



RIGHT RESIDENT RIGHT PROGRAM READY DAY ONE



APGO and CREOG Guidelines for Students Applying for an OBGYN Residency

The COVID-19 Pandemic will have a large impact on the 2020-21 application cycle. It has already led to a change in the ERAS timeline for release of applications¹, an extended timeframe for rank order list submissions, and recommendations from organizations about how interviews should be conducted. In order to ensure a fair and equitable application cycle, the leadership of APGO and CREOG have produced the following guidelines for residency programs and for medical students applying to OBGYN residency in 2021.

Background

The COVID-19 pandemic is impacting our medical education system. Its effects on the 2021 residency application process include delays in completion of medical student clinical rotations, postponement of USMLE Step 2 CK and CS, significant reduction in the availability of away rotations, and limited ability to secure letters of recommendations in OBGYN. Furthermore, prior to the COVID pandemic, there was already significant over-application by students to residency positions. Given the uncertainty of the current climate, there are concerns the number of applications each applicant submits might rise even higher in the 2021 cycle. With virtual interviews and potentially a higher number of applications, APGO and CREOG are concerned that residency programs will have difficulty performing holistic reviews of applicants due to the volume of applications. Programs may also have limited ability to get to know applicants on an individual basis. In addition, applicants will have limited ability to get to know residency programs, including faculty and residents, which could lead applicants to complete more interviews than in the past. This will lead to more challenges in finding the right resident for the right program.

Guidelines for Application Timeline

In response to the pandemic, APGO and CREOG recommend the following modifications to the timeline for the 2021 residency application cycle:

1. Application submission deadline of **October 21, 2020**
2. Interview offer release dates on **November 10 and November 17, 2020**
3. Interviews to begin no earlier than **November 17, 2020**
4. Final applicant status notification (Interview, Wait-list, Rejection) on **December 23, 2020**.

In addition, programs are encouraged to limit the number of interview offers to the number of interview spots available for each program and to allow applicants a minimum of **48 hours** to respond to an interview offer.

Guidelines for Residency Programs

The leaders of APGO and CREOG continue to meet to discuss how to address students' concerns with a **primary goal to provide the best opportunity for residency applicants to have a fair and equitable application process in the upcoming year**. Therefore, APGO and CREOG propose the following guidelines to Residency Program Directors:

1. Be flexible in the number of specialty-specific letters of recommendation required and do not penalize students with fewer letters than expected due to circumstances outside of their control
2. Encourage residency programs to develop alternate and innovative means of conveying information about their residents, their residency program, and location to applicants



3. Make screening metric information for offering interviews available to applicants
4. Implement virtual interviews for **all** applicants.

Guidelines for Students Applying for Residency:

When applying to residency, it is generally recommended to apply to a majority of “target” programs, a few “reach,” and a few “safer” programs based on an individual’s goals and the recommendations of advisors. Additionally, data from the AAMC on the number of applications submitted and the likelihood of matching into a residency demonstrates a point of diminishing returns for various applicants. As an example, for a US MD applicant with an average USMLE Step 1 score (229), there are diminishing returns when applying to more than 16 programs.ⁱⁱ Furthermore, while applicant scenarios differ, prior match data suggests little added benefit to interviewing at more than 12-15 programs.ⁱⁱⁱ For 2021, applicants should be cognizant of these data and not over-apply or interview excessively. Applicants should consider the strength of their application and advice of an OBGYN advisor or dean in determining a reasonable number of interviews. The appropriate number of interviews is expected to be more for students participating in a couple’s match.

Considering all of these factors, APGO and CREOG suggest the following guidelines for applicants to the 2021 application cycle:

1. Prior to submitting applications, each applicant should:
 - a. Speak with an advisor, at least one of whom is an OBGYN, and determine their individual needs
 - b. Consult resources about residency programs, including details about what each program offers, the residency environment, and how each program will meet the applicant’s learning and career goals. Applicants should use this information to ensure the right balance exists between their individual needs and goals and the program’s offerings
 - c. Apply only to programs that meet the applicant’s needs
2. Applicants should limit total applications to no more than 25-40 programs based on their competitiveness
3. Applicants should limit total interviews to no more than 12-15 programs and not hold interview spots they do not plan to attend
4. Applicants should cancel interviews they do not plan to pursue as soon as possible, but no less than 2 weeks prior to the interview date

By following these guidelines, the leaders of APGO and CREOG hope for the best opportunity to have a fair and equitable match for all students applying during 2021. The leadership will continue to closely monitor the effects of the pandemic and communicate updates as the situation warrants.

ⁱ <https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-residency/article/eras-timeline-md-residency/>

ⁱⁱ <https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-residency/apply-smart-residency/>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.nrmp.org/main-residency-match-data/>