

DOMINATE YOUR RESIDENCY INTERVIEWS

INTERVIEW PEARLS AND PLANNER

By Dr. Val

REAL FEEDBACK FROM A *Residency Program*



"Dear Valerie,

I don't think that I have interviewed a more genuine and perfect person than you! I interviewed 60+ candidates this past winter for our intern spots, and I can say that your poise, personality, and passion for what you do, who you are, and where you want to go in your career outshined ALL of them! We are so fortunate to have interviewed you today! It was unanimous that we all fell in love with you immediately. We feel that you would be a great fit for our program and will mesh well with our already awesome residents. We were literally speechless and had to pinch ourselves when fate brought us you."

www.elevatewomenshealth.org
elevatewomenshealth@hotmail.com

FOCUS ON



SUCCESS



Dear Doctor,

Your journey in medicine has brought you to this pivotal moment, where preparation meets opportunity, and I am genuinely honored to be a part of your path forward. Securing a residency interview is no small feat; it is a reflection of your dedication, competence, and the countless hours you've invested in your medical education.

This book was designed to provide you with the insights, strategies, and confidence needed to excel in your residency interviews. Beyond merely answering questions, it's about showcasing your potential and aligning your aspirations with the values of your prospective programs. As you delve into these pages, remember that each interview is a two-way street, an opportunity not just for programs to evaluate you, but for you to decide what is the best residency program for you to train in. Congratulations on getting to this point in your career and good luck in the MATCH!

Warm regards,

Dr. Val

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HOW TO SUCCEED IN RESIDENCY



CHAPTER ONE

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

01

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

The Electronic Residency Application Service (ERAS) is the primary online platform for applying to most residency programs. However, applicants to OBGYN programs will use a different platform, ResidencyCAS. You can see the details [HERE](#). It is essential for residency candidates to stay current on the application platforms specific to their specialty. To participate in the Match, applicants must register with either ERAS or ResidencyCAS for the application season. Upon registration, you will receive a unique AAMC identification number, which will be your main identifier throughout the Match process. Registration requires a token provided by your medical school registrar or dean's office, or, for ECFMG applicants, a token available through support services.

When completing your residency application, it is crucial to be thorough and accurate, filling out every section to the best of your ability and keeping your contact information updated. Use a personal Gmail account set up to receive notifications to ensure you don't miss important updates. Sign up for interview dates promptly upon invitation, as spots can fill up quickly. It is imperative to know what date you can begin submitting applications and what date your application will be submitted to prospective programs. You can find the general ERAS timeline via [HERE](#). All residency applications submitted prior to the date the applications are released to programs will be time stamped with the date it is released to the program.

Understanding specialty-specific and program-specific deadlines is crucial when applying to residency. For instance, for the 2024-2025 MATCH, OBGYN applicants should note that the APGO recommends a submission deadline of September 25. Additionally, it is advised that programs begin sending out interview invitations on a rolling basis from October 29, with interviews starting no earlier than November 1. See [HERE](#). It is important to stay informed about the requirements for each application platform, including the number and type of letters of recommendation needed. For example, OBGYN applications typically require four letters of recommendation, including a Standardized Letter of Evaluation (SLOE), with some programs requesting one letter from an OBGYN department chair or program director. Emergency Medicine programs often require at least two SLOEs.

It is advisable to identify your preferred specialty early in medical school and compile a list of your top 10 programs, understanding their specific application requirements. Increasingly, programs are also requiring completion of the CASPER (Situational Judgment Test) and DUET (Value Alignment Assessment) to better match residents with programs. Many of these new changes are being implemented with the intent to help find the right resident for the right program (see [HERE](#) for OBGYN). There are also helpful groups and excel spreadsheets that can be found online that contains information about programs. Simply google your corresponding year, specialty, and type “2023-2024 <specialty> Excel Spreadsheet Reddit” to find resources that applicants have made available for the interview season. For example: [Family Medicine 1](#) | [Family Medicine 2](#) | [OBGYN 1](#) | [OBGYN 2](#).

Before submitting your application, review it meticulously, as ERAS enforces a no-refund policy for applications sent to non-participating programs or those submitted after deadlines. Tailor your personal statement to reflect how your values and aspirations align with each program's goals, ensuring that the correct version of your essay is submitted to the appropriate program.



