From the ERAS Advisory Committee

Suggested practices for programs and students for an improved residency interview experience.

Dear Residency Applicants and Program Contacts,

As the current and immediate past chairs of the ERAS Advisory Committee, we would like to take this opportunity to share some feedback provided to the Committee and provide some suggested practices to improve this year’s residency interview experience for everyone. We would like to address two key themes: Student access to more specific program requirements and the interview culture.

• Students perceive a lack of clarity around programs’ criteria for considering applicants and many believe their best approach is to take their chances and “just apply” resulting in more applications to programs and a greater expense for applicants.

• Some concerning behaviors voiced from the student and school community are reports of some programs offering more interviews than can be accommodated resulting in students feeling compelled to urgently schedule interviews to which they have been invited. There is also a perception that some programs are unclear about their interview processes and timelines.

• From the program community, we have heard reports of students scheduling (or “hoarding”) more interview slots than they can possibly attend and making last-minute cancellations for interviews that were accepted much earlier.

To better support the community through this critical time, we—as representatives of the undergraduate and graduate medical education community who advise the AAMC about the residency application process—have created the following suggested best practices for programs and students that are intended to minimize stress, anxiety and frustration and improve success of the interview process for all involved. We have shared this suggested guidance with our colleagues in the AAMC Group on Residents Affairs (GRA) and the Committee on Student Affairs (COSA), and they support this effort.

PROGRAMS:

• **Inform applicants about your timeline and policies for sending invitations and conducting interviews.** This can be done through ERAS Account Maintenance (EAM) by entering the information in the Program Listing tab and/or by posting this information on your program’s website.

• **Limit the invitations offered to the number of interview slots available and provide applicants with a reasonable deadline to respond (a minimum of 48 hours is recommended) before offering interviews to other candidates.**

• **Inform applicants of their status with your program through the messaging function in the PDWS.** To facilitate, we have included **instructions** for how to send a bulk message in the Program Director Workstation (PDWS).

• **If your program uses a waitlist, communicate the process used for filling interview slots that become available.**
• Post and communicate your deadlines for interview cancellations as well as your policy, if you have one, regarding last minute or no shows.

• To support you in the selection process, the AAMC offers the Best Practices for Conducting Residency Program Interviews.

STUDENTS:

• Work with your advisor(s) to craft a sound, comprehensive application and interview strategy. This will help you set priorities and make decisions about where to apply and which/how many interview invitations to accept.

• Practice professional courtesy by providing a timely response to all interview invitations.

• Determine the maximum number of residency interviews you can reasonably attend and prioritize them by program. Avoid accepting additional interviews, and promptly cancel any interviews you will be unable to attend as early as possible.

• To support you in the application process, the AAMC offers several resources to help you apply smart and plan for the residency interview process.

Thank you for all you do to make it a successful interview process for all.

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