

Applying to Residency: The Year Ahead

Phase 2, Block 4 Meeting
Road to Residency
February 16, 2026

Jim Woodruff, MD
Dean of Students



Pritzker School
of Medicine



Fourth Year Leadership Opportunities

- Pritzker Chiefs
- PMAP (Peer Mentoring at Pritzker)
- Senior Skit
- Social Rounds
- Admissions Committee

MS4 Leadership Opportunities

- **Pritzker Chiefs**
 - Candidates interviewing in March/April.
 - Announcement of 2025-2026 Chiefs in April!
- **PMAP**
 - Responsibilities:
 - Host mentoring activities throughout the year, including group and individual mentorship
 - Organizing mentorship resources
 - Assisting with MS2 and MS3 transitions/career planning process
 - New initiatives you want to pursue!
 - Application information will come in early May after Chiefs are announced!
- Current leaders contact info:
Sai Reddy, Amanda Calipo, Andrea Gomez, Annie Feldkamp

MS4 Leadership Opportunities

- **Senior Skit**
 - Responsibilities
 - Managing production, advertisement, and showing of the Senior Skit
 - Reserve viewing space, write/direct the show (which may involve video, audio, on-stage acting, and/or live music), recruit classmates to participate in the show!
 - The new Chiefs will reach out for interest after they are selected
- **Social Rounds**
 - Watch for an email from this year's Social Rounds leadership on the application process for next year.

Match Day 2026

March 20



Our Goal for You: A Fulfilling, Satisfying Career



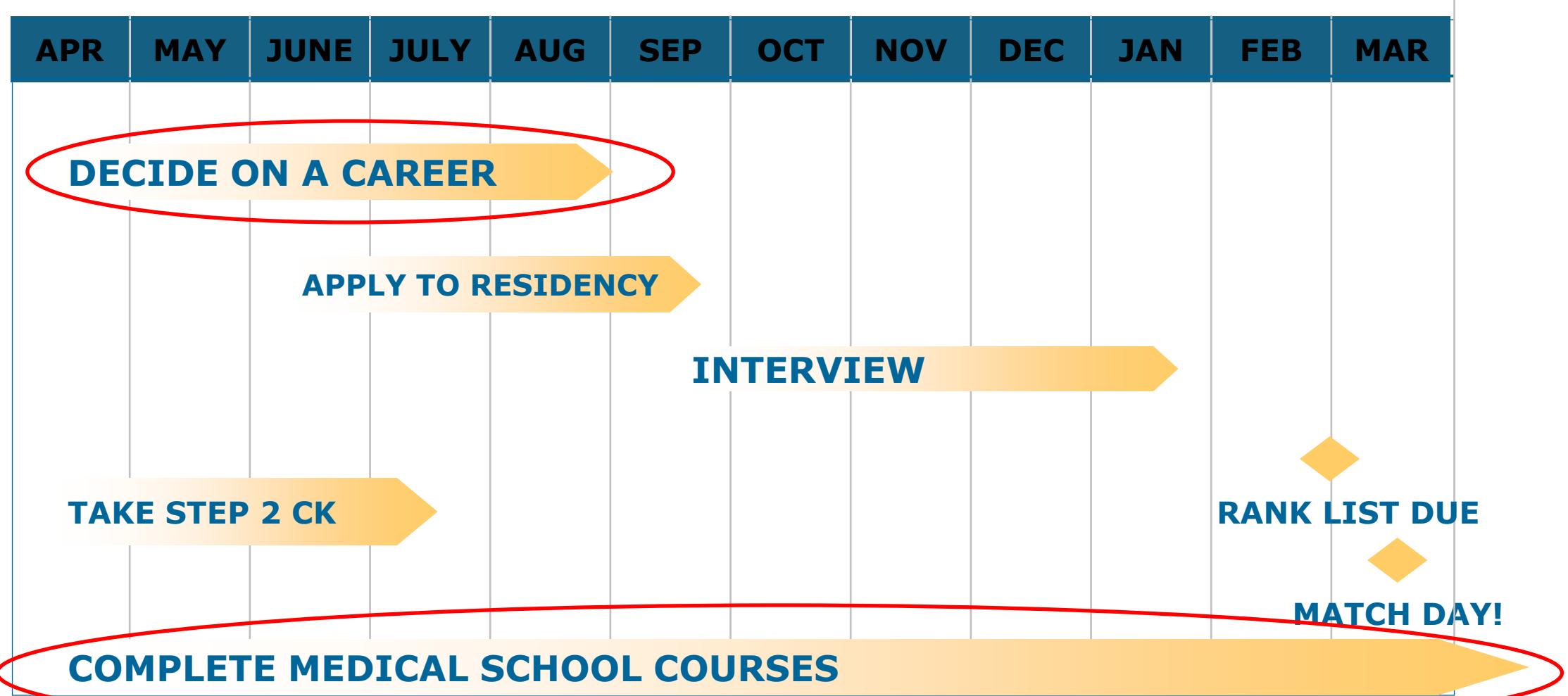
Reminder: Noteworthy Characteristics due **FRIDAY**

