
OCT. 2025



Monthly Newsletter

Surgical Society of Wollongong University



UPCOMING SPEAKER

Prof. Eugene Ek
Orthopedic Surgeon

TRAINING PATHWAY

So You Want to Be an
Orthopedic Surgeon?

Editor's Note

Welcome to the third edition of the SSOWU Newsletter!

Last month, we were honoured to host Dr. Dean Yeh, who shared valuable advice on building a surgical career — from embracing new technologies like robotic surgery to gaining hands-on experience through rural and ICU placements. He reminded us that curiosity, continuous learning, and early involvement in research are key to standing out in this field.

This month, we turn our attention to orthopaedic surgery. We're excited to welcome Professor Eugene Ek, an internationally trained orthopaedic surgeon and academic, who will share his expertise in upper limb reconstruction and his perspectives on life in the operating room.

Upcoming Speaker: Prof. Eugene Ek

Prof. Eugene Ek is a **Orthopaedic surgeon** at Melbourne Orthopaedic Group, specialising in arthroscopic and reconstructive surgery on upper extremities (Hand, Elbow and Shoulder). He has numerous fellowship experiences throughout the world including Harvard (USA), Switzerland, Canada and South Korea. He extended his field of interest into teaching and currently teaching medical students at Monash University.

In this session, Professor Ek will share the story of his journey into medicine and orthopaedics — the key decisions, challenges, and lessons that shaped his career. Students will also hear practical advice on making the most of clinical placements, building surgical skills early, and navigating a career in one of medicine's most dynamic specialties, followed by an open Q&A.

For more information about Professor Ek, visit his site at <https://eugeneek.com.au>.



EVENT DETAILS

Date: 16 October 2025 (Thursday)

Time: 7pm - 8pm

Location: Online

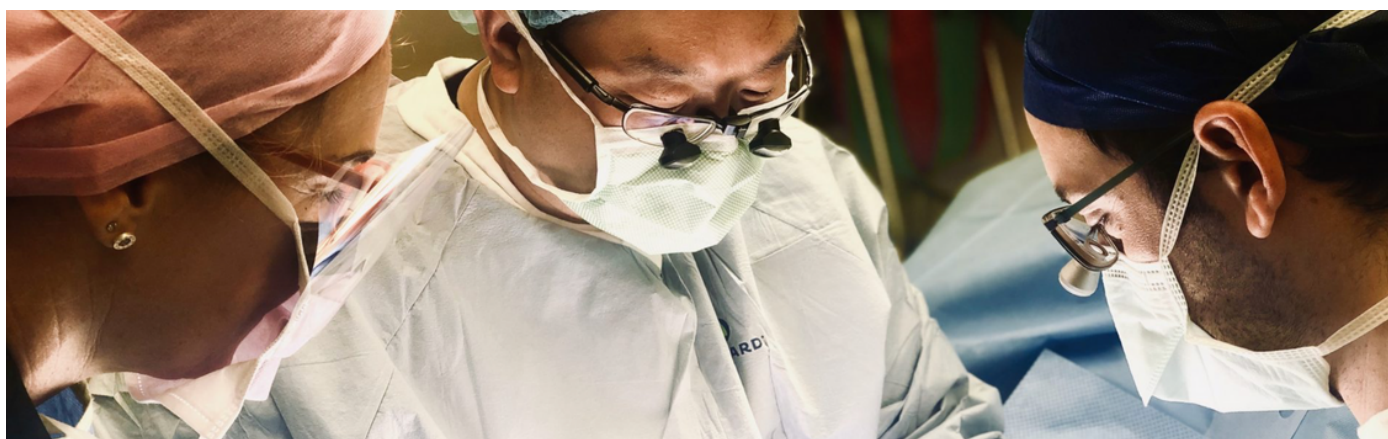
Webex: <https://uowmail.webex.com/uowmail/j.php?MTID=mebbefc5e09ddd394bcfef2c860a0f055>

Meeting number: 2654 178 3121

Meeting password: BDuD236D4Gq

WHY YOU SHOULDN'T MISS THIS SESSION

This event is more than just a talk — it's a rare opportunity to hear directly from a surgeon whose career spans some of the world's most renowned institutions. Whether you're curious about orthopaedics, exploring surgical specialties, or simply want to learn how to make the most of your clinical years, this session will offer practical insights you won't find in a textbook.

