty treats their fellow and the types of experiences they get. This fellowship has excellent variety of surgical pathology, autonomy, and continuity of care. You learn the business of private practice and become competent with billing. I enjoyed the work environment and the entire office staff. It felt like a good fit and a place I could grow as a physician and surgeon.

Any advice for future fellowship applicants?

Fellowship interviews are a two-way process, and it's important to use them to evaluate whether the program aligns with your value and career goals. Asking thoughtful questions and clarifying any uncertainties can help you make an informed decision about whether the program is the right fit for you.