- If you are applying in Fall 2026, you need to submit your draft Noteworthy Characteristics via the REDCap form you received by this **Friday, February 20**.
- Use the Intro to Noteworthy Characteristics video + worksheet
- Career Advisors will review and provide feedback within ~3 weeks
- This is a **HARD DEADLINE**

Applying to Residency

Strategy and Scheduling for the Year Ahead

The Year Ahead



Career Selection Resources

- Career Advisors
- AAMC Careers in Medicine website
 - Medical Specialty Preference Inventory (150 questions, 30 minutes)
 - Physician Values in Practice Scale (60 questions, 10 minutes)
 - Specialty Pages
- FREIDA: AMA online database of residency programs
- Your MS4 peers! (ex. PMAP)

Career Selection Factors to Consider

- Is the specialty a good fit?
- Do your skills, interests, and values match the specialty?
- Long term career goals
- Long term personal goals
- Are you a good fit?
- Consider your entire record and review with your Career and Specialty Advisors

Be Realistic

- When considering a specialty, consider the competitiveness of the specialty and your competitiveness as an applicant.
- Look at your entire portfolio
 - Clerkship grades
 - MSPE designator
 - Awards
 - USMLE scores
 - Research & publications
 - Joint degree
 - Extracurricular activities
- Consider subjective personal wishes and specialty features

