Selection to the AOA 21 Training Program in orthopaedic surgery for 2028 intake: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

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i. CV

1. How many points will I be awarded for particular activities on my CV?

You can find the weighting of points for each section of the CV detailed in the *Regulations*. If you have an activity or achievement that meets the criteria outlined in the *Regulations* you should include it in your application for assessment.

2. Does the CV score contribute to the combined score?

No. Applicants must meet a minimum score of six (6) on the CV however these points do not contribute to scoring. Applicants who achieve a score of six (6) on the CV and achieve an orthopaedic multiple choice question test (OMCQ) and departmental referee report (DRR) combined score better than one (1) standard deviation below the mean will be eligible for an invitation to interview.

3. I have completed a Master's degree; how will I know if it is eligible for points?

Each Master's degree that is included on an application for Selection will be assessed at the time on its relevance to orthopaedic surgery. Master's degrees will be accepted both by coursework and by research, provided they are relevant to the practice of orthopaedic surgery. It is recommended that applicants undertake a Master's degree only if they wish to do so for professional reasons, and not purely for the purposes of Selection.

4. Which Radiation Safety Courses will be recognised by AOA?

The only requirement for the Radiation Safety Course is that the course is licensed by the appropriate state licensing body (e.g. the Environment Protection Authority). Your hospital should be able to advise you on the courses available in your area. There is no currency requirement with regard to when the course is completed.

5. How many attempts can I make at selection into orthopaedic training?

AOA has removed the maximum number of attempts at Selection into training from 2024.

Applicants are encouraged to reflect on their performance, and the feedback provided on their application, when considering a further attempt.

6. What are the components that add to my CV score?

Candidates must achieve a minimum score of six (6) points on the CV in order to progress to the next stage of Selection. The components scored are:

- Surgical and medical experience (maximum four (4) points).
- Skills courses (maximum three (3) points).
- Higher education qualifications (maximum three (3) points).
- Research presentation (maximum two (2) points).
- Research publications (maximum four (4) points).

7. I have completed research that is currently pending publication. Can I include this under research publication on my CV?

Only research that has been published may be counted on the CV. Pending publications will not be accepted.

8. I have been acknowledged and/or listed as a collaborator on a research publication, but am not a listed author. Can I include this publication under research publication on my CV?

Only research where an applicant is an officially listed author may be counted on the CV. Publications where an applicant is only acknowledged and/or listed as a collaborator will not be eligible for points.

9. Does my publication have to be orthopaedic specific?

Publications do not need to be orthopaedic-specific. The focus is on the quality of the research, as reflected by the impact factor.

10. Research impact factors have changed since my research was published. Can I claim my research under the impact factors that applied when it was originally published?

Research publications will be measured according to the current impact factors, unless an applicant can provide evidence of the impact factor that applied to their research when it was originally published, in which case AOA will accept the research under the impact factor that applied at the date of original publication.

11. I completed my undergraduate medical training overseas. How can I join the AOA 21 Training Program?

If you are a graduate of an overseas medical school seeking entry to the AOA 21 Training Program, you will need to contact the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) in the first instance. Frequently asked questions relating to International Medical Graduates (IMGs) and the selection process can be found on the RACS website.

Please note that you **must be an Australian citizen** or have **permanent resident status in Australia** for the full duration of the training program and hold unconditional registration as a medical practitioner in Australia.

ii. Departmental Referee Report

12. How will AOA collect my departmental referee reports (DRR)s?

The DRR will be collected from each site at which the applicant has worked during the previous two clinical years. The DRR will represent the collective opinion of the multidisciplinary orthopaedic team including non-surgical perspectives.

DRRs are collected to establish the applicant's readiness for training.

13. Can I see my DRR?

All referees contacted as part of the Selection process will be advised of the confidential nature of the reports. Applicants will not be provided with any updates or information in regard to the DRR.

14. How will the DRR differ from the verbal referee report?

DRRs will represent the collective opinions of the department with regard to the applicant's readiness for training. This tool will not carry any weight and will not contribute to the overall score.

On the other hand, verbal referee reports will be collected from three referees who worked with the applicant over the past two years. The verbal referee report is a weighted tool and will contribute 40 per cent to the overall score.

iii. Orthopaedic multiple choice question test (OMCQ)

15. What is the orthopaedic multiple choice question test (OMCQ)?

The OMCQ is a multiple-choice question test to assess applicants orthopaedic and clinical knowledge. For further information on the OMCQ please refer to the OMCQ Information on the AOA website.

