Interviewing for Residency Programs
Preparation, Expectations, and Strategies

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I have no outside relationships with industry.
Currently, I do not serve as the PI on any industry supported research projects.
Where Are You Now?

- Residency applications will be submitted on September 15th
- MSPE has been reviewed
- Making interview clothing decisions
- Start practicing interview skills
- Develop and review residency evaluation criteria
- Step 2 exams are complete or will be soon
- Graduation is approximately 8 months away!!!
- May 15, 2020
Understanding the MATCH

NRMP website

http://www.nrmp.org
Outline of Today’s Presentation

• Preparing for residency interviews
• Scheduling interviews
• Travel and lodging issues
• What to expect…
Preparing for Interviews

• Learn about the specialty
• Learn about each program
  – Their mission and logistics
  – Their key faculty and their interests
  – The community
  – The interview process at their institution
• Develop potential questions with responses
• Rehearse and practice
Preparing for Interviews

• Develop your strategy to evaluate programs/fit
• Plan for a busy few months
• Find the clothes and travel items you need
  – Conservative, professional dress
  – Comfortable, quiet shoes
  – Avoid excessive jewelry
Assess Financial Resources

2 Loans are Available for Interviewing Expenses:

• Long Term University Loan Maximum is $2,500
• Unsubsidized Stafford or Graduate PLUS Loan (up to an additional $5,000)
• For more information, contact the Financial Aid Office: medfinaid@umich.edu
Interview Scheduling

- Select programs in different tiers of competitiveness and different geographic locations when possible
- Consult your Faculty Career Advisor for advice on program selection (example: if offered two interviews on same day)
- Remember: Interview offers may come in phases, and timing of offers vary by specialty
What is the right number of interviews to anticipate/accept?

• Very specialty and applicant dependent
• Most faculty career advisors recommend about 12 interviews
• In 2019, 13 was the mean number of ranked programs for matched U.S. Seniors
• In 2019, 7 was the mean number of ranked programs for unmatched U.S. Seniors
Know you will get tired...

• It’s hard to do 15 or more interviews – especially if all over the country
  – Be mindful of the January “Fade”
  • Need to be fresh and enthusiastic at every interview
  – Don’t succumb to the January “Jade”
  • Avoid the ‘been there, done that’ attitude
Cancelling Interviews

• What if you have an interview scheduled for Nov 12\textsuperscript{th} at program X, later you are offered an interview at program Y on the same date?

• Or if you decide that you have scheduled too many
Cancellation Guidelines

• If you need to cancel:
  – Be professional – you may encounter them again
  – Give as much notice as possible
  – You don’t have to reveal all the details as to why
  – If you made a mistake (travel mix-up, etc.) – do whatever you can to resolve the problem
  – If it’s a travel delay – don’t cancel – they understand, but be flexible

• Be Proactive – consider scheduling some programs for later in the season
Travel - Flying

• Review CURRENT airline security restrictions
• Pack mix and match easy care clothing for extended trips
• Hand carry all essential documents, scheduling materials, addresses, etc.
• Wear something you COULD interview in if you really had to (i.e. your luggage is lost)
• Don’t travel if sick
Travel - Driving

- Plan your route
- Figure out where to park the day before
- Allow plenty of driving time – account for weather, construction, getting lost
- Do not drive when fatigued
Lodging Options: Pros and Cons

- Friends
- Family
- Alumni
- Residency program hosts
- Friends of friends
- Friends of family
- Hotels / Airbnb
The H.O.S.T. Program
Helping Our Students Travel

https://alumni.medicine.umich.edu/get-involved/helping-our-students-travel-host-program

• Connects M4 students with alumni volunteers during the interview process.
• Alumni Host – place to stay, local insight

To register for this program: https://hostprogram.medicine.umich.edu/

For the latest updates, perspective on UMMS new curriculum go to:
https://medicine.umich.edu/medschool/about/key-initiatives/curriculum-innovation
Tips

• Punctual, Professional, Personable, Prepared
• Everyone may be evaluating you
• Pay attention to the residents and other candidates

