Association of Professors of Dermatology
Residency Program Directors Section

<u>Information Regarding the 2021-2022 Application Cycle</u>
Released August 20, 2021

During the 2021-2022 application cycle for dermatology residency, most dermatology programs will utilize the new supplemental ERAS application. For more information, including a list of participating programs, please see AAMC's [website](). Additional information and guidance can be found by viewing our DIGA x APD webinar [here]().

We have included additional relevant information about aspects of the application cycle for dermatology this year.

Resources for applicants
A [Google doc]() has been released that includes general program information including participation in the supplemental ERAS application, participation in coordinated interview invite release, interview dates and formats, and informational webinar dates. There are also tabs for each month that show interview and webinar dates. Program participation is voluntary so not all programs entered information. Please check additional details on program websites.

Pre- and post-interview communication guidelines
For programs utilizing the ERAS supplemental application, because this includes preference signaling, applicants are asked to refrain from contacting those programs to express interest or provide application updates prior to interviews, except in truly exceptional circumstances.

Post-interview, applicants do not need to send thank you notes to programs at which they have interviewed. While some applicants choose to send a "letter of intent" to their program of choice, this is unnecessary. Applicants should not feel pressure to send such a message, and should not be viewed as "uninterested" if they do not send a message.

Programs are encouraged to either avoid direct communication with applicants post-interview, or at a minimum, ensure that such communication is informational in nature, avoiding efforts to persuade or pressure candidates, in line with NRMP guidelines. Applicants should not equate lack of communication from programs with lack of interest.

Coordinated interview invite release
For the 2021-2022 residency application cycle, a number of dermatology residency programs will be participating in coordinated interview invite release. There will be two sets of dates this year. Participating programs will not release more interview invites than interview slots available. Programs not participating have also been asked to do the same, and have been asked to post the date of interview invite release on their websites when possible.

Timeline for participating programs only

First set of dates

Monday November 8, 2021: first round of interview invites released (for programs with November or early December interview dates)

Wednesday November 10, 2021: applicants begin scheduling interviews; must respond by November 11

Additional interview invites will be released as/if they become available starting after November 12, 2021.

Second set of dates

Monday November 29, 2021: second round of interview invites released (for programs with late December, January or February interview dates)

Wednesday December 1, 2021: applicants begin scheduling interviews; must respond by December 3

Additional interview invites will be released as/if they become available starting after December 4, 2021.

Programs have been encouraged to notify all applicants of their status (interview, waitlist or decline) by January 1, 2022.

Please refer to the Google doc, which includes information about programs. Importantly, most dermatology residency program directors are in favor of a coordinated interview invite release, however, each program has a different timeline for application review and interviews; therefore, programs not participating in the coordinated release this year should in no way be construed as unwilling to participate, but rather unable to given their specific timeline.

Interview formats and recruiting activities

There is no standardized virtual or in-person interview format for dermatology. Programs will use a variety of webconferencing platforms (when virtual), formats, and interview questions. These may include breakout rooms, personal meeting rooms and/or panel interviews. Timing of interviews (schedule and interview length) will also vary by program, but in general dermatology programs hold multiple brief interviews for each candidate (10-20 minutes). There is no coordination among programs with regards to types of interview questions (e.g. structured, behavioral, open-ended etc).

Additional activities, such as social activities, tours, and/or meet-and-greets with residents will be scheduled by programs and may occur on the date of interview or at other times throughout the interview season. Information regarding logistics and formatting of interviews and other recruitment activities will be provided by each program at or near the time of interview invite.

Interview etiquette

Dress code: Dress professionally, but also comfortably. Historically, the majority of applicants have worn suits, but other professional attire is acceptable. We encourage applicants to consider other elements of their visual appearance (hairstyle, make-up, etc) to be consistent with what they would typically wear in clinic or other similar professional settings. Most importantly, you should feel like yourself on the day of the interview.

Backgrounds for virtual interviews: We recommend that applicants set up their computer/tablet and camera in an area that is well-lit with a fairly non-descript background (like a solid wall). Alternatively, a solid light-colored sheet can be draped behind your set-up. If you feel more comfortable using your school's standard virtual background or a simple virtual background, please do so, but recognize that virtual backgrounds can occasionally be distracting with movement. If a program would like you to use a specific background, it will specified in the interview invite.

Equipment for virtual interviews: We do not recommend that applicants purchase additional equipment for virtual interviews (such as lighting). There are simple inexpensive ways to set up your workstation to maximize light in the room, so do not feel obligated to purchase additional lighting. Please see included resources for tips on how to set up your computer or tablet and webcam for optimal lighting and placement. Using a phone is not recommended, but could be done if needed. Ensure that you have stable internet access during the virtual interviews, and inquire with your medical school or home dermatology program if you need a private space with reliable internet access to participate in interviews as many will be able to help.

Technical issues for virtual interviews: We recommend that programs have interviewee phone numbers available so that if there is a connection issue on either end, the virtual interview can be conducted by phone either with or without the video component. Please ensure that you have provided an up-to-date phone number. Additionally, should you be concerned about aspects of the interview day with respect to technical or other anticipated issues, please reach out in advance to program coordinator(s).

Additional tips (adapted from Dr. Ginette Okoye):
- Ensure your computer or tablet is fully charged prior to your interviews.
- Download the application to be used ahead of time and practice logging in (if possible) to avoid technical difficulties at the time of interview.
- Camera should be at eye level; use books or other props as needed.
- If possible, use an external microphone or headphones/earbuds, but this is not strictly necessary.
- Find a quiet space indoors where you will not be interrupted. As mentioned above, reach out to your home program or medical school if you need a space to participate in interviews.

- If you use a virtual background (your school's, for example), make sure it is formatted well so the image is not distorted. Alternatively, use a blank neutral-colored wall or a solid neutral-colored sheet draped as a backdrop. Be mindful about what is showing on the screen behind or around you as it can be distracting and elicit additional questions.
- If possible, position your set up so that the lighting is in front of you and not behind you (makes your image darker).
- Get fully dressed for the interview as you would for an in-person interview, but ensure you are also comfortable.
- Do not have food or drink visible, but make sure to sip water before and in between interviews.
- Look at the camera as much as possible, rather than the screen, to simulate "eye contact" with the interviewer. Consider posting a photo of a family member or friend behind your camera at eye-level so that you can focus on that to simulate eye contact.
- Practice being still during your interviews, while maintaining good posture.
- Turn off your phone or put on "do not disturb." Move your phone out of sight if you will be tempted to look at it.
- If you take notes during the interview, let the interviewer know so they understand why you may look down during the interview. Use paper for notes instead of your phone. (It is also not necessary to take notes if you would prefer not to.)
- Be patient with programs if there are technology glitches or if faculty have a difficult time with the platform. This is new for everyone!
- Don't schedule other activities too close to interviews, just in case there are issues with timing on either side, so that you are not anxious should this occur.
- Practice with a friend, colleague, or family member to get feedback on your background environment, lighting, etc.
- Be mindful about programs' privacy as well – it is never appropriate to record a video of an interview, and this could disqualify you from a program. Do not post specific information about programs and their interviews on social media – remember, many program directors and residents are also on social media and will see everything you post.

Resources regarding virtual interviews:
AAMC Preparation Guide for Applicants Participating in Virtual Interviews
4 Tips on Video Interviews for 2021 Residency Applicants
Residency, Med School Interviews Go Virtual: What to Know