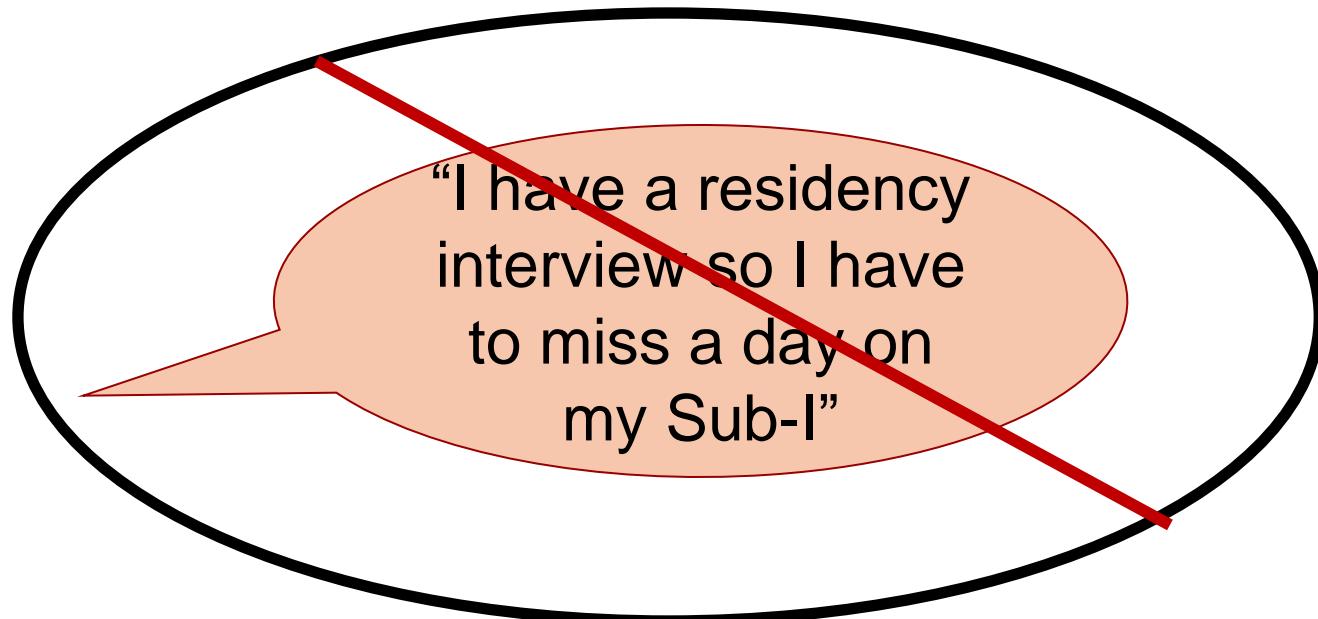
Fourth Year Schedule

- **Regular Match:**
October – January flexible for interviews
- **Early Match (Military, Ophthalmology, Urology):**
September – December flexible for interviews
- **Smaller Specialties / Surgical Subspecialties:**
November– February flexible for interviews
 - Dermatology
 - Neurosurgery
 - Orthopaedic Surgery
 - Otolaryngology
 - Plastic Surgery
 - Radiation-Oncology