❖ Most interviews end up stress-free, but anticipating and preparing for questions from your application will be time well spent
The Day – Potential Components

- General meeting with PDs, key faculty
- Overview presentations
- Interactions with residents
  - Social event (usually optional)
  - Meals
- Case conferences
- Tours
- Interviews
The Day

• Know schedule in advance – may start the day/night before...
  – Enjoy scheduled “social” events with residents, some may involve alcohol - indulge wisely

• Arrive rested, well fed, ready for a long day

• If you are sick or delayed, call them right away
Tips on Interviewing

• First Impressions are critically important
• Positive, upbeat, cheerful, business-like tone
• Conversation – two way flow (be ready with questions)
• Focus on the training (not on lifestyle issues) especially with program directors
• Get more day-to-day details and quality of life information from residents
• Watch non-verbal communication
Anatomy of an Interview

“Best Practices for Conducting Residency Program Interviews”
AAMC, September 2016


Slides 22-27 used with permission of Tony Tsai, MBA, former head of career advising at the UM Ross School of Business
Anatomy of an Interview

- Introduction / Small Talk
- Fit / Background Questions
- Behavioral Questions
- Technical / “Pressure” Questions
- Questions for the Interviewer

- A typical format for interviews
- What are they trying to assess?
- What kind of questions might you encounter?
- How might you go about answering these questions?
Introduction / Small Talk

• What they are trying to assess
  – Likeability
  – Professional presence

• Potential questions
  – How are you doing today?
  – How was your trip in?
  – What do you think about (weather, current event, etc.)?

• General Strategies
  – Positive energy
  – Engage in conversation
Fit / Background

• What they are trying to assess
  – Professional direction
  – Maturity of perspective

• Potential questions
  – Tell me about yourself
  – Why did you choose this specialty?
  – What are you looking for in a residency program?
  – What do you like about our program?

• General Strategies
  – Begin with 2 to 3 minute “Odyssey” covering past-present-future
  – Tie the “future” portion to the program
Behavioral

- What they are trying to assess
  - Your strengths and weaknesses
  - Professionalism, inter-personal, work ethic, resourcefulness, leadership, teamwork, integrity, etc.

- Potential questions
  - Tell me about a time when...
  - Tell me a strength and a weakness about yourself
  - What would you bring to the program?

- General Strategies
  - Prepare a number of stories to cover topics
  - Tell (2 min) stories in context-action-result format

Introduction / Small Talk
Fit / Background Questions
Behavioral Questions
Technical / “Pressure” Questions
Questions for the Interviewer
Situational / Technical / Pressure

• What they are trying to assess
  – Competence and thinking process
  – Confidence and poise

• Potential questions
  – If you encountered (some emergency situation), tell me what you would do
  – How do you do a (clinical task)
  – Tell me a joke

• General Strategies
  – Prepare anticipated frameworks for thinking
  – Ask clarifying questions to buy time and to organize your thoughts
Asking Questions

• **What they are trying to assess**
  – Level of engagement and interest

• **Potential questions (you ask)**
  – Ask about the interviewer’s background and perspective
  – Ask about important aspects of the job
  – Ask about the priorities of the organization

• **General Strategies**
  – Do some research if possible and demonstrate your interest through that knowledge
  – Be careful about asking about only logistical issues (pay, hours, parking spaces, etc.)
Questionable Questions

- Where else are you interviewing?
  - Can answer truthfully, but generally
    - Example: “The Midwest and East Coast”
- What do you think about program X?
  - Can make brief respectful comment
- Did you hear about X?
  - “No, I haven’t.”
Off-Limits Questions

• Those in violation of match rules:
  – Will you rank us first?
  – Where are you going to rank us?

• Inappropriate and/or illegal questions:
  – Based on marital or family status and plans, disabilities or illness, or sexual preference

❖ CAVEAT: If you choose to disclose information, then follow-up questions are acceptable
Good response...

“I’d rather not answer that...”
Applicant Questions

In Scope - Ask about
- Faculty
- Teaching
- Leadership
- Curriculum – Required vs. Elective
- Clinical learning environment and sites
- Patient diversity and volume
- Range of residents’ experiences
- Additional opportunities
  • Research
  • Leadership
  • Teaching
- Special “Tracks”
- Lifestyle

• Be tactful when questioning about problem areas
Why a leave of absence?

