

SurgStar



Introduction

The *SurgStar Teaching Series* is an innovative initiative established in 2024 under the Dermatology and Plastic Surgery Society by myself, with the support of Professor Richard Haywood, to address gaps in undergraduate surgical training at UEA. The first series in 2024–2025 consisted of six plastic surgery-themed sessions, ranging from basic suturing to microsurgery and tendon repair. Building on its success and feedback from attendees requesting a broader curriculum, the series has now moved to the Norwich Undergraduate Surgical Society for 2025–2026. This expansion enables the inclusion of more sessions and a greater variety of surgical subspecialties while maintaining its core aim of providing accessible, low-cost, and hands-on skills training. Sessions are held 1–2 times per month, with a mix of talks and practical workshops, and practical sessions take place on the University campus in the Anatomy Suite, Queens Building. Our goal is to empower students with the knowledge and skills necessary to navigate the complexities of surgery while enhancing their overall clinical competencies. By making this education accessible, we aim to ensure that all students, regardless of their background, can gain valuable practical experience and skills, ultimately fostering a more inclusive and well-rounded medical education in the field of surgery.

Session Overview

Date	Theme	Facilitator / Surgeons
06/10/2025	So You Want to Be A Surgeon?	Lead: Mr Tom Arkle (ST3 General Surgery)
08/10/2025	Basic Suturing and Knot Tying	Lead: Miss Charlotte Miller (Consultant) Mr Richard Haywood (Consultant)
22/10/2025	Basic Suturing and Knot Tying	Lead : Miss Rebecca Harsten (ST3 Registrar) Dr Anna Condescu Mr Richard Haywood (Consultant)
12/11/2025	Women in Surgery: Panel Event	Lead: Mr Richard Haywood (Consultant)
19/11/2025	Advanced Suturing	Lead: Miss Sumbal Bhatti TBC
TBC DEC-JAN TALK OR EVENT/		
11/02/2026	Basic Flap Techniques	Lead: Mr Joshua Fasuyi TBC
18/02/2026	Advanced Suturing	Lead: Mr Richard Haywood (Consultant)
01/04/2026	Burns & Skin Grafting	Lead: Mr Richard Haywood (Consultant)
15/04/2026	THEME TBC	Lead: Mr Richard Haywood (Consultant)
25/04/2026	NUSS Biennial Conference 2026	

Session 1: So You Want to be a Surgeon?

Event Type: **TALK**

Date: **Monday 6th October 2025**

Speaker: **Mr Tom Arkle, Academic Clinical Fellow ST3 General Surgery**

Learning Objectives:

By the end of this session, students will be able to:

1. **Describe** the typical day-to-day roles and responsibilities of a surgeon at different training levels.
2. **Identify** the core stages of surgical training in the UK, including foundation, core surgical training, and higher specialty training.
3. **Recognise** the importance of portfolio development for surgical applications and **outline** key areas to evidence (e.g. clinical exposure, teaching, leadership, research, audits, and quality improvement).
4. **Compare** different pathways into surgery, including academic and clinical routes, and understand how these may influence career progression.
5. **Evaluate** practical strategies to start building a strong portfolio as a medical student.
6. **Reflect** on personal motivations for pursuing a surgical career and the challenges and rewards associated with this pathway.

Session 2: Basic Suturing & Knot Tying

Event Type: **SKILLS WORKSHOP**

Date: **Wednesday 8th October 2025**

Speaker: **Miss Charlotte Miller, Consultant Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeon**

Learning Objectives:

By the end of the session, participants should be able to:

- Explain the stages of wound healing (haemostasis, inflammation, proliferation, maturation)
- Discuss factors that influence wound healing, such as infection, health, and wound care practices
- Describe various suture materials (absorbable vs non-absorbable)
- Discuss the indications for different types of sutures based on wound location and patient needs
- Explain the criteria for selecting suturing techniques based on wound characteristics
- Identify and use basic surgical instruments for suturing (needle holders, forceps, scissors)
- Compare and contrast different suturing methods (simple interrupted, simple continuous)
- Practise basic surgical knot tying
- If time allows, practise subcuticular and mattress sutures

Workshop Activities

Knot-tying practice

- Demonstration of surgical knots
- Supervised practice on models

Simple interrupted sutures

- Step-by-step demonstration
- Practice on synthetic skin tissue, animal tissue, or fruit/vegetable models (e.g. banana peels)

Simple continuous sutures

- Demonstration and practice

Extension (time permitting)

- Subcuticular sutures
- Mattress sutures (vertical/horizontal)

Materials Required

- Synthetic skin pads/banana peels (or animal tissue)
- Suture thread and needles
- Surgical instruments: needle holders, forceps, scissors

