

APPLICATION FOR UROLOGY RESIDENCY: *Recommendations for Medical Students*

This outline is intended to serve as a guide for you as you apply to urology residency programs. You will also find that advice from attending urologists and urology residents will be helpful as you make your decision.

FOURTH YEAR CLERKSHIPS

Elective Clerkships are available in most surgical specialties. Students who have not made a specific career choice might find that an elective early in the fourth year may help narrow this decision.

Students who are certain about their decision to enter Urology should participate in clerkships only if interested in a particular elective. It is important to spend your fourth year on electives that will address your clinical weaknesses and broaden your medical background. It is entirely reasonable to choose Urology clerkships in the fourth year, but you should do so because: 1) it will help you make a career decision, or 2) the elective is an area in which you are keenly interested. Many students participate in electives at other institutions.

AUA MATCHING PROGRAM

A third party, The American Urological Association, determines residency positions in Urology. All urology residency applicants must register through the AUA to obtain a match number to participate in this process. After researching and interviewing at your programs of interest, you will submit a list of programs ranked in order of your preference. In turn, residency programs will do the same. The AUA will then determine, according to the ranking preferences of applicants and programs, the matching of applicants with available residency positions. More information regarding the AUA Matching Program is available at <http://www.auanet.org/education/residency.cfm>.

APPLICATION FOR RESIDENCY IN UROLOGY

Choose and Meet with Advisors

The following faculty members have interest and experience in advising students regarding their career choices and application to residencies in Urology. Students should meet with two or more of these faculty-advisors on at least one occasion each to discuss their career choices, the application process and specific residencies. Below are Northwestern Urology faculty members who you may wish to meet with during your discernment.

Northwestern Memorial Hospital academic faculty (312-908-8145):

- Nelson Bennett, M.D., Male Reproductive Medicine/Surgery & Andrology
- Robert Brannigan, M.D., Male Reproductive Medicine/Surgery & Andrology
- William Catalona, M.D., Prostate Cancer
- Matthias Hofer, M.D., Ph.D., Male reconstruction
- Stephanie Kielb, M.D., Female Urology & Pelvic Floor Dysfunction
- Shilajit Kundu, M.D., Urologic Oncology
- Joshua Meeks, M.D., Ph.D., Urologic Oncology

- Robert Nadler, M.D., Endourology and Stone Disease
- Kent Perry, M.D., Endourology and Stone Disease
- Anthony Schaeffer, M.D., Female Urology and Urinary Incontinence
- Edward Schaeffer, MD, PhD, Department Chair, Urologic Oncology

Northwestern Memorial Hospital, private urology service (312-926-3535):

- Daniel Dalton, M.D., General Urology and Urologic Oncology
- William Lin, M.D., Male Reproductive Medicine
- Kelly Maxwell, M.D., General Urology

Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago, pediatric urology (312-227-6349):

- Earl Cheng, M.D.
- David Chu, M.D.
- Ed Gong, M.D.
- Emilie Johnson, M.D.
- Bruce Lindgren, MD
- Dennis Liu, M.D.
- Max Maizels, M.D.
- Elizabeth Yerkes, M.D.

You should obtain advice from these individuals regarding Urology programs. Appointments should be made with an advisor in spring of your third year.

Most students apply to 50 programs, although this may vary depending on the student's record. It is extremely important to have a sufficient number of "safety" programs (programs for which you will be highly competitive). As a rule, students who have a good performance during medical school should consider a combination of university and community hospital-based residency training programs. Application to a broad spectrum of programs is essential so that you will be assured of a position at the close of the AUA Match. Again, you should enlist the help of your faculty advisors for your strategy in applying to Urology programs.

When meeting with these faculty-advisors, provide them with copies of your medical school transcript, curriculum vitae, USMLE scores, and evaluation forms from your third year clerkships. This will help them in identifying programs for which you will be competitive.

A curriculum vitae or resume should include the following items:

- Full name
- Address
- Education (high school, college, medical school)
- Research experience
- Honors (awards, scholarships, honor societies)
- Employment history (post-high school)
- Extracurricular activities and interests (community activity/volunteer work/hobbies/sports)
- Future plans, if known (academic practice, private practice, field of interest)
- Publications (specific journal citation with PMID).