The process of medical residency interview preparation is not just about practicing answers or wearing the right attire; it's about setting the stage for the next pivotal phase of your medical career. Residency interviews act as gateways, giving program directors insight into who you are beyond the CV and personal statement. While your academic achievements might have gotten you to the door, it's the interview that determines whether you step through. Before you even start preparing for the interviews, it's essential to establish clarity on your objectives. Ask yourself why you're inclined towards a particular specialty. Is it the challenging nature of the work, the patient interactions, or the future prospects it offers? Understanding your own motivations will not only guide your interview preparation but also help you connect more authentically with your interviewers. When you're clear about your reasons, they resonate more genuinely, painting a picture of a candidate passionate and clear about their chosen path. View the following [LINK](#) for the AAMC ERAS Program Directory.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, numerous residency programs and medical specialties have transitioned to conducting virtual residency interviews. However, it is essential to note that some programs continue to provide in-person interview options, necessitating preparedness for both formats.

PRE-INTERVIEW PREPARATION

- Click this [LINK](#) to view AAMC's Virtual Interview Preparation page.
- Click this [LINK](#) to view AAMC's Interview Preparation Guide.
- Choose an interview environment that is clean, professional, and free from interruptions or distractions. Ensure you have a stable internet connection to prevent audio and visual delays, which can be challenging during the interview. Invest in a high-quality microphone that provides clear audio to ensure your interviewers can hear you clearly. Additionally, consider purchasing a video lighting device; proper lighting enhances the overall presentation and helps convey your enthusiasm and engagement during the interview.
- Undergo mock interview sessions with a tutor, mentor, or friend using a digital platform like **Zoom**, **Webex**, or **Google Meets**. Find out what software is going to be used at your virtual interview and download the necessary applications prior to your big day.
- Sign up for virtual interviewing preparation on a paid platform like **The Big Interview** or **Stand Out** to get comfortable answering questions. It is also helpful to speak to alumnis from your medical school or hire a residency mock interview tutor. You can sign up for our professional service at my website link provided below.
- Select an outfit that is professional and business casual. For virtual interviews, you will want to look especially nice above the waist. Men should opt for a well-fitted, dark-colored suit, paired with a white or light-colored dress shirt and a conservative tie. Choose polished dress shoes in black or brown and ensure accessories are minimal and understated. Women should select a tailored suit—either a pantsuit or skirt suit—in a neutral or dark color, and pair it with a professional blouse. Closed-toe dress shoes in neutral colors are recommended, along with minimal jewelry and selective makeup.

”

*"Success is not just about
reaching the destination
but about the perseverance
and passion you show
along the way."*



AWAY/AUDITION ROTATIONS

Away or audition rotations are available for current medical students and provide a valuable opportunity to demonstrate your fit for various residency programs. To apply, research through platforms such as VSLO, Clinician Nexus, or the individual program websites. Though there is a cost associated with these rotations, the experience of working directly with staff and faculty is invaluable. Be mindful of application deadlines, which generally fall between January and April, and apply early. Schedule your rotations strategically, preferably from December to February, to coincide with programs' ranking processes. Even if you are unsure about a program, convey enthusiasm and gratitude for the opportunity to participate.

Thoroughly research the program directors, residents, and curricula of your top-choice programs. Seek opportunities to interact with them during your rotations, specialty events, or conferences. Ensure that you are visible and actively engaged throughout these interactions. Trust that your efforts will help you align with the best opportunities available.

Maintain a professional demeanor at all times during your rotation. Dress appropriately, uphold a positive attitude, and be punctual, aiming to arrive at least 30 minutes early. Refrain from interrupting others and be mindful of appropriate communication practices. Even in difficult situations, continue to demonstrate professionalism and be willing to undertake various tasks, including those that are less desirable, such as fetching equipment or cleaning up spills.

Enhance your contribution to the program by offering small tokens of appreciation, such as cookies or snacks, or by sharing valuable resources like books or charts you have created. Ensure you are well-versed in charting requirements, as proficient charting can positively influence others' perceptions of you. After your rotation, express gratitude with a thank-you gift or snack for the residents and attendings, and include a business card with your name and photo to help ensure a memorable and positive impression.