Post-Session

- Collect participant feedback through an online form
- Allocate time for final questions
- Provide certificates of attendance for portfolios

Session 3: Basic Suturing & Knot Tying

Event Type: **SKILLS WORKSHOP**

Date: **Wednesday 22nd October 2025**

Speaker: **Miss Rebecca Harsten, ST3**

Learning Objectives:

By the end of the session, participants should be able to:

- Explain the stages of wound healing (haemostasis, inflammation, proliferation, maturation)
- Discuss factors that influence wound healing, such as infection, health, and wound care practices
- Describe various suture materials (absorbable vs non-absorbable)
- Discuss the indications for different types of sutures based on wound location and patient needs
- Explain the criteria for selecting suturing techniques based on wound characteristics
- Identify and use basic surgical instruments for suturing (needle holders, forceps, scissors)
- Compare and contrast different suturing methods (simple interrupted, simple continuous)
- Practise basic surgical knot tying
- If time allows, practise subcuticular and mattress sutures

Workshop Activities

Knot-tying practice

- Demonstration of surgical knots
- Supervised practice on models

Simple interrupted sutures

- Step-by-step demonstration
- Practice on synthetic skin tissue, animal tissue, or fruit/vegetable models (e.g. banana peels)

Simple continuous sutures

- Demonstration and practice

Extension (time permitting)

- Subcuticular sutures
- Mattress sutures (vertical/horizontal)

Materials Required

- Synthetic skin pads/banana peels (or animal tissue)
- Suture thread and needles
- Surgical instruments: needle holders, forceps, scissors

Post-Session

- Collect participant feedback through an online form
- Allocate time for final questions
- Provide certificates of attendance for portfolios

Session 4: Women in Surgery Panel Q&A

Event Type: **TALK**

Date: **Wednesday 12th November 2025, 6-8pm**

Speakers: **Various**

Learning Objectives:

By the end of this session, students will be able to:

1. **Gain insight** into the lived experiences of female surgeons across a range of surgical specialties.
2. **Identify** common challenges and hardships faced by women pursuing a career in surgery (e.g. gender bias, work–life balance, underrepresentation).
3. **Explore** strategies and approaches to overcome these challenges, including mentorship, support networks, and resilience-building.
4. **Recognise** the diversity of surgical specialties and the opportunities available within each.
5. **Evaluate** how individual experiences can shape career progression, leadership roles, and advocacy for equality in surgery.
6. **Reflect** on the importance of inclusivity and representation in surgical training and practice.

Session 5: Advanced Suturing

Date: **Wednesday 19th November 2025, 6-8pm**

Speaker: Richard Haywood, Consultant Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeon

Learning objectives for overall session including talk:

- Explain the stages of wound healing (haemostasis, inflammation, proliferation, maturation)
- Discuss factors that influence wound healing, such as infection, health, and wound care practices.
- Describe various suture materials (absorbable vs non-absorbable)
- Discuss the indications for different types of sutures based on wound location and patient needs
- Explain the criteria for selecting suturing techniques based on wound characteristics
- Compare and contrast different suturing methods (simple interrupted, running, mattress sutures)

Workshop

⇒ Practice simple interrupted sutures

- Demonstrate the technique of simple interrupted sutures
- Practice placing simple interrupted sutures on synthetic skin tissue, animal tissue or fruit/vegetable material (e.g., banana peels)

⇒ Practice running sutures

- Demonstrate the technique of running sutures
- Practice placing running sutures on synthetic skin tissue, animal tissue or fruit/vegetable material (e.g., banana peels)

⇒ Practice mattress sutures

- Demonstrate the technique of mattress sutures (horizontal and vertical)
- Practice placing mattress sutures on synthetic skin tissue, animal tissue or fruit/vegetable material (e.g., banana peels)

Materials Required

- Synthetic skin pads/banana peels: for practising suturing techniques
- Suture kits: including needles and threads
- Surgical instruments: needle holders, forceps and scissors
- Gloves/antiseptic solution: simulation of in practice hand hygiene

Post-Session

- Collect feedback from participants to evaluate the session's effectiveness and gather suggestions for improvement through the online form
- Allocate time to ask any questions
- Providing certificates for attendance to use in portfolios

Session 6: Basic Flap Techniques in Plastic Surgery

Date: **Wednesday 11th February 2026**

Speaker: Richard Haywood, Consultant Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeon

Learning objectives for overall session including talk:

