

Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine (VTCSOM)

Statement: Residency Application
Subject: Student Affairs
Administrator: A. Knight
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RESIDENCY APPLICATION

For the Class of 2018

The dates included in this calendar are estimated for the 2018 NRMP Match (for the M4s) as well as the early matches for ophthalmology and urology. Student agreements and registration forms for each match will have complete schedules of dates printed on them. It is mandatory that you review these schedules to ensure that applicable deadlines are met.

Summer 2017

- Study for and take Step 2 CK
- Take Step 2 CS
- Write curriculum vitae (CV) and personal statement.
- Write unique characteristics paragraph for MSPE
- Arrange MSPE interview with the Associate Dean for Student Affairs - do this early and have CV and personal statement ready by time of interview.
- Research residency training programs through AMA's FREIDA.
- Military match -- check deadlines, even if applying for deferments.
- Meet with Department Chair for Letter of Recommendation
- Meet with other Letters of Recommendation authors
- Non-ERAS applications should be sent to programs prior to their stated deadline. Each program sets its own deadlines.
San Francisco Match for Ophthalmology
AUA Urology Match

September 6, 2017

ERAS Post Office opens for applicants to submit applications.

September 15, 2017

National Resident Matching Program (NRMP) information and registration available online. Late registration fee applies after November 30, 2015.*

September 15, 2017

ERAS Post Office opens for programs receive applications.

September 2017

Read over MSPE to correct any errors.

October 1, 2017

MSPEs are sent through the ERAS post office to the programs.

Sept - Nov 2017

Begin to arrange interviews. Some programs will not grant an interview until all materials have been received and/or reviewed. Consider calling to assure your application is complete. Call or respond early as some programs fill interview spots quickly.

Nov - Dec 2017

Submit application for extra loan money if needed for interviews and/or relocation. Applications are available in the Financial Aid Office.

January 2018

Results of military matches/deferments announced.

October – January 2018

Interviews!

January 2018

Rank order lists due for ophthalmology and urology. Check each match for specific dates as they are also announced in January.

February 2018

Deadline for Applicants and Programs to enter Rank order lists on the NRMP- R3 web page

March 16, 2018

MATCH DAY! Results of NRMP are announced at noon EST

March - April 2018

Hospitals and programs send letters of appointment or contracts to students matched at their institutions.

For the Class of 20198:

The dates included in this calendar are estimated for the 2019 NRMP Match (for the M3s) as well as the early matches for ophthalmology and urology. Student agreements and registration forms for each match will have complete schedules of dates printed on them. It is mandatory that you review these schedules to ensure that applicable deadlines are met.

Winter-Spring, 2017-18

Select your specialty-specific advisor(s)

January 5, 2018

Workshop: Preparing for Year 4; Intro to VSAS

February 16, 2018

Year 4 Lottery

Spring 2018

Apply to Away electives

May 11, 2018

Workshop- Intro to ERAS, NRMP; Preparing for the Match

- Discussion on registering tokens and using your previous AAMC login
- An overview of ERAS software, including reference materials and helpful hints
- Discussion of various milestone dates and action required on or before those dates

June 19-22, 2018

Assessment Week

- Mock Step 2 CK
- Mock Step 2 CS
- Year 4 orientation
- Preparing for Step 2 CS- Heidi Lane
- Year 04 Research Presentations

Summer 2018

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San Francisco Match for Ophthalmology
AUA Urology Match

September 15, 2018

National Resident Matching Program (NRMP) information and registration available online. Late registration fee applies after November 30, 2015.*

September 15, 2018

ERAS Post office opens for applicants, schools and programs to submit and receive applications.

September 2018

Read over MSPE to correct any errors.

October 1, 2018

MSPEs are sent through the ERAS post office to the programs.

Sept - Nov 2018

Begin to arrange interviews. Some programs will not grant an interview until all materials have been received and/or reviewed. Consider calling to assure your application is complete. Call or respond early as some programs fill interview spots quickly.

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Submit application for extra loan money if needed for interviews and/or relocation. Applications are available in the Financial Aid Office.

January 2019

Results of military matches/deferments announced.