Applicants must attend the test in-person at one of the examination centres provided by AOA's partnered service provider, located across various regions. Applicants will have the option to select the location most convenient for them. A valid photo ID is required for entry.

16. Where can I sit the OMCQ?

The OMCQ is an in-person test, delivered at various locations. Applicants will have the option to select the location most convenient for them. Further information will be provided following registration.

17. What if I cannot attend the OMCQ?

Applicants must make themselves available at the time the OMCQ is scheduled. If an applicant does not complete the OMCQ, the applicant will be automatically withdrawn from the Selection process and their application will not be considered further.

18. How will the OMCQ determine the progress of my Selection application?

The OMCQ score will be combined with the departmental referee report score. Applicants will be ranked on this combined score and invited to interview based on regional preferences and the interview capacity in each region with consideration for applicants identified in section 6.3 in the *Regulations*.

iv. Selection application initiatives in 2027

19. What are AOA diversity and inclusion initiatives?

In order to promote diversity within the training program and address the workforce needs of rural communities, the Selection Committee has implemented selection initiatives as follows:

a. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants
b. female applicants
c. applicants with a rural origin and connection

These initiatives are designed to provide these applicants with the best opportunity to be assessed for the training program throughout the Selection process. More information can be found in the *Regulations* (section 6.3).

20. I am an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicant, how will the Selection initiatives affect my application?

As an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, if you have:

a. satisfied the minimum eligibility criteria detailed in section 4.2 of the *Regulations*, and
b. achieved at least six (6) points on your CV

you will automatically progress through all stages of the Selection process regardless of your score or rank.

Please refer to Section 15 in the *Regulations* to learn about how offers will be extended to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants.

21. I am a female applicant; how will the Selection initiatives affect my application?

As a female applicant, if you have:

a. satisfied the minimum eligibility criteria detailed in section 4.2 of the *Regulations*,
b. achieved at least six (6) points on your CV, and
c. achieved the minimum standard of OMCQ and departmental referee report performance

you will progress to the Interview regardless of your score or rank. Following interview, you will progress to verbal referee reporting if your combined score falls within two (2) deciles below the progression decile in each region.

Please refer to Section 15 in the *Regulations* to learn about how offers will be extended.

22. I am a rural applicant; how will the Selection initiatives affect my application?

To be considered as a rural applicant, you will need to demonstrate that you meet the eligibility criteria for 'rurality'. If you:

a. meet the rurality eligibility requirements
b. have satisfied the minimum eligibility criteria detailed in section 4.2 of the *Regulations*,
c. achieved at least six (6) points on your CV and,
d. achieved the minimum standard of OMCQ and departmental referee report performance,

you will progress through the interview and verbal referee report stages of the Selection process regardless of your score or rank.

Please refer to Section 14 in the *Regulations* to learn about how offers will be extended.

23. I am a rural applicant; how can I demonstrate my rurality?

In order to meet the eligibility requirements for rurality applicants must have:

1. Completed 10 years of combined primary, and secondary schooling in a rural area categorised as MM2* or above, and undertaken a period of tertiary education in a rural area categorised as MM2* or above. OR

2. Completed a minimum of 75% of medical training at a rural university or rural campus

*When referring to a rural area for this purpose, the Modified Monash Model (MMM) will be used. MMM is used to define whether a location is a city, rural, remote, or very remote.

Along with details confirming the rural area as MM2* or above, applicants will be required to provide the following documentary evidence:

Rurality Components	
Requirement	**Documentary Evidence**
Primary and secondary schooling	An official academic transcript or an official letter from the school including details of rural schooling
Tertiary education	An official academic transcript including details of rural tertiary education
Medical training	An official academic transcript including details of rural medical training

How to find current areas under the MMM

You can find 2015 and 2019 MMM classifications on the Health Workforce Locator.

