

AAOS item writer spotlight

Interview, Spring 2024
Dr. Mark Schultzel

AAOS has many great volunteers who contribute to the Academy's examination development process. Through their experience and expertise, they offer their time to help build the future of our examination product offerings. Each quarter, we will celebrate these efforts with a featured volunteer in the AAOS Item Writer Spotlight.

Mark Schultzel, MD, MBA, FAAOS, FAOA is our featured volunteer for the Spring 2024 AAOS Item Writer Spotlight. Dr. Schultzel recently completed six years on the Shoulder and Elbow Evaluation Committee. He currently serves as a Shoulder and Elbow Member on the OKU Evaluation Committee. We recently had the opportunity to talk with Dr. Schultzel about the many years he has volunteered with AAOS, and the fantastic contributions he has made.



Thank you, Dr. Schultzel!

Tell us a little bit about your background as an orthopaedic surgeon.

I attended medical school at UC San Diego and my residency in Kansas City at UMKC. My shoulder and elbow surgery fellowship was in LA at the Kerlan Jobe Orthopaedic Clinic with Dr. John Itamura. During Covid I returned to UCSD to earn my MBA.

How many years have you been an AAOS volunteer?

Since I was a resident—almost 10 years.

How did you first find out about volunteer opportunities?

I found out about volunteering with AAOS through an attending of mine who previously did volunteer work with the Academy. He thought it was a good way to stay connected with AAOS. It's also a great way to affect policy and make positive contributions to the orthopaedic community.

What has been most surprising about working with the other members of the Shoulder and Elbow Committee?

They are all incredibly driven people, which is very infectious—we can accomplish a lot of great things. The axiom holds true: "If you want something done right, ask someone who is busy." Those of us who volunteer all overextend ourselves, but for good reasons.

It is really great to network with colleagues in our community. It can give you people to bounce challenging cases off of and doctors you know when you go to large meetings.

What is your best advice to new item writers?

Don't try to look for the items that are most unique/flashy/controversial. These exams are really designed to test if you are a competent, safe surgeon, and operating within standards. Focus on common conditions that you treat and any updates on treatment management.

What has been the most rewarding thing about participating in exam development?

Having a positive effect on surgeons' knowledge. It is a great reminder of all the material that I have learned and that I use in my everyday life. And a reminder of all the things that go into being an orthopaedic surgeon.

What is the best and/or worst thing about having a twin also in the medical profession?

The best is knowing that I have my best friend nearby when I walk into the hospital. We also have a common understanding having gone through some of the same challenges during residency, training, and practice. It's also great on those Top Doctor magazine articles to make the public laugh.

On the other hand, my brother is a very famous robotic surgeon, so he is very busy and well-known. I often get confused for him and get strange questions that would apply to his practice instead of mine.

But overall, it is a big point of pride and I couldn't be more proud of him.

To get involved and become an AAOS Item Writer,
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