- Explain the principles of local flap techniques in plastic surgery
- Understand the different types of local flaps and their uses
- Discuss the planning and design considerations for creating local flaps
- Learn to assess the suitability of different flap designs based on the defect size and location
- Describe the steps involved in the execution of local flap techniques
- Understand the importance of precise surgical technique in flap viability
- Understand how to construct different types of flaps
- Learn to troubleshoot common issues that arise during flap construction

Workshop

- ⇒ Introduction to local flap techniques
 - Demonstrate the basic concepts and steps of local flap techniques using foam models or synthetic skin pads.
 - Practice planning and designing local flaps on synthetic skin or other materials.
- ⇒ Practical application of flap construction
 - Practice constructing Z-plasty and other local flaps on synthetic skin tissue (foam models)
 - Demonstrate and practice the execution of various flap techniques, with a focus on Z-plasty, including flap rotation and suture placement

Materials Required

- Foam models for simulating flap techniques
- Suture thread
- Surgical instruments: needle holders, forceps and scissors
- Gloves/antiseptic solution: simulation of in practice hand hygiene

Post-Session

- ⇒ Collect feedback from participants to evaluate the session's effectiveness and gather suggestions for improvement through the online form
- ⇒ Allocate time to ask any questions
- ⇒ Providing certificates for attendance to use in portfolios

Session 7: Advanced Suturing

Date: **Wednesday 18th February 2026, 6-8pm**

Speaker: Richard Haywood, Consultant Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeon

Learning objectives for overall session including talk:

- Explain the stages of wound healing (haemostasis, inflammation, proliferation, maturation)
- Discuss factors that influence wound healing, such as infection, health, and wound care practices.
- Describe various suture materials (absorbable vs non-absorbable)
- Discuss the indications for different types of sutures based on wound location and patient needs
- Explain the criteria for selecting suturing techniques based on wound characteristics
- Compare and contrast different suturing methods (simple interrupted, running, mattress sutures)

Workshop

⇒ Practice simple interrupted sutures

- Demonstrate the technique of simple interrupted sutures
- Practice placing simple interrupted sutures on synthetic skin tissue, animal tissue or fruit/vegetable material (e.g., banana peels)

⇒ Practice running sutures

- Demonstrate the technique of running sutures
- Practice placing running sutures on synthetic skin tissue, animal tissue or fruit/vegetable material (e.g., banana peels)

⇒ Practice mattress sutures

- Demonstrate the technique of mattress sutures (horizontal and vertical)
- Practice placing mattress sutures on synthetic skin tissue, animal tissue or fruit/vegetable material (e.g., banana peels)

Materials Required

- Synthetic skin pads/banana peels: for practising suturing techniques
- Suture kits: including needles and threads
- Surgical instruments: needle holders, forceps and scissors
- Gloves/antiseptic solution: simulation of in practice hand hygiene

Post-Session

- Collect feedback from participants to evaluate the session's effectiveness and gather suggestions for improvement through the online form
- Allocate time to ask any questions
- Providing certificates for attendance to use in portfolios

Session 8: Burns and Skin Grafting

Date: **01/04/2026, 6-8pm**

Speaker: Richard Haywood, Consultant Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeon

Learning objectives for overall session including talk:

- **Describe** the classification of burns (by depth and surface area) and the principles of acute burn management.
- **Explain** the stages of wound healing (haemostasis, inflammation, proliferation, maturation).
- **Discuss** factors influencing wound healing, including infection, vascular supply, comorbidities, and wound care practices.
- **Outline** the principles and indications for skin grafting in surgical practice.
- **Identify** different types of skin grafts (split-thickness vs full-thickness) and their respective advantages, disadvantages, and uses.
- **Discuss** post-operative care and complications associated with grafting.

Workshop Objectives

By the end of the practical session, students will be able to:

Skin Grafting Simulation

- **Demonstrate** harvesting and handling of a simulated skin graft using rice paper.
- **Practice** placing the rice paper graft onto animal tissue (e.g., porcine or chicken skin) to simulate clinical application.
- **Secure** the graft in place using sutures to approximate real-life surgical technique.

Suturing Practice (on grafted surface)

- **Demonstrate** the technique of simple interrupted sutures to secure graft edges.
- **Practice** running sutures for continuous wound closure.
- **Practice** mattress sutures (horizontal and vertical) to reinforce graft fixation.

Materials Required

- Rice paper sheets (for simulated grafts)
- Porcine or chicken skin (for graft application and suturing practice)
- Suture kits: including needles and threads
- Surgical instruments: needle holders, forceps, scissors
- Gloves and antiseptic solution (to simulate clinical hygiene practice)

Post-Session

- **Feedback collection** via online form to evaluate learning outcomes and gather suggestions.
- **Open Q&A** for participants to clarify concepts and techniques with the speaker.
- **Certificates of attendance** provided for portfolio use