The background image shows a professional setting. On the left, a person's hands are clasped together. In the center, a laptop is open on a desk. On the right, a person is sitting at the desk, holding a pen and writing on a document. The scene is brightly lit, likely from a window in the background.

02

DURING
THE
INTERVIEW



INTERVIEW CHECKLIST

- ☐ SET THE SCENE
- ☐ EXPRESS GRATITUDE FOR BEING THERE: SMILE
- ☐ KNOW WHY YOU WANT TO GO TO THEIR PROGRAM
- ☐ SHARE YOUR PASSIONS BY YOUR EXPERIENCES
- ☐ PAUSE AND THINK BEFORE RESPONDING
- ☐ ANSWER QUESTIONS WITH HOW YOU'VE GROWN
- ☐ DON'T SAY ANYTHING NEGATIVE ABOUT ANOTHER
- ☐ PRAISE THE INTERVIEWER AT LEAST ONCE
- ☐ DON'T INTERRUPT THE INTERVIEWER
- ☐ HAVE A QUIET SHOW AND TELL ITEM PREPARED

DURING THE INTERVIEW

SET THE SCENE (VIRTUAL INTERVIEWS)

Create an ideal setup for your residency interview by preparing the room in advance. Make sure you have good lighting, a quality computer microphone, a clean and professional background, and a quiet space with no distractions. Print out pictures of the residents and attendings, along with their names, to help you remember who you'll be talking to. It might also be helpful to print out answers to common interview questions so you can review them beforehand, but keep in mind that you won't be able to refer to them during the actual interview.

EXPRESS GRATITUDE

Start by thanking the interviewer for their time and expressing how excited and honored you are to meet with them. Show that there's nowhere else you'd rather be than right there in that interview. Keep a friendly and genuine smile, and stay actively engaged in the conversation throughout.

KNOW THEIR PROGRAM

Make sure you thoroughly understand the program and why it's a good fit for you. Review the program's goals and the hospital's core values. Look up the faculty and residents to learn about their backgrounds and personalities. Also, explore the program's curriculum for each year of training and think about what you're looking for in a residency. Identify how this program, its location, and its culture meet your needs and preferences.

SHARE EXPERIENCES PASSIONATELY

Show your passion during the interview and be ready to share stories from your experiences that highlight it. Talk about what you've done to pursue your passion and the core values that define you, such as making patient safety a personal priority. Share what you can contribute to their program, how you handle challenges and recharge, and be honest about your strengths and weaknesses. Include meaningful stories about loved ones who have been impacted by illness or disease. Let them see what makes you unique.

DURING THE INTERVIEW

PAUSE BEFORE RESPONDING

Practice taking a moment to pause and think through the interview question before answering, so you can give the best response possible. Make sure to practice this during your mock interviews.

DEMONSTRATE GROWTH

When interviewers ask you questions, they want to understand who you really are. Make sure to directly answer the question and back it up with a personal story or patient experience that reflects your key values. Then, discuss what you learned from that experience and how it helped you grow. Focus on these three steps: 1. Answer the question clearly. 2. Share a personal or patient experience that shows your core values. 3. Explain what you learned or how you grew from it.

NO NEGATIVITY

Avoid speaking negatively about any doctors, programs, facilities, or hospital systems. This rule should also apply once you start your residency. Complaining about others won't work in your favor, so always stay positive and professional.

PRAISE THE INTERVIEWER

When granted the opportunity, be prepared with questions to ask of your interviewer. This is also a great opportunity to compliment them, which can positively impact their impression of you. Remember, how you make people feel can influence how they remember you. Aim to praise the interviewer at least once, focusing on their character, compassion, dedication to teaching, or strength. For example, you might say, "Thank you for sharing that with me. Your courage and achievements are truly inspiring. The residents are fortunate to have the chance to work with and learn from you."

DURING THE INTERVIEW

DON'T INTERRUPT

Avoid interrupting others while they are speaking. Instead, politely wait and say, "Excuse me, please go ahead" if you need to interject. This is also a good habit to develop as you go into residency.

PREPARE FOR SHOW AND TELL

Bring a "show and tell" item to every interview that you can use as an icebreaker or to support your personal stories, especially when asked about your hobbies or activities. This could be something like a portrait of your dog/cat/puppies, grandmother who inspires you, farm that you grew up on, professional award, or books you published.