See the Residency Process Book for sample schedules

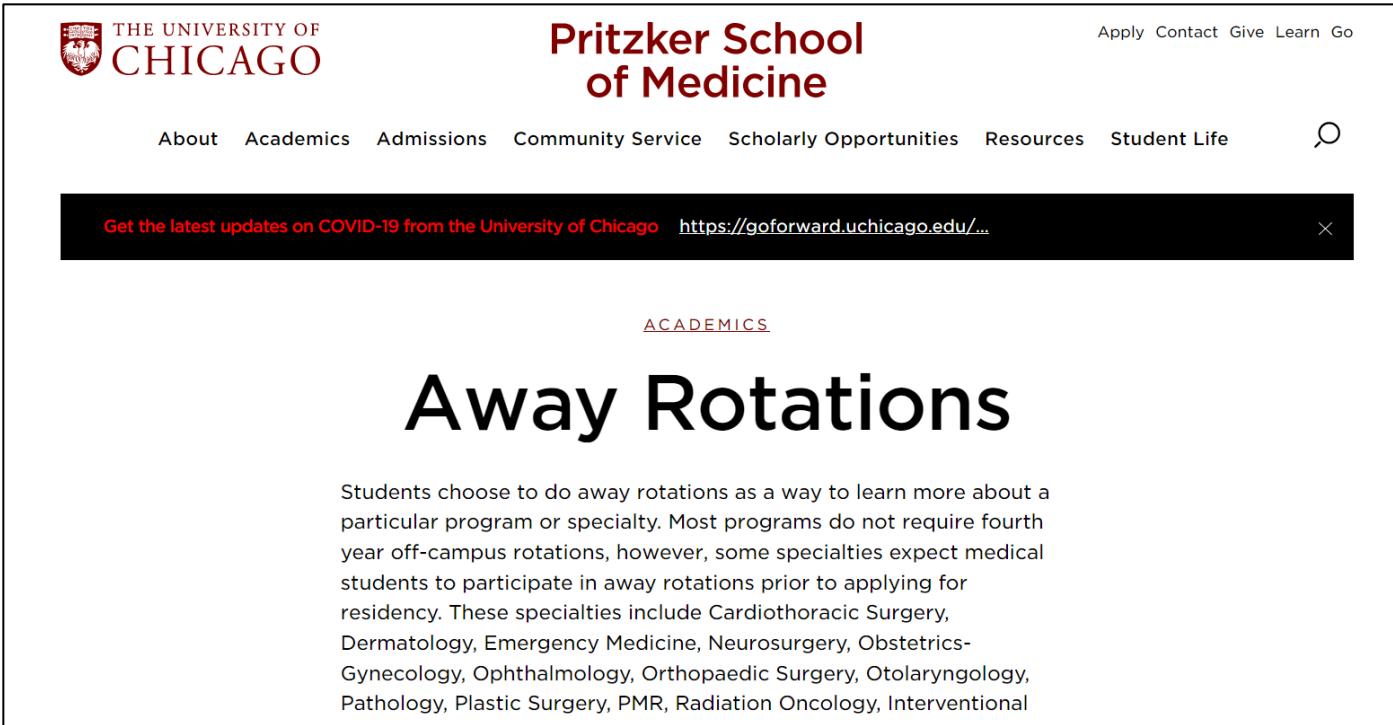
Fourth Year Schedule

- Build flexibility for residency interviews into your fourth year schedule
- Having an interview is not an excuse to miss days in a Sub-I or a fourth year rotation



Away Rotations

- Refer to the Residency Process Book for specialty-specific information
- The Away Rotation page on our website has a full list of resources



The screenshot shows the Pritzker School of Medicine website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for 'About', 'Academics', 'Admissions', 'Community Service', 'Scholarly Opportunities', 'Resources', 'Student Life', 'Apply', 'Contact', 'Give', 'Learn', and 'Go'. A search icon is also present. A red banner at the top of the page reads 'Get the latest updates on COVID-19 from the University of Chicago' with a link to [https://goforward.uchicago.edu/...](https://goforward.uchicago.edu/). Below the banner, the 'ACADEMICS' section is titled 'Away Rotations'. The text in this section explains that students choose to do away rotations to learn more about a particular program or specialty, mentioning specialties like Cardiothoracic Surgery, Dermatology, Emergency Medicine, Neurosurgery, Obstetrics-Gynecology, Ophthalmology, Orthopaedic Surgery, Otolaryngology, Pathology, Plastic Surgery, PMR, Radiation Oncology, and Interventional.