October 2018 – January 2019

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Rank order lists due for ophthalmology and urology. Check each match for specific dates as they are also announced in January.

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Electronic Residency Application Service (ERAS)

The Electronic Residency Application Service (ERAS®) is a service that transmits the MyERAS application and supporting documentation from applicants and their Designated Dean's Office (VTCSOM Office of Student Affairs) to program directors. ERAS consists of MyERAS, Dean's Office Workstation (DWS), Program Director's Workstation (PDWS), and the ERAS Post Office. This service transmits residency applications, letters of recommendation (LoRs), the medical student performance evaluation (MSPE), medical school transcript, USMLE transcript, photograph, and personal statement(s) from you and your Designated Dean's Office to program directors.

Your responsibility as a student is to complete the following:

- Research Residency Programs and request any additional information you may want to know.
- Attend all Student Affairs Retreats related to ERAS to receive important information and updates regarding the process.
- Register for MyERAS using the token provided by the Office of Student Affairs.
- Complete your MyERAS application.
- Submit your MyERAS applications after your final sit down meeting with the Office of Student Affairs.
- Request and assign your USMLE transcripts, LoRs and photograph.

- Create and finalize your LoR Author(s) within MyERAS.
- Print Letter Request Forms and distribute to LoR Author(s).
- Apply to programs.
- Track documents through ADTS and monitor the Message Center for information from residency programs, as well as important notices from ERAS.
- Return to MyERAS to update your Profile, request updated USMLE scores, and make changes to program selections and assignments as needed.
- Pay all fees as invoiced.

Faculty Letters of Recommendation

Programs will generally request that three or four letters of recommendation from faculty members be submitted as part of your application package. You should select three or four faculty members who know you and ask each one to write a letter of recommendation for you. The ideal letter is written by a senior faculty member who knows you well, whose field is in the specialty to which you are applying, who is known at the program to which you are applying. The ideal may not be attainable, but try. You can obtain advice about these choices from your advisor and the Senior Dean for Student Affairs. A copy of your biographic sketch, a written statement of your career goals and a brief reminder of your contact with them will help the faculty write better letters on your behalf. These letters should be sent by the faculty member directly to the residency program for Non-ERAS Programs. For ERAS Programs, they should be uploaded by the faculty member directly into the ERAS system. For Non-ERAS Programs, be sure to provide the faculty member with a list of persons and addresses to whom they should send the letter of recommendation.

These letters can be very valuable to program directors looking for some distinguishing characteristics among the many applications they receive. After reading through this manual, everyone will know how to write a good CV and personal statement, the quality of letters of recommendation may be the strength of your application.

Your letters of recommendation often become an important reflection of your academic performance and serve as an important source of information.

Number of Letters

Most residency programs request three or four letters of recommendation. Sometimes they specify certain departments or rotations from which the letters should originate; be sure to follow directions from the program brochure. One letter should come from the Chair of the Department into which your residency of choice falls. Occasionally, a letter from a person not involved in the profession of medicine will be requested.

Requesting a Letter

In most instances, you will request a letter from a rotation in which you did well, that relates to your chosen field, or was specifically requested by the program brochure. When possible, choose someone who knows you well over someone who does not. Choose someone who can judge your clinical skills and intentions as well as your personal qualities. Choosing at least one person who is likely to be recognized by the program is also a good idea. Also, make it easy for the person preparing your letter by providing a CV and a copy of your personal statement. Make a brief appointment with the letter writer to review your resume personally and to provide additional personal information, particularly if you can

remind him or her of some specific event or situation in which you performed well on his or her rotation.

Each letter writer must receive the following from you: a LoR request form printed from the ERAS website showing your letter ID number. Encourage authors to upload letters into the ERAS system. This is a new option and is preferred to scanning the letters and sending them to the ERAS post office. Agree to waive the right to review the letter.

Chair's Letter

Most residencies like to see a letter of recommendation from the chairperson of the department (chief of service) of the specialty in which you are applying. These letters usually reflect the department's composite assessment of its experience with you. Most department chairpersons will ask that you schedule an interview with them and provide them with a copy of your personal statement and/or CV before they will write a letter for you. Once you know where you want the chairperson's letter sent, submit the list to the chairperson's office.