SEND THANK YOU EMAILS

Send a thank you letter or email to your interviewers unless specifically instructed not to. Also consider sending Crumbl cookies or other appropriate gift to the residents at your top programs.

VISIT THE PROGRAM

If possible, visit the city and surrounding area before your interview. It's helpful to have some connection to the area, so you can discuss your favorite restaurants, tourist attractions, and show that you're familiar with the location and can picture yourself there for 3+ years.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- If you could not be a physician, what career would you choose?
- What do you see yourself doing in the future?
- What leadership roles have you held?
- What do you do in your spare time?
- What was your favorite course in medical school?
- Why did you choose this specialty?
- What are your goals?
- Are you interested in academic or in clinical medicine?
- Do you want to do research?
- What was the most interesting case that you have been involved in?
- Do you plan to do a fellowship?
- What is your most important accomplishment?
- What motivates you?
- What will be the toughest aspect of this specialty for you?
- If you could do medical school over again, what would you change?
- What do you think you can contribute to this program?
- Do you see any problems managing a professional and a personal life?
- Are you prepared for the rigors of residency?
- How much did lifestyle considerations fit into your choice of specialty?
- Describe the best/worst attending with whom you have ever worked.
- What is the greatest sacrifice you have made to get here?
- What problems will our specialty face in the next 5-10 years?
- How would you describe yourself?
- List three abilities you have that will make you valuable as a resident?
- Describe a particularly satisfying or meaningful experience during your medical training. Why was it meaningful?
- What questions do you have for me? ****

[AAMC LINK](#) of questions.

QUESTIONS FOR THE PROGRAM

Questions for Faculty:

- What brought you to this program?
- If you could give advice on the very best thing a resident can do to succeed in your residency program, what advice would you give?
- What are your program strengths or weaknesses?

Questions for Residents:

- Who is your favorite attending to work with and why?
- Do you feel that this program is perceptive and adaptive to any concerns that you raise?
- Do you feel like you have the appropriate amount of close supervision and hands on independence?
- Are you happy that you MATCHED in this program?
- What are your favorite things to do outside of residency?
- What recommendations do you have for housing? Recommended neighborhoods?
- What support is in place for residents interested in fellowship?
- Do you have good opportunities for research?

AAMC What to Ask [HERE](#)



REMINDER REMINDER



*You can't choose what life throws
at you, but you can choose how you
respond.*



03

INTERVIEW PLANNER

The medical residency interview process is a crucial phase in your journey to securing a position in your chosen specialty. To navigate this period effectively, it's essential to plan meticulously from scheduling interviews to evaluating and reviewing your experiences. Adequate preparation is key; dedicate time to research each program, practice common interview questions, and ensure your presentation is polished.

During and after your interviews, systematically evaluate each program based on your experiences and interactions. Finally, prioritize and review your rank order list carefully to reflect your preferences and align with your career goals, ensuring that your decisions are both strategic and well-informed. The following pages contain a template to help guide your planning, preparation, and reflection for each phase of the interview season.

My Legacy

Legacy is not what I did for myself. It's what I'm doing for the next generation. -Vitor Belfort

WHAT ARE MY CORE VALUES?

☐☐☐

WHAT ARE MY PRIORITIES?

☐☐☐

WHAT IS STOPPING ME?

☐☐☐

WHAT DO I WANT TO BE REMEMBERED FOR?

☐☐☐

WHAT RESOURCES DO I NEED?

☐☐☐

WHAT CAN I DO DAILY TO CREATE MY LEGACY?

☐☐☐

WHERE CAN I GO FOR HELP?

☐☐☐

WHO ARE MY MENTORS?

☐☐☐

Where do I see myself in..

10 years:

5 years:

1 year:

What are my biggest strengths?

What are my biggest weaknesses?

What things do I love about myself?

