Supplemental ERAS® 2022-2023 Application Cycle: Results of the Advisor Reaction Survey

Overview

On Oct. 11, 2022, an anonymous survey for medical student advisors was emailed to about 2,500 addresses on the AAMC Group on Student Affairs (GSA), Careers in Medicine® (CiM), and Electronic Residency Application Service® (ERAS®) Dean's Office WorkStation (DWS) user listservs. These listservs reach faculty and staff at MD- and DO-granting schools (hereafter referred to as "medical schools") and associated institutions who advise students who are applying to U.S. residency programs. Email recipients were asked to forward the survey to other potential survey participants. (Percentage values in tables may not total 100% due to rounding and cells with fewer than five observations.)

The purpose of the survey was to collect feedback from advisors who advised their students on the supplemental ERAS application. The survey took about 15 minutes to complete.

Sample

The survey closed Nov. 1, 2022, with 447 respondents; results from 104 respondents who advised students applying to U.S. residency programs but not specifically on the supplemental ERAS application were excluded from the analysis.

All 343 respondents who advised students on the supplemental application answered optional background questions related to their institution, region, and role and other institutional characteristics. About 80% of respondents represented a U.S. MD-granting medical school, and half the respondents served in a career advising and/or student affairs role at their institution.

Characteristics of the survey respondents are displayed in Tables 1 and 2 below.

Table 1. Survey Sample, by Institution Type and Location and Respondents' Roles

Characteristic	Percentage (n)
Type of School	
U.S. MD-granting	80% (274)
U.S. DO-granting	18% (63)
Canadian	--[1]
U.S. residency program	3% (9)
Other	--

(continued)

Table 1. Survey Sample, by Institution Type and Location and Respondents' Roles *(continued)*

Characteristic	Percentage (n)
Region	
Central	24% (82)
Northeast	26% (90)
South	38% (130)
West	12% (40)
Role[2]	
Career Advising/Development/ Services	50% (173)
Specialty-Specific Advising/Mentor	25% (85)
Diversity Affairs	--
Faculty	31% (108)
Medical Education	29% (98)
Student Affairs	49% (167)
Program Director	8% (28)
Clerkship Director	8% (29)
Other	9% (31)
Total Number of Respondents	343

1. Dashes indicate cells with fewer than five observations.

2. Respondents could select more than one role.

Table 2. Relative to other institutions, how would you compare your medical students in the following areas?

Option	Percentage (Number) of Students	
	Underrepresented in Medicine	Facing Significant Financial Challenges
Slightly fewer than other institutions	21% (72)	11% (37)
About the same as other institutions	35% (119)	47% (162)
Slightly more than other institutions	29% (98)	20% (70)
Not sure/Prefer not to answer	15% (52)	21% (73)
Total	100% (341)	100% (342)

Findings

Past Experiences

- Fifty-seven percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the Other Impactful Life Experiences essay will help programs put the main ERAS application in context (Table 3).
- Fifty-five percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that identifying the most meaningful past experiences helps programs get a better picture of each applicant (Table 3).
- About 35% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the new key characteristics and primary focus area questions help programs get a better picture of each applicant and better understand applicant-mission alignment (Table 3).
- Thirty-four percent of respondents felt confident knowing how to advise applicants on strategizing and completing the Past Experiences section (Table 3).
- Twenty-one percent of respondents had no difficulties advising applicants on the Past Experiences section. More than 40% of respondents had difficulty advising applicants on identifying their most meaningful experiences, writing about their meaningful experiences within the character limit, and whether to write an Other Impactful Life Experiences essay (Table 4).