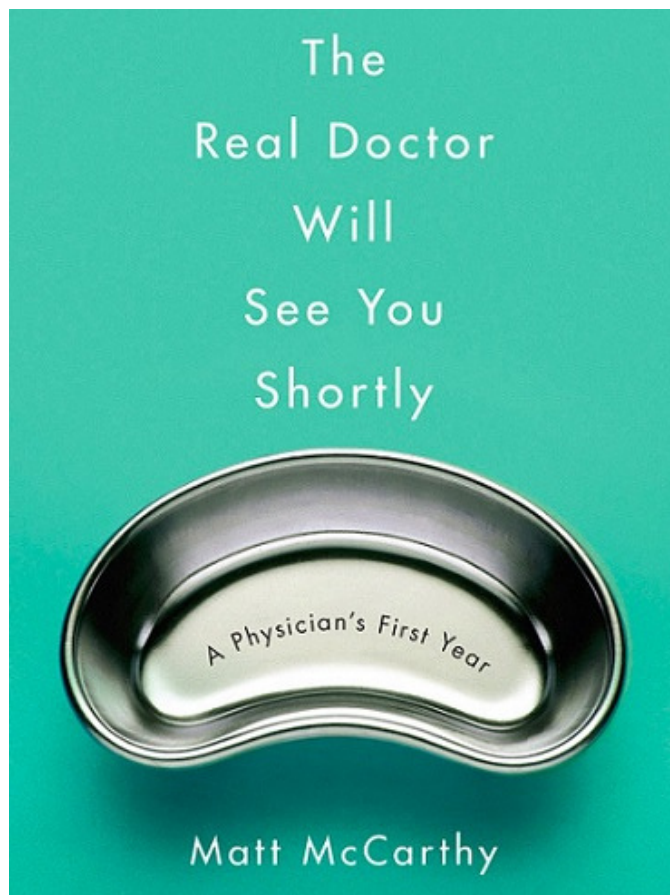
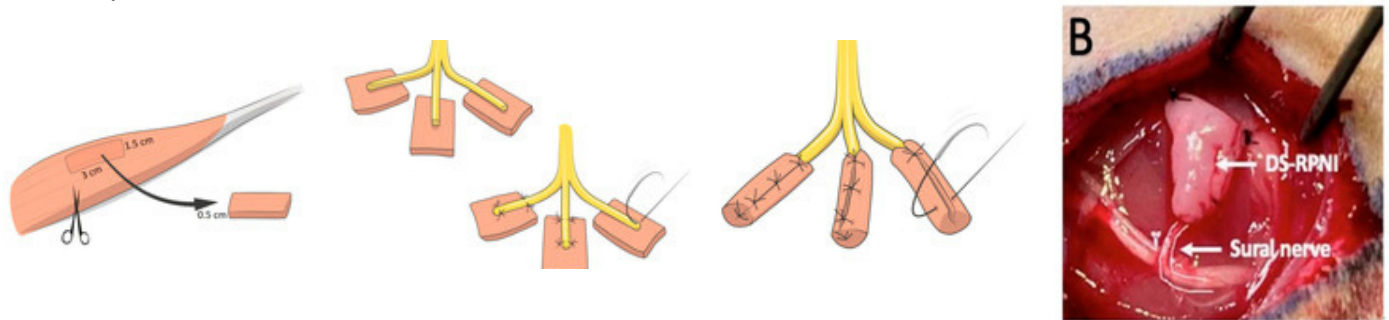


Research Highlight

Merging Neuroscience and Engineering Through Regenerative Peripheral Nerve Interfaces

<https://doi.org/10.3390/prosthesis7040097>

A new study from the University of Michigan introduces Regenerative Peripheral Nerve Interfaces (RPNIs), an exciting breakthrough that could make prosthetic limbs feel and move more like real ones. By connecting small muscle grafts to the body's remaining nerves, surgeons can turn nerve signals into powerful, stable control inputs and even restore touch and movement sensation. What makes this so exciting is that it bridges the gap between biology and technology, giving prosthetic users finer control and a more natural connection to their limbs. RPNIs are also showing big promise in reducing phantom limb and nerve pain after amputation.