INTERVIEW PLANNER

[illegible]

OCTOBER

DATE: _____

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN

SCHEDULED EVENTS/DEADLINES

TO DO

NOVEMBER

DATE: _____

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN

SCHEDULED EVENTS/DEADLINES

TO DO

DECEMBER

DATE:

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN

[illegible]

JANUARY

DATE: _____

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN

SCHEDULED EVENTS/DEADLINES

TO DO

FEBRUARY

DATE: _____

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN

SCHEDULED EVENTS/DEADLINES

TO DO

PROGRAM NAME: _____

SPECIALTY/LENGTH: _____

LOCATION: _____

5 THINGS I LIKE ABOUT THIS PROGRAM	
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PROGRAM SUMMARY			
Stipend/Salary		Distance to Desired City (miles)	
Program Type	University Community Hybrid (circle)	Distance to Nearest Airport (miles)	
Number of Residents (per year)		Average Cost of Housing	
Vacation/Sick Leave (days)		Research Opportunities	
Resignation Policy (days)		Volunteer/Community	
Disciplinary Action		Fellowship Training	
Specialty Board Pass Rate		Subspecialty Exposure	
Summary of Strengths:			
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Program Type	University Community Hybrid (circle)	Distance to Nearest Airport (miles)	
Number of Residents (per year)		Average Cost of Housing	
Vacation/Sick Leave (days)		Research Opportunities	
Resignation Policy (days)		Volunteer/Community	
Disciplinary Action		Fellowship Training	
Specialty Board Pass Rate		Subspecialty Exposure	
Summary of Strengths:			
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PROGRAM NAME: _____

SPECIALTY/LENGTH: _____

LOCATION: _____

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INTERVIEW REVIEW

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What didn't go well?

Things to improve for next time:

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Red flags about the program?

Unanswered questions for the program?

Other notes:

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Other notes:

RANK ORDER LIST

MATCH YEAR:

SPECIALTY:

Rank	Program	State	Desired Region?
1			<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
2			<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
3			<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
4			<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
5			<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
6			<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
7			<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
8			<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
9			<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
10			<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
11			<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
12			<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
13			<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
14			<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
15			<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
16			<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
17			<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
18			<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
19			<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO

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SPECIALTY:

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1			<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
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4			<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
5			<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
6			<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
7			<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
8			<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
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19			<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO

04

HOW TO SUCCEED IN RESIDENCY



HOW TO SUCCEED IN RESIDENCY

Be Kind and Respectful: Treat everyone with kindness and respect, including staff members, nurses, physicians, and attendings. Avoid speaking negatively about anyone, even if others are doing so. Do not undermine fellow coworkers. Build friendly relationships with your co-residents and nurses. Be available to help as needed.

Maintain Professional Boundaries: Keep your personal and professional lives separate. Avoid sharing personal details that might influence your professional relationships or how you are perceived by others. Focus on fitting in professionally rather than personally.

Ensure Accuracy and Honesty: Be meticulous about the accuracy of everything you say, report, and chart. If you're unsure about something, admit it openly. Ensure that your charting is precise, high-quality, and up-to-date. Learn and get familiar with how to confirm information.

Listen Before Responding: Pause to fully listen to others before you respond. Aim to provide concise and accurate answers while being clear and to the point.

Commit to Continuous Improvement: Strive to enhance your skills and knowledge every day. Seek feedback, reflect on your performance, and actively look for ways to improve.

Express Daily Gratitude: Show appreciation to staff members, co-residents, and faculty every day. Building positive relationships through gratitude can create a supportive and collaborative learning environment.

Be Prepared and Punctual: Know your patients and their conditions well. Review charts in advance, if possible, including pertinent history, labs, or imaging that can change management. Always be on time and early so that the team does not have to wait on you.



*Stay true to
who you are.*

”



"FAKE IT TILL
YOU MAKE IT."

SIGN UP FOR 1:1 MOCK INTERVIEWS!



BOOK NOW!

TEXT 234-956-0034

www.elevatewomenshealth.org
elevatewomenshealth@hotmail.com



THANK YOU

Congratulations again on getting to this milestone! Your dedication to refining your skills and preparing thoroughly is a testament to your commitment to excellence. As you embark on this pivotal journey, remember that your hard work and preparation will shine through in each interaction. Best of luck as you navigate the interview process—may your newfound expertise and confidence lead you to success and bring you closer to achieving your career aspirations. Embrace this opportunity with enthusiasm and determination, knowing that you are well-equipped to make a lasting impression.