



RIGHT RESIDENT RIGHT PROGRAM READY DAY ONE

April 14, 2020

APGO and CREOG Residency Application Response to COVID-19

The current COVID-19 pandemic is having a profound effect on our medical education system and potentially could impact the transition from Undergraduate Medical Education (UME) to Graduate Medical Education (GME). It has upset traditional medical education processes including:

1. Interruption to medical student clerkships
2. Cancellation of medical student sub-internships and opportunities for students to have adequate clinical experience to make an informed career decision
3. Interruption and cancellations of away rotations
4. Postponement of USMLE Step 2 CK and CS and COMLEX Level 2 CE and PE

The uncertain timing for resumption of traditional processes in the transition of UME to GME makes the following items unpredictable:

1. Completion of requirements for residency applications prior to September 15
2. Opportunities for away electives and other clinical rotations
3. Ability to get letters of recommendation (LORs) from ob-gyn faculty
4. Timing of and ability to travel for interviews
5. Nature of traditional interview interactions

As the situation unfolds in the US and around the world, the overall impact may vary from region to region, and disproportionately affect students from certain locations. This has led to widespread concern among medical students, medical schools, program directors and GME sponsoring institutions about the 2021 residency application cycle.

The leadership of APGO and CREOG has met to discuss how to address concerns of our stakeholders: medical students, program directors and medical schools. **Our primary goal is to provide the best opportunity for both students and programs to have a fair and equitable application process in the upcoming year.** Therefore, APGO and CREOG propose the following guidelines for the 2021 residency application cycle:

1. Limit away rotations for the 2020-2021 academic year to those students who cannot acquire those experiences locally
2. Be flexible in the number of specialty specific LORs required
3. Encourage residency programs to develop alternate and innovative means of conveying information about their residents, their residency program and location to applicants





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While we realize there are external forces that may necessitate further revisions, the schedule of the application process will require modification to adapt to the aforementioned issues. Applying the principles employed with the successful implementation of the residency application guidelines in 2020, APGO and CREOG propose the following tentative timeline for the 2021 application cycle:

1. Adjust the ob-gyn application submission deadline to October 16, 2020, or the MSPE letters release date (if modified), whichever is later
2. Adjust interview offer dates to November 3 and November 10
3. Adjust interviews to begin no earlier than November 10
4. Adjust student status final determination to December 23
5. Consider offering earlier interview dates to candidates who can travel by automobile given the variable COVID-19 peaks and associated travel restrictions
6. Consider providing the opportunity for video interviewing, especially for those students who may not be able to travel because of local COVID-19 infection rates. Guidelines and best practices for video interviews to follow

These recommendations will allow more students to complete traditional requirements as well as career decisions for residency applications, including completion of clerkships and sub-internships, sitting for the USMLE Step 2 and COMLEX Level 2 exams, relieve the stress of not performing away rotations in order to secure a LOR or other experience, and delay or minimize travel.

Given the pandemic response, this is an uncertain time. Organizations with influence over the residency selection process may adjust their calendars. If those adjustments impact the timeline proposed here, APGO and CREOG will amend these recommendations accordingly. APGO and CREOG acknowledge that these proposed changes may place a larger burden on the traditional interview process and appreciate the flexibility of the residency programs in response to changes.

As we move forward in this application cycle, APGO and CREOG will continue to monitor the ongoing pandemic and continue to share updates, innovations and best practices with the UME and GME communities.