Table 3. Responses to the Past Experiences Questions

Statement	N	Percentage (Number) of Advisors Who					
		Strongly Disagreed	Disagreed	Neither Agreed nor Disagreed	Agreed	Strongly Agreed	Agreed or Strongly Agreed
Identifying the most meaningful past experiences helps programs get a better picture of each applicant.	287	6% (17)	12% (34)	27% (77)	45% (130)	10% (29)	55% (159)
The key characteristics tag helps programs get a better picture of each applicant.	287	7% (20)	16% (45)	40% (116)	31% (90)	6% (16)	37% (106)
The primary focus area tag helps programs better understand applicant-mission alignment.	286	7% (19)	18% (52)	40% (114)	31% (88)	5% (13)	35% (101)
The Other Impactful Life Experiences essay will help programs put the main ERAS application in context.	284	6% (17)	12% (33)	26% (73)	45% (129)	11% (32)	57% (161)
I felt confident knowing how to advise applicants on strategizing and completing this section.	283	13% (37)	25% (72)	27% (77)	27% (77)	7% (20)	34% (97)

Table 4. What difficult(ies), if any, did you have advising or strategizing with your applicants on the Past Experiences section? (Select all that apply)

Factor	Percentage[1] (n)
I had no difficulties advising applicants on the Past Experiences section (exclusive)	21% (55)
Identifying their most meaningful experiences	41% (109)
Writing about their meaningful experiences within the character limit	49% (132)
Writing about their Other Impactful Life Experiences essay within the character limit	30% (81)
Whether to write an Other Impactful Life Experiences essay	48% (127)
Other topics/questions on the Past Experiences section	10% (26)

1. Based on 267 respondents who selected at least one factor on this question.

Table 6. If you advised applicants to select "I do not have a division preference," what factors did you consider when making that recommendation? (Select all that apply)

Factor	Percentage[1] (n)
Applicant was uncertain about their geographic preferences	56% (118)
Geography is not important to the applicant	80% (167)
Concern that programs would overlook their application if they did not select the program's region	49% (102)
Applicant's application was less competitive	31% (64)
Other	6% (13)

1. Based on 209 respondents who selected at least one factor on this question.

Table 7. What difficult(ies), if any, did you have advising or strategizing with your applicants on the Geographic Preferences section? (Select all that apply)

Factor	Percentage[1] (n)
I had no difficulties advising applicants on the Geographic Preferences section (exclusive)	31% (81)
Overall strategy for responding to the geographic preferences questions	56% (148)
Selecting their three geographic divisions	33% (88)
Other topics/questions on the Geographic Preferences section	6% (16)

1. Based on 265 respondents who selected at least one factor on this question.

Program Signals

- About 85% of respondents advised their students to signal programs that accurately reflected their true preferences (Table 8).
- More than 75% of respondents tailored their advice about signaling programs based on their students' competitiveness (Table 8).
- More than 70% agreed or strongly agreed preference signals may help students be noticed by programs in which they have the most interest (Table 8).
- More than 40% felt confident they knew how to advise their students on the Program Signals section (Table 8).
- More than 90% of respondents suggested to students they should signal a mix of less and more competitive programs (Table 9).
- More than 60% of respondents advised students who were applying to multiple specialties to use the same strategy for signaling across all participating specialties (Table 10).
- Fifteen percent of respondents had no difficulty advising applicants on the Program Signals section. More than 50% of respondents had difficulty advising applicants on an overall strategy for sending program signals and on whether or not they should signal their home institutions, in-person clinical sub internships, and/or away rotations (Table 11).

Table 8. Responses to the Program Signals Questions

Statement	N	Percentage (Number) of Advisors Who					
		Strongly Disagreed	Disagreed	Neither Agreed nor Disagreed	Agreed	Strongly Agreed	Agreed or Strongly Agreed
I advised students to signal programs that accurately reflect their true preferences.	283	--[1]	6% (17)	8% (23)	48% (136)	37% (105)	85% (241)
I tailored my advice about signaling programs based on students' competitiveness.	283	2% (6)	8% (22)	13% (38)	50% (142)	27% (75)	77% (217)
I felt confident knowing how to advise my students.	282	9% (24)	23% (65)	26% (74)	32% (91)	10% (28)	42% (119)
Program signals may help students to be noticed by programs in which they have the most interest.	283	3% (8)	4% (11)	20% (57)	52% (146)	22% (61)	73% (207)