The Year Ahead



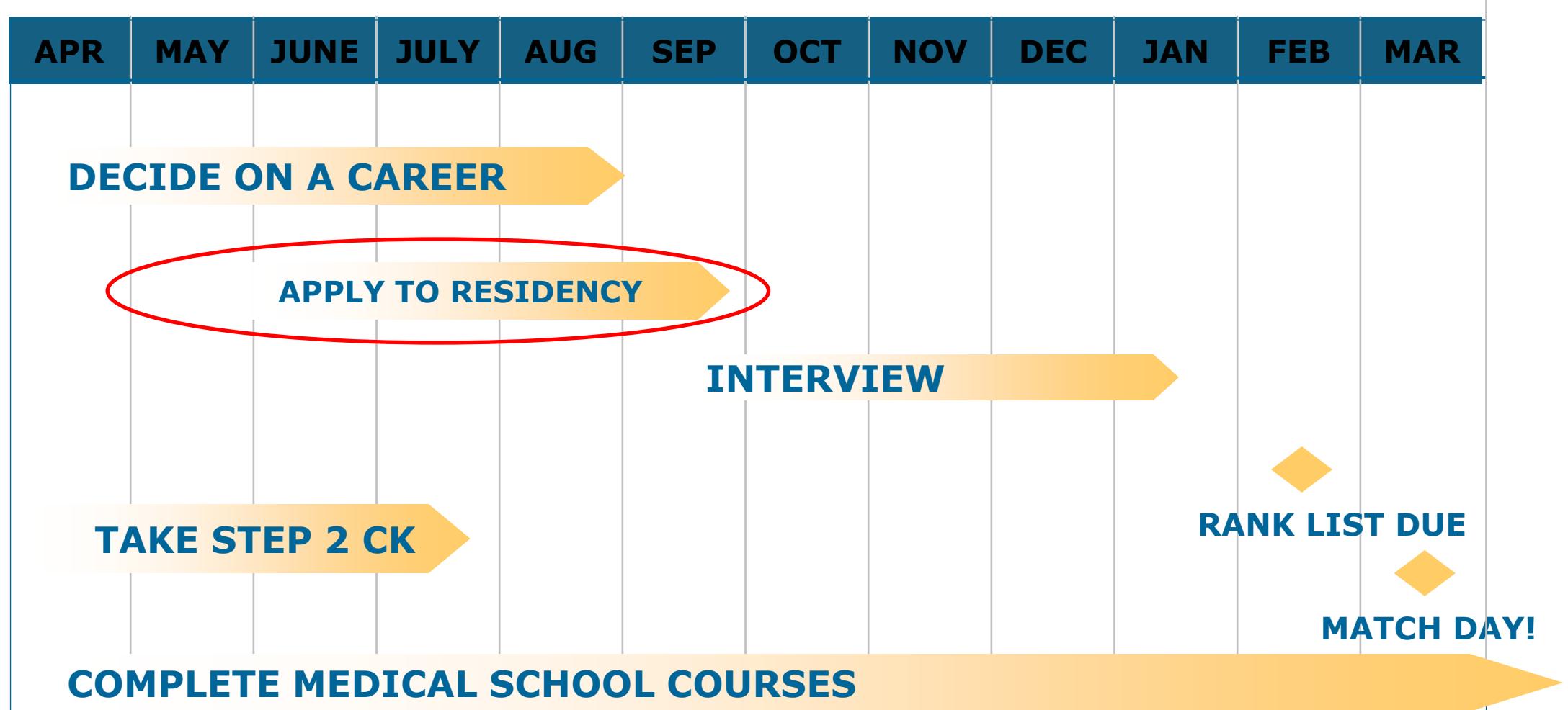
USMLE Step 2

- Must take Step 2 CK in order to graduate
- May register up to 6 months before the date of the exam
- Early sign-up is recommended to get the date/location you prefer
- For optimal use of Step 2 during the interview offer process, take it by July to ensure you have a Step 2 score when you apply to residency programs in September
 - Increase in PDs using Step 2 scores during interview offer process (Oct-Nov)
 - Increase in Step 2 failures across the country
- PSOM deadline: **July 1, 2026**

Why do I have to take Step 2 by July 1?

- Increasingly, residency programs will not rank applicants unless they can see evidence that you have passed Step 2 CK
- Increasing number of program directors in some specialties say they use Step 2 CK to select students for interview
- Students tend to do better on Step 2 when they complete the tests immediately following their clerkships
- Passing threshold expected to adjust each year on or around July 1

The Year Ahead



Applying to Residency: Key Vocabulary

- **Electronic Residency Application Service (ERAS)**
 - A service that transmits residency applications, letters of recommendation, MSPEs, transcripts, and other supporting credentials from medical schools to residency program directors via the internet.
 - <https://www.aamc.org/students/medstudents/eras/>

Applying to Residency: Key Vocabulary

- **National Resident Matching Program (NRMP)**
 - Matches applicants to programs according to the preferences expressed by both parties (applicants and programs)
 - The NRMP is an applicant-favoring process
 - <http://www.nrmp.org/>

Applying to Residency: Key Vocabulary

- **Main Match:** offers PGY-1 and PGY-2 level residency training positions in most specialties.
- **Early Match:** collection of specialties that operate outside the main match, earlier match process (ophthalmology, urology)
- **Couples' Match:** couples can link their program choices together so that they can be matched into a combination of programs suited to their needs.
- **Military Match:** match held by the US Armed Services.

Applying to Residency: Key Vocabulary

- **Military Match:** Varies by branch: some apply through ERAS & match through the Military Match; some apply outside of ERAS
- **ResidencyCAS:** Apply for OB-GYN and EM through ResidencyCAS and match through NRMP
- **SF Match:** Apply through SF Match and match through SF Match for Ophthalmology (<http://www.sfmatch.org/>)
- **Urology:** Apply through ERAS & match through the AUA (<http://www.auanet.org/education/residency.cfm>)

Applying to Residency: Key Vocabulary

- **Medical Student Performance Evaluation (MSPE)**
 - A letter of evaluation that describes a student's performance in medical school
 - Not a letter of recommendation
 - Released to programs on September 23, simultaneously with your ERAS (or other) application

