



SSOWU

NEWSLETTER

WELCOME TO SSOWU!

Dear Members,

Welcome to the very first edition of the **Surgical Society of the University of Wollongong (SSOWU)** newsletter!

SSOWU was created to support, inspire, and guide students interested in surgery by offering hands-on experiences, educational resources, and fun social events throughout the year.

This monthly newsletter will feature a rotating selection of topics such as:

- 🛠️ Surgical workshops and hands-on opportunities
- 📅 Upcoming events and how to get involved
- li>• 🧠 Insights into different surgical pathways
- li>• 📖 Recommended reads in surgery and medicine
- li>• 🏥 Interesting case studies from clinical and surgical settings
- li>• 🔧 Updates in surgical training, techniques, and tools
- li>• 🎓 Tips and reflections on medical school and clinical placements

Whether you're considering a career in surgery or simply exploring your options, we hope this platform helps you grow and connect with others who share your passion.

Thanks for joining us – We're looking forward to growing, learning, and having some fun along the way.

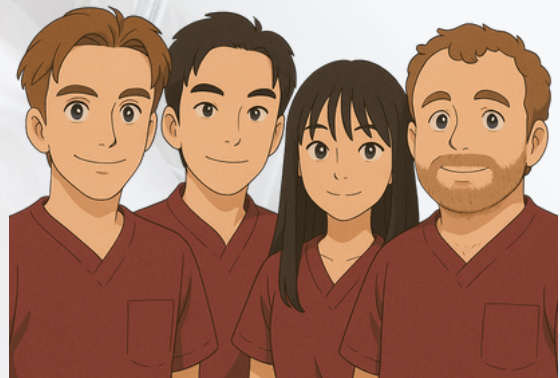
Warm regards,

Minjae Choi – President

Ivone Su – Vice President

Darcy Ryan – Secretary

Jamie Thomson – Treasurer





UPCOMING EVENT

A/Prof Andrew S. Davidson

MBBS, MS, PHD, FRACS



<https://www.asdavidson.com.au>



<http://linkedin.com/in/andrew-davidson-5848b1224>



<https://twitter.com/melbbrainsurg>



Royal Melbourne Hospital
Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre
Parkville Neurosurgery
Melbourne Private Hospital



Surgery & Service: Real Talk with A/Prof Andrew S. Davidson

Join us for an inspiring session with A/Prof Andrew Davidson — neurosurgeon, Deputy Director at RMH, and Medical Officer with the Royal Australian Navy. He'll be sharing his unique journey through surgery and service. Don't miss it!



Thursday, August 7th 2025



07:00 pm - 08:00 pm



Meeting number: 2653 188 5472
Meeting password: YcHfYEws323



[https://url.au.m.mimecastprotect.com/s/9YSmCgZ0JJUMZKE3uNf8i4JVIR?](https://url.au.m.mimecastprotect.com/s/9YSmCgZ0JJUMZKE3uNf8i4JVIR?domain=uowmail.webex.com)
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SO YOU WANT TO BE A NEUROSURGEON?

If you're aiming to get into neurosurgery in Australia, buckle up—it's one of the most competitive surgical specialties out there with most applicants getting into training at PGY5. Entry is via the Surgical Education and Training (SET) program run by the Neurosurgical Society of Australasia (NSA) and RACS with ~11 people selected each year.

THE PATHWAY:

Step 1: Registration and Eligibility

- Australian or NZ citizenship/permanent residency
- General (unconditional) AHPRA registration
- ≥ 24 weeks full-time neurosurgery experience (often 2-3 years, known as your accredited registrar years)
- Must have completed:
 - RACS Generic Surgical Sciences Exam (Pass)
 - NSA Neurosurgery Anatomy Exam ($\geq 70\%$)

Step 2: Application Components (scored out of 100)

Component	Weight	Min. Score Required
Neurosurgery Anatomy Exam	30%	70%
Structured CV	10%	50%
Reference Report	30%	50%
Semi-Structured Interview	30%	50%

Step 3: Training (post-selection)

- 5 years of SET (Basic, Intermediate & Advanced training)
- Completion = Fellowship of RACS (FRACS) in Neurosurgery



6 WAYS TO BOOST YOUR APPLICATION:

1

Get on a neurosurgery/ICU rotation early

- Look for neurosurgical and ICU terms in PGY2–PGY3 and get involved in the operating theatre, clinics, and ward rounds.

2

Ace the Anatomy Exam

- The NSA Anatomy Exam is tough
- Study Last's Anatomy (9th ed) and do lots of practice MCQs.

3

Go Rural

- Most SET applications have significant points for doing your JMO years in a rural area. Well worth it.

4

Publish and Present

- Talk to consultants and registrars about opportunities to publish

5

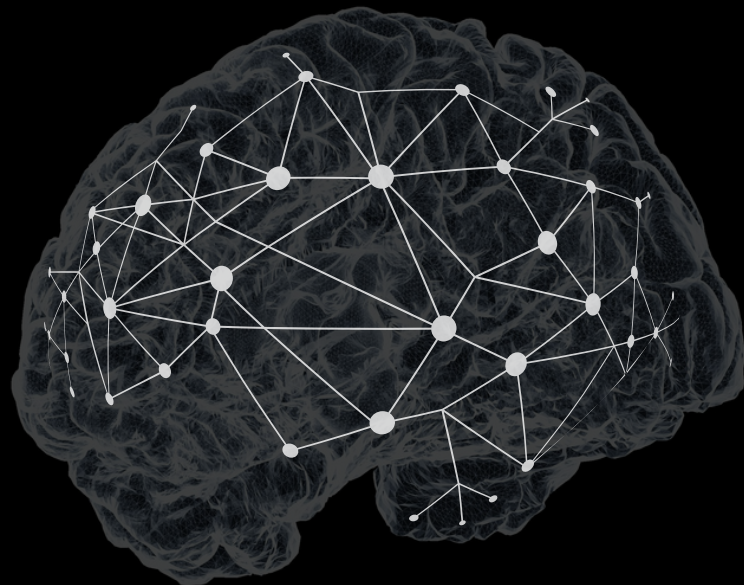
Consider additional degree

- Surgery is competitive and an additional medical related degree (Masters etc) will help

6

Strong references are key

- Build great relationships with consultants during your med school neurosurgical terms and during your unaccredited registrar years.
- The reference report makes up 30% of your score and can make or break your application



FINAL WORD

Getting into neurosurgery is a marathon, not a sprint. Start early, be strategic, and don't underestimate the value of good mentorship. It's a tough road but for the right person, it's one of the most intellectually and technically rewarding careers in medicine. Want to chat with someone who's applied or get help preparing your CV? **Reach out to SSOWU to get in touch.**



<https://www.nsa.org.au/Public/Public/homepage.aspx?hkey=0badfd83-d216-4fc8-80a0-27c0fca386f1>

COMING UP NEXT

Ever wondered what it takes to handle emergencies, manage the unknown, and operate under pressure?

In our next issue, we'll be diving into the **General Surgery pathway** — from SET entry requirements to tips on excelling in this demanding specialty.

Stay sharp — you won't want to miss this cut.



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If you have any **questions, feedback, or suggestions** on what you'd like to see in the future, feel free to contact us via social media or email at **surgicalsocietyuow@gmail.com**

