

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

Canceling Interviews

- What if you have an interview scheduled for Nov 12th 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

https://www.aamc.org/download/469536/data/best_practices_residency_program_interviews_09132016.pdf

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

Introduction / Small Talk

Fit / Background Questions

Behavioral Questions

Technical / "Pressure" Questions

Questions for the Interviewer

- **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

Introduction / Small Talk

Fit / Background Questions

Behavioral Questions

Technical / “Pressure” Questions

Questions for the Interviewer

- **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

Introduction / Small Talk

Fit / Background Questions

Behavioral Questions

Technical / “Pressure” Questions

Questions for the Interviewer

- **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

Situational / Technical / Pressure

Introduction / Small Talk

Fit / Background Questions

Behavioral Questions

**Technical / “Pressure”
Questions**

Questions for the Interviewer

- **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

Introduction / Small Talk

Fit / Background Questions

Behavioral Questions

Technical / “Pressure” Questions

Questions for the Interviewer

- **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.”

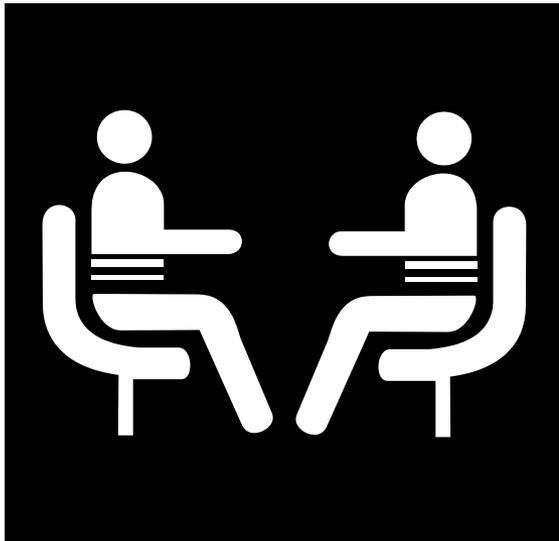
Off-Limits Questions

- 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/>

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

University of Michigan Medical School
Residency Evaluation Form

Instructions: Assign each factor a weight based on importance to you
Then assign program a 1 to 10 score for each factor

PROGRAM: _____	DATE INTERVIEWED: _____
	WEIGHT SCORE = Total
CLINICAL EXPERIENCE	
On-Call Schedule	0 0 0
Patient Population	0 0 0
Responsibility	0 0 0
Setting	0 0 0
Volume	0 0 0
GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION	
Part of Country	0 0 0
Specific City	0 0 0
REPUTATION	
Program Age and Stability	0 0 0
FACULTY	
Availability	0 0 0
Interest	0 0 0
Stability	0 0 0
CURRICULUM	
Number of Conferences	0 0 0
Special Training	0 0 0
Types of Conferences	0 0 0
ESPRIT DE CORPS	
	0 0 0
RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES/ TRAINING	
Knowledge	0 0 0
Materials	0 0 0
Time	0 0 0
FACILITIES	
Clinical Laboratory Support	0 0 0
Library/On-Line Journal Access	0 0 0
Safety/Security	0 0 0
No Restrictive Covenant	text text text
HEALTH BENEFITS	
Health Insurance	text text text
Hospitalization	text text text
NON-HEALTH BENEFITS	
Childcare	text text text
Disability	text text text
Educational Leave:	0
Funding Available	0 0 0
Time Off	0 0 0
Liability Insurance	text text text
Vacation	0 0 0
MOONLIGHTING	0 0 0

* TOTAL OF ALL WEIGHTS = **0**

PROGRAM EVALUATION SCORE **0**

Adapted from Iserson, Kenneth V. (2013). Iserson's Getting Into A Residency: A guide for medical students. 85th ed. (pp.290-95). Galen Press, Tucson, AZ.

*** 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