Couples' Match

➤ Anyone interested in couples matching **must**:

- Notify your Career Advisor & Tyler Lockman
- Schedule a meeting with Dr. Woodruff no later than early Spring

Applying to Residency

Putting together your application...and the people who will help you do it

Steps in Applying to Residency

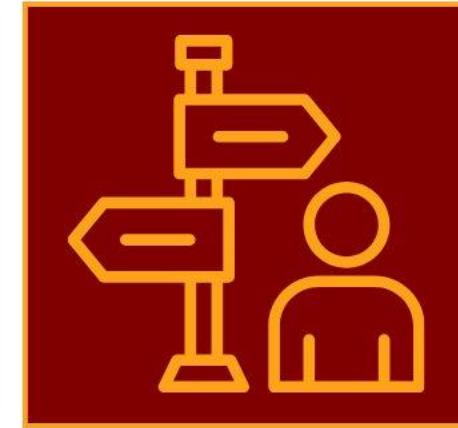
- Get to know the career advising team
- Select a Specialty Advisor
- Understand the components of an application

Career Advising Team

Dean of Students: Jim Woodruff, MD

MSPE Director: Barrett Fromme, MD, MHPE

Support Staff: Kate Blythe & Tyler Lockman



COGGESHALL

- Brian Callender, MD'04
- Ashley Williamson, MD

LEWIS

- Victoria Barbosa, MD, MPH
- Tipu Puri, MD, PhD

HUGGINS

- Brandon Baird, MD
- Arlene Roman, MD

ROWLEY

- Wei Wei Lee, MD, MPH
- Brady Still, MD'17

Career and Specialty Advisors

A Career Advisor provides **primary** care:

- Counseling & navigation of the entire match process
- Honest assessment of your overall competitiveness, strengths and weakness
- **Assigned** to you

A Specialty Advisor provides **specialty** care:

- Advice on individual programs & potential letter writers
- Understands nuances of specialty application process
- **Chosen** by you

Career Advisor Limitations

- Possibly ever worked in your specialty of choice
 - May have excellent observations about specialty, but no direct experience
- May miss application nuances
 - Each specialty has their own style

Specialty Advisor Limitations

- Specialty Loyalty
 - May not be able to assess your relative competitiveness
 - May not understand nuances of today's application requirements
- Recruiter Mentality
 - Promote their favorite programs

Assembling your Team

Feb. – March

1 Career Advisor Check-in: Career Selection

March – June

Complete Online Residency Application (MSPE) Survey

May – June

Specialty Advisor Appt.

Bring to the meeting:

- A draft of your personal statement
- A draft of your CV

March – July

MSPE Appt.

Prior to the meeting:

- Send CV draft to Tyler for review/revision
- Noteworthy Characteristics finalized (by April 1)
- MSPE Survey **MUST** be completed

June – Aug.

2 Career Advisor Check-in: Application

July – Aug.

MSPE Review

Aug. – Sept.

3 Career Advisor Check-in: Interview + Mock Interview

Jan. – Early Feb. 2026

4 Career Advisor Check-in: Rank list

Components of an Application

- Application (ERAS, SF Match, etc.)
- USMLE Scores
- Letters of Recommendation
- Personal Statement
- Medical Student Performance Evaluation (MSPE)
- Pritzker Transcript
- ERAS Photo
- Program Signals

Letters of Recommendation

- 4 letters allowed per program
 - 3 clinical letters (1 may need to be a Chair's letter)
 - 1 research letter (only if appropriate)
- Provide letter writers with the following:
 - ERAS Letter Request Form
 - Draft of CV and personal statement
- Give faculty **at least 6 weeks** notice
 - September 11 deadline (ask by **end of July!**)

See The Residency Process Book for specialty-specific information

Personal Statement

Thinking about and drafting your Personal Statement early in the process...

- Helps you:
 - Figure out your career/specialty choice
 - Articulate what you like about the specialty, which will be beneficial during interviews!
- Helps your letter writers:
 - Have a more meaningful conversation with you when you ask for a LOR
 - Understand what points about you to highlight in the LOR
- The personal statement is probably the hardest piece of your application – start early for the best results!

