



Box 3

Sample questions for residents:

- Are you happy with your residency training?
- What is the call structure and schedule?
- Is there an educational stipend?
- Is there a parental leave policy?
- How do faculty interact with residents? (This is a nice open-ended question that can address morale, respect and out of hospital activities and camaraderie.)

After the Interview

Many students question if they should send follow-up communication to a program. In general, if a program states that they do not want to receive communication the applicant should honor this request. However, if this is not stated, applicants should send brief, personal emails to the program director and, if possible, to their interviewers, stating specific reasons that they like the program. Applicants should not send the same email or thank you note to every interviewer. For example, if you interviewed with 12 faculty, but you really connected with 2-3, it is better send 2-3 personal, thoughtful emails to those faculty, rather than generic responses to all 12 interviewers.

It is important to encourage students to keep track of thoughts regarding pros and cons of each program after they interview. This will facilitate an easier rank list development at the end of interview season. Students should be aware of the Match Prism app that is available as a resource to help rate programs after an interview: <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/the-match-prism/id687444845>

Related Questions and Answers

Q: What is the process for declining interviews?

A: As soon as an applicant knows that they are not going to attend an interview they should immediately contact the program. Timeliness in this communication benefits the program which can fill the interview spot and benefits another applicant who can obtain another interview. When declining the interview an applicant should be courteous and professional, as this will reflect on the medical school from which they are applying and can affect future applicants' ability to obtain interviews at that individual program.

Q: How many interviews are appropriate?

A: Approximately twelve interviews is considered the "sweet spot." In recent years for ob-gyn, approximately 90% of applicants ranking 10 or more programs matched, and more than 99% of applicants ranking 20 or more programs were successful. Only 70% of applicants ranking five programs matched (NRMP 2018).

Q: What about couples match and interviews?

A: Couples matching is different. Each student is able to rank up to 20 programs including a "no match" option. The pair will match to the most preferred pair of programs on the rank order lists where each partner has been offered a position. An honest appraisal of the qualities of each applicant in the pair is essential to ensuring the best match for both students. An appreciation of the competitiveness of the respective fields is also necessary, as choosing highly competitive programs may limit the success of a couples match.

Q: Which programs should students be encouraged to select for an interview?

A: Ideally a student should select a range of programs, including highly competitive, middle range, and less competitive programs. Students in the lower third of their class or with less competitive applications should have more programs in the middle to less competitive range.

Q: What should I do if my student is not receiving many interview offers?

A: The FA should be in contact with their advisees to be sure that they are receiving an appropriate number of interview offers. If there are concerns about the number of interview offers, there are several options to attempt to increase offers. First, the FA can encourage the student to apply to additional programs. In addition, the FA can encourage the student to reach out personally to program directors and program managers with targeted reasons that they are interested in their particular program. The FA may find it helpful to reach out to programs to advocate for their students, perhaps asking for a holistic review of the application if appropriate. Finally, if students keep track of interview dates of local programs, they can reach out a day prior to or the day of interviews and see if there are any cancellations that they can fill.

Q: How should students be coached to handle "Taboo Topics?"

A: The NRMP has a list of several questions/topics which are considered to be illegal or coercive.



These include asking questions about age, gender, religion, sexual orientations, family status, other programs applying to and ranking of the current program by the applicant. Unfortunately, these questions are sometimes asked often inadvertently and without ill intention. The applicant is recommended to practice a planned response to these questions, such as, "I politely decline to answer this question during my interview today, thank you." Applicants are also allowed to answer these

questions if they are comfortable with the question and their response.

Conclusion

The interview is possibly the most important component of a student applicant's successful residency match. The FA can be highly influential in this part of the application process by preparing the student before, during and after the interview.





The Effective Student Advising Series is a project of the Association of Professors of Gynecology and Obstetrics (APGO) Undergraduate Medical Education Committee (UMEC) 2018-2020:

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