Book of the Month:

The Real Doctor Will See You Shortly

This memoir follows Dr. Matt McCarthy through his chaotic first year as an intern in a busy New York hospital. Despite top-tier medical training, he quickly realises how unprepared he is for the realities of clinical work — from sleepless nights and overwhelming responsibility to the fear of making mistakes.

Through honest reflections and memorable patient encounters, McCarthy shows that good medicine is built not just on knowledge, but on empathy, humility, and human connection. It's a relatable and encouraging read for anyone about to begin their clinical journey.

“Medicine is about uncertainty. Learning to live with it, to make decisions despite it, is the heart of what we do.”

SO YOU WANT TO BE A ORTHOPAEDIC SURGEON?

Orthopaedic Surgery is a high-stakes, technically demanding, and rewarding specialty in Australia, covering musculoskeletal trauma, joint reconstruction, paediatric orthopaedics, tumour surgery, spine, and sports injuries. Entry is competitive, but with early planning the pathway is clear.



THE PATHWAY:

Step 1: Eligibility

- 26 working weeks of orthopaedic surgical experience within the last two (2) years
- Successful completion of the Generic Surgical Sciences Exam (GSSE)
- Successful completion of a state-licenced Radiation Safety Course

Step 2: Application Components - 2 Stages

	Component	Weight/ Purpose	Key Point
Stage 1	Structured CV	≥6 points to progress	Surgical Experience (4 points) Skills Courses (3 points) Higher Qualifications (3 points) Research Presentation (2 points) Research Publications (4 points)
	OMCQ Test	Gatekeeper + Initial ranking	Must meet standard score; combined with DRR for interview shortlisting
	Department Referee Reports (DRR)	Initial ranking	Scored feedback from surgical supervisors

Initial ranking based on combined OMCQ + DRR is used to invite for Interviews + VR

Stage 2	Interview (Panel)	60% of final score	Structured interview on scenarios & behaviour
	Verbal Referees (VR)	40% of final score	Used post-interview for final ranking
	Equity & Rurality	Progression or Tie-breaker	Recognises Aboriginal / Torres Strait Islander, female & rural applicants



HOW TO BOOST YOUR APPLICATION:

1

Get Early Ortho Exposure

- Secure ≥ 6 -week orthopaedic terms (trauma + reconstruction) by PGY 2–3.

2

Do Recognised Skills Courses

- EMST, CCrISP, ASSET, BST, AOA ASM (attendances = CV points)

3

Publish & Present

- Peer-reviewed papers and oral presentations are highly valued

4

Pursue higher degrees

- Master's or Doctorate in a relevant field adds CV points

5

Build referee relationships

- Performance and teamwork are heavily weighted.

6

Track Rural & Equity Options

- Rural origin or work can support selection.

FINAL WORD

Orthopaedic surgery demands precision, teamwork, and persistence—but entry is achievable with clear planning. Focus on orthopaedic exposure, research output, and strong references early in your postgraduate years to build a competitive CV and stand out at selection.

Want to chat with someone who's applied or get help preparing your CV? **Reach out to SSOWU to get in touch.**



Selection Regulations:

https://aoa.org.au/docs/default-source/selection-documents/2026-selection-updates-to-website/2026-intake-aoa-21-selection-regulations_board-approved_final.pdf?sfvrsn=649af04_10

Intake Numbers:

<https://aoa.org.au/orthopaedic-training/selection-into-training/selection-applications-for-the-2026-intake>



COMING UP NEXT

Ever wondered what it takes to operate on the heart and lungs — and save lives on the operating table?

In our next issue, we'll be diving into the world of **Cardiothoracic Surgery** — exploring the training pathway, essential skills, and insider advice on how to stand out in one of medicine's most high-stakes specialties.



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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**