See The Residency Process book for strong (and NEW!) examples

Personal Statement Workshop

May 18, 2026

&

June 9, 2026

Program Signals

- Now used by more than 20 specialties to help determine interview offers; integrated in the applications (ERAS, SF Match, etc)
- Number of signals varies by specialty
- Some specialties and programs advise to signal home program + away rotation site; others advise *not* to. Be sure you know what to do!
- Be honest and diversify your signal distribution; this is **critically** important

More information and advice to come on this in the spring/summer!

Steps in Applying to Residency

- Get to know the career advising team
- Select a specialty advisor
- Understand the components of an application
- Begin MSPE process

What is the MSPE?

Medical Student Performance Evaluation

- Review of student's medical school experiences and noteworthy characteristics
- Academic history
 - Pritzker Honors and Awards
 - Summary evaluation from Clinical Skills
 - Summary evaluations from all required clerkships
- Overall summary
- Appendices

What is the role of the MSPE director?

- Meets with each student to discuss the residency application process and gather information for the Medical Student Performance Evaluation (MSPE)
- Works with staff on MSPE construction
- Reviews MSPE with student

Sign up instructions to come in early March

What is in the MSPE?

- Clerkship summaries are the bulk of the MSPE
- Professionalism comments are highlighted
- Summary statement based on holistic evaluation of performance in curriculum, scholarship, and service

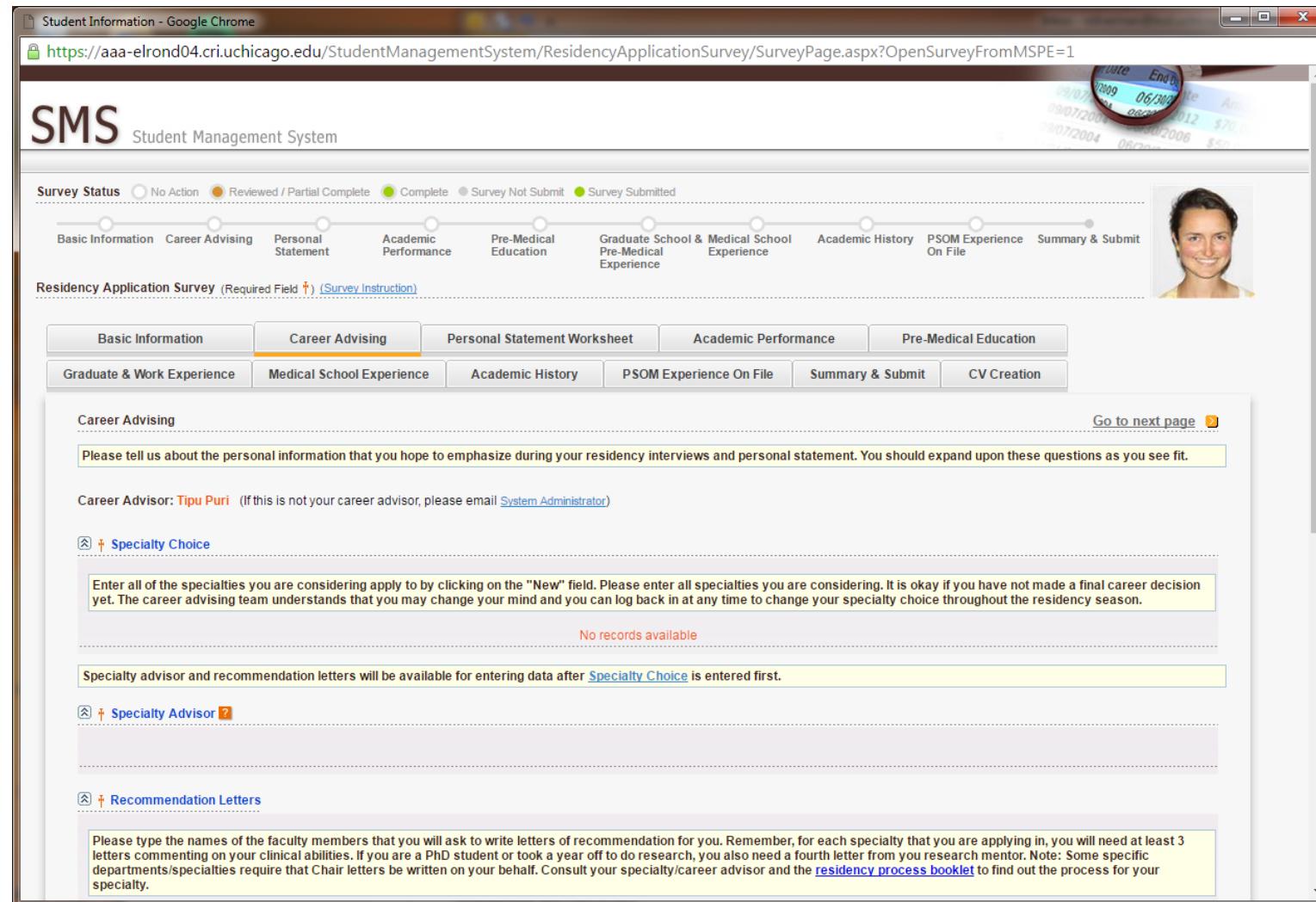
See The Residency Process book for an example of an MSPE

