

**ACFAS 2021 Virtual Fellowship Fair:
Get to Know the Fellow Questionnaire**



**American College of
Foot and Ankle Surgeons®**

Fellow Name: Jason Spector

Fellowship Program: St. Petersburg Innovative Foot & Ankle Fellowship

City/State: St. Petersburg, FL

Program Director: Dr. Adam Perler

How many Attendings do you work with regularly? 3-4

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.

Typically, very wide ranging. Overall, not much focus on diabetic/wound care. Some Charcot exposure with frames, nails, fractures etc. Small amount of pediatric clinic and surgical experience. Vast amounts of Sports Medicine, Deformity correction, Complex recon, trauma. Very good exposure to rearfoot/ankle. You will likely feel very comfortable with almost everything from forefoot to rearfoot/ankle. Probably ~35% of overall cases are trauma.

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

Schedule can be tailored to the fellows needs. I have spent all 5 days in the OR but eventually opted for a more well-rounded schedule with at least 1 consistent clinic day. I typically have a 60/40 surgical/clinic balance now. I usually see patients on my own in clinic alongside the director. I often diagnose/treat on my own and schedule surgery/conduct pre-op appointments (sometimes from initial appointments to surgery depending on when they present/return for follow ups/pre ops). We have started a fellow's clinic which typically consists of post ops/follow ups but look for this to evolve more down the line.

How many surgical cases do you typically scrub per month?

Typically 10-20 (sometimes more and sometimes less). The high volume of cases I've had in some weeks have been in the mid to high 20s.

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

ACFAS, State podiatry conferences

How would you describe your director's teaching style?

I would say he is laid back and very supportive. He is very good about discussing his approach while trying to instruct.

How is research incorporated into your experience? What resources are provided/available?
Typically retrospective studies. Not setup for prospective studies but this may change and will vary from year to year depending on fellows desire for research.

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

No formal call or rounding schedule. There are consults to cover on occasion during the week or weekends.

How many hospitals/surgery centers are you credentialed at?

5 hospitals and 4 surgery centers

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

No set didactic schedule this year due to covid restrictions. Will frequently do labs that are sometimes in conjunction with neighborhood residencies. Usual informal discussions about new journal articles, surgeries etc. This will likely go back to more structured meetings as held during the prior fellowship year.

Is your fellowship affiliated with a residency program? If yes, what are your responsibilities?

How often are you interacting with residents (What % of cases?)

No

Are you able to collect cases for board certification?

Yes, on consults you may receive at the hospital but this is of variable quantity (count on very few)

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

I would recommend reaching out early in the process (end of the year that is prior to you applying, beginning of the actual application year). I would say our program is great about discussing the program with candidates and even conducting zoom meetings before any formal interview. Applicants should likely set up visits, if possible, in early/mid year of the application year

What is the interview process like at your program?

We consider and evaluate each applicant that applies. We typically grant interviews to the vast majority (or all of) the applicants over a zoom meeting. The session is typically non-academic and there is usually a follow-up interview for the final candidates.

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

No

What support is available for finding post-fellowship employment?

Usually contacts from faculty

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

I think we look for someone who is well-rounded, dedicated, and down to earth. Almost every applicant is going to have a fantastic CV with academics/research. I think the applicants' intangibles and personality/originality will allow them to mesh with the program/faculty and make them stand out as a good fit for the program. Having interests that align with the strengths/foundation of the program I think also helps.

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

I decided to pursue a fellowship that would provide a unique training experience in comparison to my residency. I felt that I had a strong surgical foundation coming out of residency and was looking for an experience that would add to and provide a different foundation. I feel like my fellowship, and my director in particular, has a very unique and impactful way of practicing medicine and performing surgery. There is strong influence and exposure to certain clinical/surgical aspects that I had little to no experience to in residency (such as 3D printing). I would say that even with a strong surgical foundation in residency, my fellowship has dramatically changed/improved both my clinical/surgical approach and experience.

Any advice for future fellowship applicants? – I would recommend applicants start with a list of objectives for what they are looking for in a fellowship and what they are hoping to get out of it. Every program will have its pros and cons but I think it's vital an applicant always have their priorities at the forefront of their application process.