1. Dashes indicate cells with fewer than five observations.

Table 9. What strategies did you suggest students use when advising them how to select programs to signal? (Select all that apply)

Strategy	Percentage[1] (n)
Signal programs they felt they would have less difficulty getting into	10% (26)
Signal a mix of less and more competitive programs	93% (246)
Signal programs they felt they would have more difficulty getting into	14% (36)

1. Based on 265 respondents who selected at least one factor on this question.

Table 10. For students who applied to multiple specialties, did you advise them to strategize about their program signals differently depending on the specialty?

Factor	Percentage (n)
Yes, I advised my students to use a different strategy for signaling depending on specialty.	39% (100)
No, I advised my students to use the same strategy for signaling across all participating specialties.	61% (157)
Total	100% (257)

Table 11. What difficult(ies), if any, did you have advising or strategizing with your applicants on the Program Signals section? (Select all that apply)

Factor	Percentage[1] (n)
I had no difficulties advising applicants on the Program Signals section (exclusive)	15% (42)
Overall strategy for sending program signals	55% (152)
Whether or not to signal home institutions, in-person clinical sub internships, and/or away rotations	61% (168)
Other topics/questions on the Program Signals section	5% (13)

1. Based on 275 respondents who selected at least one factor on this question.

Preparation and Communications

- Nearly half of respondents spent less than one hour advising each student on the supplemental ERAS application questions (Table 12). Around a third of respondents spent two to three hours with each student.
- Over 90% of respondents used the AAMC *Supplemental ERAS Application Guide* and/or consulted with medical school colleagues (Table 13). More than 90% of respondents who used these resources found them useful.
- Around 50% of respondents were very satisfied or satisfied with communications about the supplemental ERAS application.

Table 12. On average, how much additional time did you spend advising each student on the supplemental ERAS application questions?

Time	Percentage (n)
Less than 1 hour	47% (162)
2-3 hours	33% (113)
4-5 hours	7% (23)
More than 5 hours	13% (45)
Total	100% (343)

Table 13. How useful were the following resources in advising your applicants?

Resource	N	Percentage (Number) of Advisors					
		Did Not Use	Used	Not Useful	Somewhat Useful	Useful	Somewhat Useful or Useful
AAMC *Supplemental ERAS Application Guide*	309	8% (26)	92% (283)	2% (7)	30% (84)	68% (192)	98% (276)
AAMC Supplemental ERAS Application Worksheet	300	24% (71)	76% (229)	3% (8)	35% (81)	61% (140)	97% (221)
AAMC Supplemental ERAS Application Webinar for Medical School Advisors	307	21% (65)	79% (242)	2% (6)	38% (92)	60% (144)	98% (236)
AAMC Supplemental ERAS Application website	307	17% (53)	83% (254)	4% (9)	42% (106)	55% (139)	96% (245)
AAMC Supplemental ERAS Application 2022 Data Snapshots	303	37% (113)	63% (190)	7% (14)	52% (99)	41% (77)	93% (176)
Medical school colleagues	302	9% (26)	91% (276)	4% (10)	42% (117)	54% (149)	96% (266)
Program colleagues	295	17% (51)	83% (244)	5% (12)	42% (102)	53% (130)	95% (232)
Social media discussion	289	47% (135)	53% (154)	33% (51)	49% (76)	18% (27)	67% (103)
Webinar or information session hosted by a specialty organization	290	24% (70)	76% (220)	7% (16)	47% (103)	46% (101)	93% (204)
Other(s)	83	71% (59)	29% (24)	--[1]	25% (6)	71% (17)	96% (23)

1. Dashes indicate cells with fewer than five observations.

Table 14. Overall, how satisfied are you with communications about the supplemental ERAS application?

Percentage (Number) of Advisors[1]					
Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Satisfied or Very Satisfied
3% (8)	14% (40)	29% (83)	43% (122)	11% (31)	54% (153)

1. Based on 284 respondents.