

Reference Centers & Fellowships of ASSI - Streamlining Guidelines & Processes

Guidelines

I. Reference Centre

a. Eligibility for becoming a Reference Centre

Such Centres should be recognized for competence in spine surgery, preferably recognized for provision of a standardised training programme in spine surgery, have an empanelled ASSI member recognized for his training skills and preferably have provision for accommodation to the trainees.

The Centres should have the possibility to provide hands on training. It should have both Orthopaedics and Neurosurgeon consultant level surgeons working together and enough registrar level and resident level staff. Post graduate teaching institutions will be preferred. All pathologies should be addressed (Trauma/ Tumor/ Infection/ Deformity/Degenerative and Metabolic disorders).

In house critical care, physiotherapy, rehabilitation, radiology (CT, MRI, X rays), pathology services should be available. In house theatre facility with C Arm, neuro monitoring, Operating Microscope, Burrs should be there.

Case load should be at least 500 cases per year (spine alone). Library/ internet access/ journals access on line should be available in center.

Dedicated training time; teaching and research time should be built in the system. Research output, publications and presentations should be emphasized.

b. Advertisement/Information Dissemination inviting applications for Reference Centres

ASSI should advertise in a renowned national journal (like Indian Journal of Orthopaedics) & also on its website in this regard. Mass mailers should also be sent to all ASSI members.

c. Designating a Center as a Reference Center

Interested centers should apply using the application form as enclosed in Annexure A. The centre should apply to Secretary, ASSI. ASSI will designate an expert to evaluate if all eligibility criteria are met. The expert should do an inspection and submit a report within two months of the request. Based on the expert report, Education Committee / Secretary would recommend suitable Centers to the Executive and General Body of ASSI for final approval.

d. Renewal of Reference Centre Status

Reference Centre status would be provided for a period of three years at a time. Reference centre should apply for renewal at least three months before expiry of term. Education Committee / Secretary would designate a suitable inspector to review. If the Centre still fulfills eligibility criteria, inspector would submit a report within 2 months. On the basis of inspector's report, Education committee / Secretary would recommend renewal to the Executive and General Body of ASSI for final approval.

II. Fellowship

a. Eligibility of a candidate for ASSI Spine fellowship

The candidate must be of age between 28-40 years and a paid member of ASSI since at least 6 months, must be a MS/DNB/FRCS/equivalent in Orthopedics or MCh/DNB in Neurosurgery, should have active interest in developing spine as a full time specialty & must have permanent registration with the MCI (Medical Council of India). He / she should have strong emphasis on publications and presentation. A fellow will have to maintain and submit complete logbook and final evaluation form. He / she will have to meet the requisite criteria of minimum 2 paper presentation at a national conference and one publication in peer reviewed journal during his fellowship.

An ASSI Spine fellowship is granted at the discretion of ASSI, based upon the fellow's application form, degree of experience vis a vis requirements, and availability.

b. Fellowship Duration

Duration would be 2 Years.

c. Advertisement / information dissemination

ASSI should advertise in a renowned national journal (like Indian Journal of Orthopaedics) & also on its website in this regard. Mass mailers should also be sent to all ASSI members.

d. Selecting a candidate for ASSI Spine Fellowship

Interested candidates should apply by sending the filled application form (the same as that of ASSI Spine Fellowship as enclosed at Annexure B) to Secretary ASSI after posts are announced through website / advertisement/mailer.

Secretary would review the eligibility criteria. Candidate for Fellowship would be selected based on an interview by the Education Committee / a panel selected by the Executive. The approval for Fellowship would be subject to acceptance of the candidate by the Reference Centre (as preferred by the fellow).

e. **Exit Evaluation**

Exit evaluation would be conducted by Examiners selected by Executive of ASSI.

f. **Other details of the fellowship**

- **Confirmation:** ASSI must receive confirmation of acceptance within one month after the fellowship has been granted through a letter addressed to Secretary & copy marked to in charge of the reference centre. If no response is received within that period, ASSI will be free to assign the place to another candidate.
- **Working hours:** The fellow is expected to follow the daily routine of the centre and should be available for emergencies at night and on weekends.
- **Leave of absence:** Maximum of 20 casual leaves will be given to the candidate in one academic year. Leave will not be the right of candidate and will be given at the discretion of head of fellowship Centre. Paternity leave of 7 days will be given to the candidate. Maternity leave of three months will be given to the candidate but candidate has to work for extra three months after her fellowship tenure to compensate for her academic loss and to be eligible for fellowship exit examination. If, for some reason, the fellow wishes to change the placement or leave before completion of the allotted period, permission must be sought from the Head of the Fellowship Centre and Education Committee / Secretary.
- **Evaluation:** The fellowship program can only maintain its standard or improve, if there is feedback from the fellows. Following completion of the placement, a confidential report is requested. This evaluation form with honest comments or criticisms should be returned. A completed evaluation form is mandatory to receive ASSI fellowship certification.
- **Report:** The hosting Centre would also need to prepare a confidential report on every fellow. This will be used as a reference for any further communication or information.
- **Case Representation:** A logbook needs to be prepared by candidate for every surgery the fellow has participated in the fellowship course.