

APDS Position Statement: 2020-2021 Medical Student Experience and Application Cycle Updated statement to that released May, 2020

The APDS represents more than 320 university, independent, and military general surgery programs in many geographic locations with diverse populations. The prevalence of COVID 19 has been remarkable in many areas and sparse in others. There are 4 primary issues that need to be addressed by Program Directors as we begin the 2020-2021 recruitment season:

1. ERAS and NRMP modifications to candidate application timing and the match process
2. Offering clinical (“away”) rotations to 4th year students
3. Interview format options
4. Anticipated changes in the availability of some application portfolio items

Our original statement was released in May: <https://apds.org/about/apds-position-statements/>

The following recommendations have been updated to reflect the current state of affairs and the environment anticipated during the upcoming application cycle. The major update pertains to interviews and our recommendation that these be offered virtually to all applicants. While we clearly recognize the importance of institutional and geographic familiarity when entertaining a 5-year commitment, the anticipated inequity in interview access (institutions not permitting candidates to travel, candidates not feeling comfortable traveling, institutions not permitting applicant to visit for interviews) during the COVID era is a major concern.

Program Directors should:

1. **Be aware of new ERAS program release dates and NRMP match date modifications. (Links below)**
2. **Consider ongoing implementation of “Virtual” rotations or experiences to include prospective students in curriculum meetings or lectures provided at their institutions**
3. **Not consider the participation of an applicant on an “away” rotation positively or negatively in assessment of the applicant for interview selection or ultimate match.**
4. **Be prepared for the contingency that applicants may not have completed all their licensing examinations by recruiting season (specifically USMLE or COMLEX Step 2)**
5. **Offer virtual interviews to all general surgery applicants**

In addition, the APDS Task Force focused on developing an Interview Code of Conduct recommendations have been reviewed/approved by the Executive Committee and are linked here:

<https://apds.org/program-directors/interview-code-of-conduct/>

We continue to recognize that it is difficult to predict the prevalence of COVID-19 across the United States during the upcoming recruitment season for any single location. We all need to act to provide equitable and safe opportunities for our applicants while affording as much transparency as to our program characteristics and recruitment processes as is possible. The recommendations above are consistent with those goals.

We wish you well with a successful recruiting season during these unprecedented circumstances.

Respectfully submitted,

Benjamin Jarman, MD
APDS President on behalf of the Executive Committee
July 15th, 2020

Coalition for Physician Accountability's Work Group on Medical Students in the Class of 2021 Moving Across Institutions for Post Graduate Training report:

https://www.aamc.org/system/files/2020-05/covid19_Final_Recommendations_Executive%20Summary_Final_05112020.pdf

AAMC Electronic Residency Application Service (ERAS) dates:

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

National Residency Match Program (NRMP): Calendar dates

<http://www.nrmp.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/2021-Main-Residency-Match-Detailed-Calendar.pdf>

AAMC Posting of subspecialty society position statements:

<https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-residency/article/specialty-response-covid-19/?edit>