UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN MEDICAL SCHOOL
A Reply to Common Questions from M3s with an Interest in Radiology as a Career

1. Q: Should I schedule a “General Radiology” or “Sub-Specialty Radiology” course in order to obtain the appropriate letters of recommendation?
   A: The "General Radiology" elective is a broad overview of Radiology, a sort of "survey course." The “General Radiology" elective is best for those who haven't decided on Radiology as a career and want an overview (early in M4 year) or for an M4 who is not going into Radiology but who would like some exposure to it. It is more difficult to obtain a meaningful letter of recommendation with the “General Radiology” elective because your experience is so spread out that the faculty cannot get to know you well. The "Sub-Specialty Radiology elective does afford a faculty member the opportunity to work with you and to observe you over the month which makes it more appropriate for obtaining a letter of recommendation.

2. Q: Should I complete all of my radiology electives at U of M or elsewhere?
   A: Totally your choice. You might take an away elective to have a good look at a program which might interest you. You might do it to "introduce" yourself to the program. However, if you don't make a good effort and impression, this "strategy" could backfire. You should base your decision on your goals for overall medical experience and education (and even enjoyment to some degree) rather than as a "strategy" per se.

3. Q: When should I schedule my radiology research month?
   A: The earlier the better so that you have time to continue working on the project throughout the year. (It would actually be best to do or start your project during your first, second, or third year of medical school so that you have a completed publication to put on your residency application.) If you take a research radiology month, it must be pre-approved by Dr. Leslie Quint, as noted in the handbook.

4. Q: I plan on using the first month of my M4 year to study for USMLE step 2 (since my USMLE step 1 score is slightly below the U of M average). Is this a wise use of time?
   A: For some competitive programs with a large number of highly qualified applicants, standard test scores do serve as an initial threshold for further consideration. Therefore, a higher score makes it more likely that you'll be invited for an interview than a lower score.

5. Q: Are there any preferences on what Sub-Internships or ICU experiences to take if one is interested in radiology?
   A: Be sure there is significant patient care responsibility. It is generally best in one of the big 4 areas (Internal Medicine, Surgery, OB, or Pediatrics). Base your decision on what you will learn, how much responsibility you will take on, and how it will help you grow from a medical student into a house officer (i.e. taking on more responsibility). Of course, any clinical medicine, applied physiology, etc which you learn along the way will only help you as a radiologist. The better Radiology residents are those who interact well with clinicians, who understand the importance of their contributions to the patients’ clinical care, and who realize that behind the images is a real, breathing human being.

   If in doubt, ask current Radiology residents who are U of M Medical school alumni and ask current M4s.

6. Q: Other suggestions?
   A: Be active in the U of M Radiology Interest Group. Enhance your residency application by demonstrating leadership skills and meaningful volunteer experience.

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