• Craft your response carefully – focus on opportunities, experiences, new perspectives.

**Academic reasons**
- Make it as positive as possible
- Note your improvement
- Note your dedication to enrichment, focus on your successes

**Medical or Family reasons**
- Spare the details
- Demonstrate a positive outcome
“I wanted to devote 100% effort and attention to my studies to be the most prepared as possible for a residency and a career in medicine.”

“I realized that it would be difficult to be in school while dealing with this. So after much deliberation, I realized that the smartest thing I could do was take a leave so that this could be completely resolved.”

“After my leave I was able to return and fully commit to my studies, and I feel very good about my performance.”

(optional) – “I do not anticipate needing any time off during my residency”
Traits Desired by Program Directors

- Initiative
- Work ethic
- Great clinicians with skills, insight, and savvy
- Independent problem-solvers who know when to seek help
- Can-do and will-do attitude
- Adaptable, flexible, resilient
- Team players - get along with everyone
**Goal of the Interview**

To convey to Program Directors and interviewers that you have these traits, it should be demonstrated through:

- your portfolio
- your words
- your actions that day and after

CiM Residency URL: [https://www.aamc.org/cim/residency/application/interviewing/](https://www.aamc.org/cim/residency/application/interviewing/)
Second Visits

• Encouraged by some programs, but are NOT mandatory and should be uncommon

• Consider if you:
  – Have a geographic restriction
  – Have a significant other who is moving with you, or couples matching
  – Are trying to decide between 2 or 3 top programs
  – Did not get enough sense of program you are very interested in
After the Interview

• Start your program evaluation process SOON after the interview
  – write down notes
  – fill out any spreadsheets/forms
  – the information will fade quickly
Residency Program Evaluation

• Systematic
  – Detailed program evaluations and rankings
  – Consideration of multiple factors
  – Input from many sources

• Intuitive
  – General feel for programs
  – Little objective data
  – Gestalt-type approach
Residency Program Evaluation

- UMMS Career Development Residency Program Evaluation Form
  - Adapted from Iserson
  - Allows some quantification that can be useful for grouping programs into tiers
  - Considers factors by weight of importance to applicant, and program score
  - Whenever possible consider same factors for each program
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* Total of all weights must equal 100
After the Interview

• **Thank you:** write brief and personalized thank-you notes to program director +/- other interviewers

• Email is okay for most programs and for most interviewers. Take your cues from the program re: email vs handwritten/typed Thank You note
Help and Upcoming Session

- Evaluating Programs (Faculty Career Advisors)
- Preparing the Residency Rank List
  January 2020
- If you need help with the interview process, contact your FCA’s, your friends in OMSE and OHEI
- Don’t forget to register with NRMP!
  – This includes Early Match students who need a preliminary or transitional year
OMSE Contact Info

Assistant Dean for Student Services, Tamara L. Gay, MD,
email Charlotte Wojcik – wojcikc@umich.edu - for appointments

House Counselors:
• Tu’Rone Elliott, MS LPC – Hamilton House
tmelliot@med.umich.edu
• Eric Middleton, PhD – Salk House
emiddle@med.umich.edu
• Christine Neejer, PhD – Fitzbutler House
cneejer@med.umich.edu
• Amy W. Tschirhart, MA LPC – Sanford House
awtsch@med.umich.edu

Learning Specialist:
• Charlotte O’Connor, M.Ed. – choconno@med.umich.edu
Other Resources

• AAMC Careers in Medicine
  https://www.aamc.org/cim/

• American College of Physicians
  Guidelines for the Residency Interview Process
  https://www.acponline.org/membership/medical-students/residency/preparing-for-residency-interviews/guidelines-for-the-residency-interview-process
Residency Interviewing

• A snapshot of health care delivery in America
• Exposure to leaders and future colleagues
• Chance to make new friends, contacts
• Gain perspective on your education
• Travel - new cities, regions, cultural experiences
Thank you