



# RCSI

ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS IN IRELAND

COLÁISTE RÍOGA NA MÁINLEÁ IN ÉIRINN

## Grant/Fellowship Report Form

<b>Fellowship/Grant Holder Name</b>	John Tristan Cassidy
<b>Brief biography, including qualification and year of graduation (no more than 100 words)</b>	Completed orthopaedic specialist training in Ireland in 2020 (FRCSI Tr & Orth). Fellowships in Upper Limb Surgery in London and Melbourne. Starting as a consultant in University of Limerick Hospital Group
<b>Title of Project/Fellowship</b>	Upper Limb Fellowship, Melbourne Orthopaedic Group Australian Institute of Musculo –Skeletal Research
<b>Year of Award:</b> <b>Commencement Date:</b> <b>Conclusion Date:</b>	2021 August 2021 July 2022

### Summary (no more than 250 words)

The working week is busy. Most weeks consisted of four days in theatre, a morning of dedicated research time +/- one clinic. One half-day clinic per fortnight you run as your own. From this clinic you then generate an independent waiting list and then run your own theatre. This theatre list is separate to the other consultants' lists; however, you also have their support available from the adjoining theatres (if-and-when the need arises). This "trial run" as a consultant is both humbling and invaluable. This first-hand experience is complemented by spending the remainder of your theatre time either as a supernumerary individual or 1<sup>st</sup> assistant. The advantage to of being supernumerary is getting 1<sup>st</sup> hand exposure to a high volume of cases and the teaching that goes with it. All in all, I found the fellowship workload challenging, but well balanced.

Having completed time in Melbourne, I reflect on what has been an exhausting, challenging and thoroughly enjoyable year. I feel as prepared as I can be to go home and start my own practice. I can ask for no more. I am very grateful for the help provided by the RCSI.

**Grant Report (in the region of but no more than 500 words)**

Objectives of Project/Fellowship:

To advance my understanding of upper limb sporting injuries particularly in the contact sport cohort and high-level athletes

To advanced my subspecialist upper limb training in both operative proficiency and academic excellence

Did you achieve these objectives?

Yes

In your opinion, what is the value of your award to:

(a) Yourself

I targeted Australia for its mix of high volume, expertise in the management of upper limb sporting injuries, and excellent research output. Melbourne did not disappoint. I worked with the Melbourne Orthopaedic Group which has a total of 15 surgeons and a third of whom do upper limb. Usually there is more than upper limb fellow but, due to global circumstance, this year I was the only one. This afforded me excellent flexibility to get the mix of cases I needed whilst working with five surgeons -Greg Hoy, Eugene Ek, Matt Evans, Ash Carr and Shane Barwood. My year in Victoria was massively influential. My learning curve was steep both inside and outside the operating theatre. The award helped make this year possible for me and my family.

(b) The institution in which you worked

Moving to Australia during 2021 was a massive undertaking the country was locked down and last minute flight cancellation was routine. There was a lot of uncertainty, costs were high, and the necessary administration was almost overwhelming. There are usually two fellows, but I was the only one who successfully made it over. The help from RCSI travelling fellowship was instrumental in getting us to Australia. It would have been a real loss to the institution where I worked if they had had no fellow for an entire year.

I have been involved with clinical practice with the Melbourne orthopaedic group, have ongoing research projects and have done pro bono public work during my year in Australia. I'd hope to have added value during my time in Melbourne and enhanced the reputation of Irish surgical trainees.

(c) In the future for Irish patients

One of my key learning goals was to advance my understanding of upper limb sporting injuries particularly in the contact sport cohort and high-level athletes. Greg Hoy is a world-renowned upper limb surgeon for this patient group. Professor Hoy manages injuries for several premier Australian Football League teams... as well as other professional athletes/Olympians (tennis, rugby, swimming etc.). AFL shares many similarities with Gaelic sports and consequently the injuries observed are remarkably similar. This makes Australia and working with Prof Hoy a great fit for my learning goals. Working with Prof Hoy has given me confidence in my decision making regarding how and when patients can return to play. This was an area of which I was unsure of before arriving to Melbourne. Furthermore, I've also learned what steps can be taken intra-operatively in anticipation of the future loads/demands on the injured site after resumption of play.

My other primary fellowship supervisor was Professor Eugene Ek. Having worked with Christian Gerber, Robert Hotchkiss, Shawn O' Driscoll and JP Warner, Professor Ek has advanced training in both operative proficiency and academic excellence. Professor Ek challenged not just my opinions but my way of thinking. During my time with Professor Ek I was exposed a wide range of surgeries I had no previous experience with, examples of which include arthroscopic pectoralis minor release for scapular dyskinesia, endoscopic exploration of the brachial plexus, sternoclavicular joint arthroscopy, and middle gleno-humeral reconstruction allograft reconstruction. While I do not leave Melbourne with the skill set to perform all the above, I am confident that this breath of exposure has deepened my understanding on how best to meet patients' needs at home in Ireland.