Letters of Recommendation

Three letters of recommendation are sufficient. More than three are unnecessary unless specifically required by a program. Request letters from faculty who know you or on whose service you rotated. There should be at least two letters from members of the Department of Urology. Faculty members are generally very happy to write letters for students and will write letters if they feel they know you well and can write a positive letter. Typically, the faculty advisors who you choose as your mentors may be better able to supply you with letters of recommendation.

Again, students should present medical school transcripts, USMLE scores, CV, evaluations from third year clerkships, and a personal statement to the faculty member. This will help the faculty write letters of recommendation.

These letters should be requested in July or August of your 4th year. Early requests ensure the letters are uploaded into ERAS before the application deadlines. Along with your request for a letter of recommendation, include the ERAS cover sheet which has an individual alpha-numeric code that identifies specific faculty members' letters with your ERAS application.

A letter of recommendation from the Chair of Urology is desirable. You should make an appointment with Dr. Schaeffer (our department Chair) in anticipation of his writing a letter on your behalf. Most often students like to meet with Dr. Schaeffer during their 4th year urology elective, but this is not required. To make an appointment to meet with Dr. Schaeffer, please call or email Jean Michniewicz at (312) 908-1615 or jmz@northwestern.edu.

ERAS Schedule

September 1st ERAS opens for students to upload application documents

September 15th Programs begin viewing applications

September 30th Northwestern application deadline

NOTE: Application deadlines vary from program to program

October 1st MSPE (Medical Student Performance Evaluation) uploaded by medical schools

We recommend that you plan to complete your application, and have everything uploaded (including letters of recommendation) by September 15th.

In summary, it is appropriate to request letters of recommendation and begin writing your application materials between May and August. This should ensure that your application is complete by the middle of September, which should easily meet most program deadlines.

If you have questions through the process feel free to contact our Education Coordinator Kelly Ross at (312) 503-3238 or k-ross@northwestern.edu.

INTERVIEWS

November through December is the urology interview season. Most clinical faculty members are very understanding about short leaves of absence from your clinical rotations for residency interviews. It is important to notify the faculty of your absence in advance. Attempt to schedule electives that are not overly time-consuming during the months you plan to interview.

Most programs interview on a few select dates. Remember that you may always contact the program coordinators for any of the programs if you have questions about receipt of your application, interviews, etc. If you need to cancel or reschedule your interview, contact the program at least two weeks before your interview date, since you are holding an interview spot that could be offered to another candidate.

As you know, winter travel to and from Chicago is often adversely affected by weather conditions. Plan your travel accordingly, and allow time for unexpected delays. Make your travel arrangements so that you arrive early and are rested. Do not leave an institution without taking a tour of the facility and speaking with housestaff to learn about the program. Be sure all of your questions are answered. It is helpful to prepare a mental list of questions that should be answered.

Possible questions to consider when you visit programs:

- What kind of research opportunities are offered or required by the program?
- What is the average number of operative cases for different levels of residency?
- Is the program's case load sufficiently broad and variable?
- How many hospitals participate in the training program? What is the level of supervision by attending surgeons?
- Are the house officers enthusiastic about the program? Have any residents left the program recently?
- Is the program pyramidal? Is there a "cut" after the first or second year?
- Is the Department of Urology stable? Are the relationships among surgical specialties and Urology, General Surgery, Surgery and Medicine, etc., amiable?
- When was the program last reviewed by the ACGME? Is the residency program in good standing?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the program?
- Is there an outpatient experience throughout each level of the residency program? (Emergency Room, outpatient clinic, urologists' private offices)?
- What fellowships do residents obtain after graduation?
- What are the resident rotations? Is there a good breadth of surgical experience?
- What is the philosophy of the program? Are they trying to train academic urologists, private practitioners, both, etc.?
- What is the call schedule generally like at the different levels of residency?

Appearance and poise are extremely important during an interview. It is unusual for an interviewer to ask questions testing your medical and surgical knowledge. Most interviewers are interested in getting to know you as a person. For each of your interviews, be prepared to ask two or three specific questions about the program. These questions indicate your interest and knowledge of the specific program. Make sure that you have researched each program and have thoroughly read through the information sent to you.

MATCHING

Be realistic and balance the type of programs that you select. For example, ranking only prestigious programs without considering other less renowned but equally instructive programs is foolhardy. As a rule, students who have a good performance during medical school should consider a combination of university and community-hospital based residency training programs. Ranking a spectrum of programs is essential so that you will be assured of a position at the conclusion of the match.

Remember:

SEEK ADVICE, PLAN AHEAD, STAY COOL...

AND GOOD LUCK!