Modified Monash Model classifications table	
Modified Monash category	**Inclusions**
MM 1	All areas categorised ASGS-RA1.
MM 2 MM2*	Areas categorised ASGS-RA 2 and ASGS- RA 3 that are in, or within 20km road distance of a town with a population greater than 50,000. Areas will only be accepted where they are located in a regional setting. That is where they are surrounded by or contiguous to MM3 areas.
MM 3	Areas categorised ASGS-RA 2 and ASGS-RA 3 that are not in MM 2 and are in, or within 15km road distance, of a town with a population between 15,000 and 50,000.
MM 4	Areas categorised ASGS-RA 2 and ASGS- RA 3 that are not in MM 2 or MM 3 and are in, or within 10km road distance of a town with a population between 5,000 and 15,000.
MM 5	All other areas in ASGS-RA 2 and 3.
MM 6	All areas categorised ASGS-RA 4 that are not on a populated island that is separated from the mainland in the ABS geography and is more than 5km offshore. Islands that have an MM 5 classification with a population of less than 1,000 (2019 Modified Monash Model classification only).
MM 7	All other areas; that being ASGS-RA 5 and areas on a populated island that is separated from the mainland in the ABS geography and is more than 5km offshore.

v. Ranking and offers

24. In which instances during Selection are applicants ranked?

Applicants are ranked nationally throughout the Selection process:

1. When applicants meet the minimum CV score and achieve an OMCQ and DRR combined score better than one (1) standard deviation below the mean they are ranked nationally according to their combined OMCQ and DRR score. Applicants will be invited to interview based on the ranking of their combined OMCQ and DRR score and their regional preferences
2. When applicants attend a Selection interview they are also scored. Applicants will be ranked nationally based on their interview score and will progress to verbal referee reporting (VRR) based on this ranking and regional capacity. AOA will collect VRRs at a minimum ratio of two applicants to each expected available post in each region.
3. Following referee reports, applicants are ranked on their overall score when being considered for an offer. The overall score is comprised of the interview score (60 per cent) and the referee report score (40 percent).

vi. Regional preferences

25. How many regions can I preference on my application?

Applicants are asked to nominate a first and second regional preference. Applicants will only be considered for interviews and offers in the regions of preference on their application.

vii. Verbal referee reports

26. How will AOA collect my verbal referee reports (VRR)s?

Applicants will be ranked based on their interview score.

AOA will collect VRRs at a minimum ratio of two applicants to each expected available post in each region. AOA will collect a minimum of three (3) referee reports for each of these applicants. AOA will select the surgeons to provide the VRRs. Applicants are not involved in this process.

VRRs are collected to obtain information, in confidence, regarding the observed work performance, character, and abilities of the applicant.

27. How will I list my referees?

As part of their application, applicants must list each site at which they have worked during the previous two clinical years (since the start of 2023 and including any current post), and provide the name and contact details of the head of the orthopaedic department (or equivalent) and every orthopaedic surgeon with whom they have worked at each site.

Applicants must provide contact details including a valid email address for every surgeon.

28. Which referees are considered suitable for listing in my application?

You must list *every orthopaedic surgeon you have worked with in the last two (2) years*.

You will be required to detail the extent of your interaction with each surgeon by completing the following matrix upon application:

Orthopaedic surgeon	Supervised and/or observed applicant	Setting	Frequency	Duration (continuous)
Dr xx	Yes / No	Theatre, Clinic, On-call, Ward Rounds	Daily, Weekly, Monthly, Rarely	< 10 Weeks > 10 Weeks > 26 Weeks > 50 Weeks

29. Can I select which consultants will be contacted as my preferred referees?

Applicants will have the opportunity to highlight two (2) referees as those they consider best able to provide an assessment of their performance. Referees must be FRACS qualified orthopaedic surgeons and be able to comment on all aspects of the applicant's workplace performance. However, there is no guarantee that the highlighted referees will participate or be invited to provide a referee report. Referees will be selected at the discretion of the Selection Committee.

30. I am on parental leave; do I have to list a current post?

Applicants who are on a period of extended leave at the time of application (e.g. parental leave) are not required to list a current post.

31. I work in a rural setting I might not be able to list three (3) referees within the last two (2) years; what should I do?

Applicants who believe they may have insufficient referees within the nominated period due to a period of extended leave or rural location should email selection@aoa.org.au for advice.

viii. Other

32. My question is not listed here. Whom can I contact?

Applicants requiring further information about AOA applications must submit their enquiry to selection@aoa.org.au. Once the enquiry is received, an AOA staff member will contact the applicant as soon as possible to provide further appropriate information.

Phone enquiries will not be accepted.