

ACFAS 2023 Meet the Fellow Questionnaire



American College of
Foot and Ankle Surgeons®

Fellow Name:

Alec Dierksheide

Fellowship Program:

University Hospitals/Precision Orthopaedics Advanced Foot & Ankle Surgery Fellowship

City/State:

Chardon, Ohio

Program Director:

Mark Mendeszoon, DPM FACFAS

How many Attendings do you work with regularly?

One

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 program has an emphasis on sports medicine, trauma, pediatrics, and complex reconstruction. We do 5-10 TARs per year. 30% trauma, 35% sports medicine, 25% complex reconstruction, 10% other including limb salvage, nerve surgery, forefoot surgery. 85% of the cases are rearfoot/ankle. Approximately 50 arthroscopy cases per year.

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

1.5 days dedicated OR but there are add-on cases throughout the week/weekend and once per month we will have 2-2.5 OR days per week. 3 full days of clinic and two half days of clinic per week. There is no dedicated fellows clinic but if Dr. Mendeszoon is out of the office, the fellow(s) will cover the clinic themselves.



How many surgical cases do you typically scrub per month?

40 on average

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

We attended OrthoFix, Paragon, Stryker, and Arthrex Fellows courses. We also attended APMA and ACFAS National Conferences. We also attended a course at ConMed Headquarters lead by Dr. Mendeszoon and attended SALRM Trauma & Post-Traumatic Limb Reconstruction Conference in Cape Town, South Africa.

How would you describe your director's teaching style?

Dr. Mendeszoon is a pleasure to work with, he is laid back and gives the fellows great autonomy both in clinic and the OR. Hands-on learning and you learn from experience through the high volume clinic and surgical patient volume.

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

We currently have multiple research projects on going and there always an opportunity to publish. Resources include University Hospitals for IRB and funding to present at one conference per year.

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

We are always on call for one hospital (trauma, diabetic foot, etc.) and various days throughout the month at two other hospitals. We also are responsible for calling patients after hours who contact the practice with questions (typically post-op patients).

How many hospitals/surgery centers are you credentialed at?

We are credentialed at 4 hospitals and 1 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 do sporadic cadaver labs throughout the year when the opportunities arise.

There is no formal radiology conference or journal club but we are frequently going over imaging and current literature throughout the week. A few times per year we will lecture or help out with lectures at the Kent State College of Podiatric Medicine.

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

We are no longer affiliated with the UH Residency Program.

Are you able to collect cases for board certification?

No

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

Applicants should visit between April-August at the end of their PGY2/beginning of PGY3 year, the earlier the better. We recommend visiting on a Wednesday/Thursday as the applicant would experience a full day of surgery center and a full day of clinic at our main clinic.

What is the interview process like at your program?

There is no formal interview process, the "interview" is the 2-day visit.

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

I do have a co-fellow and we scrub the majority of the cases together.

What support is available for finding post-fellowship employment?

Dr. Mendeszoon and Precision Orthopaedics are very supportive of assisting you in finding a job. The practice and Dr. Mendeszoon will write the fellows LOR. This fellowship will make the fellow very competitive for Orthopedic Practice positions as you gain a full year of experience working at a private orthopedic practice.



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

Trustworthy, hard worker, works well as a member of a team, comfortable with autonomy in decision-making and surgery.

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

There were many reasons: I wanted to get the most training possible to make myself competitive with other leaders in our field and other foot and ankle surgeons. Many of our specialty surgery colleagues do fellowships and I believe this is the way medicine is going in the future. My passion is sports medicine and Dr. Mendeszoon is at the top of our field as a surgical sports medicine podiatrist and I wanted to obtain that added experience in training athletes at all levels and get experience in a private orthopedic practice.

Any advice for future fellowship applicants?

I recommend being honest with yourself about your goals and aspirations and do your best to research programs that align with your goals and will give you the specific training you desire.