Personal Statement

A part of nearly every application process is the preparation of a personal or autobiographical statement. The importance of your personal statement and its interpretation by every program director and residency selection chairman will vary. Some individuals will use these essays as background to the rest of the application; others will use them to assess an applicant's intelligence, personality, character, aspirations, and professionalism.

A personal statement serves to compliment and supplement your CV with a description of your qualifications and strengths in narrative form. Like a CV, it is written for a specific purpose or position. The goal is to eloquently convey how and why you are qualified for the position to which you are applying. In the case of a residency position, you want to make clear the basis of your interest in that specialty and, if possible, that particular program. Highlight items in your CV if they help to remind your reader of your experiences that make you well prepared for the position. However, do not simply re-hash your CV in prose form and call it your personal statement. Expand on the important activities so that your reader may appreciate the breadth and depth of your involvement in them. Writing a personal statement also gives you the opportunity to describe yourself, your background, significant personal experiences in your life (if they are relevant), and your hopes and expectations about your future career. The best essays tell the reader what a superior applicant you are without explicitly stating it. For example, telling a story about yourself is a good way to accomplish this because it allows the reader to draw his or her own conclusions about you. In addition, the ability to put down on paper clear, realistic, and carefully considered goals will leave the reader with a strong impression of your maturity, self-awareness, and character.

The importance of effective writing skills cannot be overemphasized. The quality of your writing in the preparation of a personal statement is at least as important as the content. Unfortunately, not only are good writing skills allowed to deteriorate during medical school, in some sense, they are deliberately undermined in the interest of learning to hastily write histories and physicals. For the moment, forget everything you know about writing H & P's. Start writing and rewriting your personal statement very early in the process so that you have time to perfect it. Be sure that you have as many other people as possible help you edit your personal statement. VTCSOM will have a contracted individual to assist you with editing your personal statement.

Here are some pointers for writing an interesting and effective personal statement:

- * Start early and consider it a draft so you have time to rewrite your statement multiple times.
- * Remember your purpose in the personal statement is to make them want you. Your cv gives your “actions”; your personal statement should convey your “contemplations or reflections”. Try and convince them you are a superior applicant without explicitly stating it.
- * Use plain language. The goal is to engage the reader. If you use flowery language or pretentious words, the reader is more involved in the language and not the story.
- * Tell a story and let the reader draw conclusions about you. Resist the phrase, “I am passionate about...” Let the story make that clear.
- * Write a focused essay covering the basics, 4-5 paragraphs and < one page long.
- * Write in full sentences and tend toward shorter sentences. One thought/one sentence; One topic/one paragraph.
- * Use correct grammar and spelling – always run a spellcheck or better yet let a good proofreader read it.
- * Avoid abbreviations and acronyms.
- * Avoid repetitive sentence structure.
- * Write with a fresh presentation in order to spark some interest for the reader.
- * Identify your specialty early.
- * Own up to red flags and describe how you’ve grown. Don’t make excuses.
- * Do not use the pronoun "I" too much.
- * Be honest and consistent with the rest of your application.
- * Too long is worse than too short.

To ensure your statement is well written, have others read and edit it with you. Remember, the key to good writing is rewriting. You may also want a crash course in good writing skills, so consider reading The Elements of Style by Strunk and White.

Medical Student Performance Evaluation (MSPE)

"The MSPE describes, in a sequential manner, a student’s performance, as compared to that of his/her peers, through three full years of medical school and, as much as possible, the fourth year. The MSPE includes an assessment of both the student’s academic performance and professional attributes." - AAMC

1. **Composition-** *“Final authority for composing the MSPE, as an institutional assessment composed on behalf of the medical school faculty, should rest with a professional person, at the faculty level in the institution, who has access to all relevant evaluation data for all students. Ideally, the process by which the MSPE is composed should include a personal meeting with each student”.- AAMC*
2. **Content**
 - a. **Identifying information**
 - b. **Noteworthy characteristics**
 - i. Information about special considerations, including any distinguishing characteristics exhibited by the student in medical school (e.g., demonstrated leadership and research abilities, participation in community service activities).
 - ii. Information about any significant challenges or hardships encountered by the student during medical school.
 - c. **Academic history**
 - i. The month and year of the student’s initial matriculation in, and expected graduation from, medical school.

