

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



American College of  
Foot and Ankle Surgeons®

Fellow Name:

Vikram Bala, DPM, AACFAS

Fellowship Program:

Balance Foot and Ankle Fellowship

City/State:

Concord, Ohio

Program Director:

Jonathan J. Sharpe, DPM, FACFAS

How many Attendings do you work with regularly?

Sharpe, but next year fellows will be able to work with Jennifer Prezioso, DPM, FACFAS; Mark Hardy, DPM, FACFAS; Carissa Sharpe, DPM, DABPM; Christopher Hehemann, DPM, FACFAS

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.

Emphasis on reconstruction of the foot and ankle as well as trauma. Fair amount of sports medicine. We do between 10-15 TARs per year. Also performs Total Talus. Great forefoot volume (HTs, distal bunions, MIS, Lapidus)  
4-5 Frames per year

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

Wed and Fri in the OR.

M Tues and Thurs in Clinic.

I do have my own fellows clinic. I see anywhere between 15-25 patients in a day.

Volume depends on fellow comfort level and aptitude.

How many surgical cases do you typically scrub per month?

10-12 cases per week, so 40-50 cases per month.

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What conferences have you attended/are you encouraged to attend?  
ACFAS, maybe CLES depending on interest. And any Fellows course.

How would you describe your director's teaching style?

He's there when you need him, he lets you make decisions and supports decisions based in EBM.

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

Through Dr. Sharpe's network and associations, there are ample opportunities to get involved in research

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

We take trauma call, both myself and Dr. Sharpe are on the schedule independently. Usually about 10-12 total days per month, between 2 hospitals.

How many hospitals/surgery centers are you credentialed at?

Hospitals: Lake West and Tripoint. Cleveland Clinic on the west side. Metro health.  
ASC: 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.)

I attend cadaver labs with Mercy residents. You can attend whatever didactics you would like. You can also schedule and host didactics if desired.

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

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

Mercy residents are with us everyday. I have had the opportunity to work with all of them. They are primarily there to shadow Dr. Sharpe, but can scrub cases with the fellow also

Are you able to collect cases for board certification?

Yes. I will likely finish the year with 50+ cases as surgeon of record.



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

Reach out in mid June, we will have more information at that time.

What is the interview process like at your program?

Come for a visit, then Dr. Sharpe sits down with the fellow to review applications and discuss candidates. Once a decision is made, the applicant is contacted and offered the position. Likely Early November decision.

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?

Drs. Sharpe and Hardy have been great resources. They are well connected and happy to include me in their network to identify the right opportunity. They have also been fantastic about helping to look at opportunities and review contracts.

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

Self motivated, hard worker, seeks out extra learning opportunities. Clear research interests and well rounded. Personality is important, let the real you shine through.

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

Dr. Sharpe is in an elite class, in my personal opinion. I have heard him lecture at ACFAS and other forums.

The type of cases he does, his demeanor and the type of practice he has all factored in.

Any advice for future fellowship applicants?

Reach out, ask questions, never stop learning and improving.

Make sure you enjoy what you do. This job is not always easy, your love of the craft and your dedication to the patient will set you apart.