- ii. An explanation, based on school-specific policies, of any extensions, leave(s) of absence, gap(s), or break(s) in the student's educational program.
 - iii. Information about the student's prior, current, or expected enrollment in, and the month and year of the student's expected graduation from, dual, joint, or combined degree programs.
 - iv. Information, based upon school-specific policies, of coursework that the student was required to repeat or otherwise remediate during the student's medical education.
 - v. Information, based on school-specific policies, of any adverse action(s) imposed on the student by the medical school or its parent institution.
 - vi. Statement on the school-specific Attributes of Professionalism and whether or not the student had any issues pertaining to professionalism.
 - vii. Narrative information regarding the student's overall (rather than course-specific) performance in the preclinical/basic science curriculum.
 - viii. Narrative information regarding the student's overall performance on each core clinical clerkship and elective rotation completed to date, with a focus on summative, rather than formative, comments by clerkship/elective directors. This information should be provided in the chronological order in which the student completed each core clinical clerkship and elective rotation. Information should be provided about the location of any "away" elective rotations.
- d. The **Summary** section includes a summative assessment, based upon the school's evaluation system, of the student's comparative performance in medical school, relative to his/her peers, including information about any school-specific categories used in differentiating among levels of student performance.

3. Your Input

- a. Provide a draft of the Notable Characteristics section
- b. Meet with the Senior Dean for Student Affairs
- c. Identify a preference for the MSP{E} writer to be someone other than the Senior Dean for Student Affairs.
- d. Review the MSPE for accuracy prior to its being uploaded into ERAS

Interviews

There is no question that your residency interview is an important factor in determining your place on the rank list of programs. Your credentials and accomplishments are what landed you the interview. The impression you make at the interview becomes the most important factor in determining a rank order. Therefore, it certainly makes good sense to make every effort to prepare yourself so that you will be seen in the best possible light.

You have two purposes for the interview:

1. You are attempting to assess how compatible you are with a program, how comfortable you feel, and how well the program meets your stated goals.
2. You are also trying to convey your sense of compatibility with the program to your interviewers. This goes beyond making a good impression; you are demonstrating to the faculty and residents that you would be a welcome addition to their ranks.

The best time to visit programs participating in the NRMP is mid-October through January. Programs participating in the early matches: ophthalmology, urology, and the military, will have interviewing

schedules that begin earlier. There is no reliable data to conclude that it makes a difference in outcome whether you interview first, in the middle, or last at a given program, so try not to worry about it. There is general agreement, however, that you should schedule the interview for your most highly desired program after you have had some experience with one or two interviews in other programs. It is a good idea to email or call and confirm your appointment about a week before your scheduled interview. This will give you an opportunity to reconfirm the place and time of your meeting, name of the individual with whom you are to meet first, and other details such as parking arrangements. Interviewing is expensive, so save money when you can. Try to cluster interviews in the same geographic location. Be sure to ask for student discounts at motels and residency interview discounts on airlines. Contact local VTC alumni to see if they can assist you in finding inexpensive lodging.

Just before the interview, take time to research the information you have received from the program. Write down the facts that you want to double-check as well as any initial impressions you may have formed based on the written material. Pay special attention to the names and positions of people you are likely to meet. Remind yourself of the specific questions you had about this program and write them down in a convenient place so that you will be sure to ask them. You should have some interesting questions prepared ahead of time to let the interviewers know that you have seriously considered the qualities of their particular program. The interviewer gets as much information about you from the questions you ask as from the answers you give. You may want to formulate a list of standard questions which you will ask every program for comparison, or you may develop a checklist of program characteristics to fill out after each interview. Don't be surprised if the interview begins with your questions.

As important as knowing what to ask is knowing what NOT to ask during the interview. Areas to avoid are salary/benefits, vacation, the competition, moonlighting, and topics that may put the interviewer on the defensive. You can get most of the answers to these questions from the residents.