What we need to complete your MSPE

- Complete biographical data on **MSPE Survey** (link on website)
- A scheduled MSPE meeting with Dr. Fromme in spring/summer
A draft CV (template online + in follow up email)
- Your Noteworthy Characteristics (submitted in MSPE survey)
- Clinical Clerkship Grades
- A second MSPE review with Dr. Fromme in late summer

**Let us know immediately if you are doing an away rotation;
second meetings MUST be conducted in person.**

Residency Application Survey—Used to Construct MSPE



Student Information - Google Chrome
<https://aaa-elrond04.cri.uchicago.edu/StudentManagementSystem/ResidencyApplicationSurvey/SurveyPage.aspx?OpenSurveyFromMSPE=1>

SMS Student Management System

Survey Status: No Action Reviewed / Partial Complete Complete Survey Not Submit Survey Submitted

Basic Information Career Advising Personal Statement Academic Performance Pre-Medical Education Graduate School & Medical School Experience Academic History PSOM Experience On File Summary & Submit

Residency Application Survey (Required Field) [Survey Instruction](#)

Basic Information Career Advising Personal Statement Worksheet Academic Performance Pre-Medical Education

Graduate & Work Experience Medical School Experience Academic History PSOM Experience On File Summary & Submit CV Creation

Career Advising

Please tell us about the personal information that you hope to emphasize during your residency interviews and personal statement. You should expand upon these questions as you see fit. [Go to next page](#)

Career Advisor: [Tipu Puri](#) (If this is not your career advisor, please email [System Administrator](#))

[Specialty Choice](#)

Enter all of the specialties you are considering apply to by clicking on the "New" field. Please enter all specialties you are considering. It is okay if you have not made a final career decision yet. The career advising team understands that you may change your mind and you can log back in at any time to change your specialty choice throughout the residency season.

No records available

Specialty advisor and recommendation letters will be available for entering data after [Specialty Choice](#) is entered first.

[Specialty Advisor](#)

[Recommendation Letters](#)

Please type the names of the faculty members that you will ask to write letters of recommendation for you. Remember, for each specialty that you are applying in, you will need at least 3 letters commenting on your clinical abilities. If you are a PhD student or took a year off to do research, you also need a fourth letter from your research mentor. Note: Some specific departments/specialties require that Chair letters be written on your behalf. Consult your specialty/career advisor and the [residency process booklet](#) to find out the process for your specialty.

Residency App/Graduation Photos

- You **must** submit a photo with your Residency application
- 4-5 dates will be available in April-June when you can get your photo taken on campus **for free**
 - If you **fail to sign up** for a slot or **miss your scheduled time**, it is unlikely we will be able to provide a make up slot; you will be responsible for getting your own professional photo taken.
- Even if you already have a professional photo, you still **need** to get one taken because we use them for the graduation composite
- Students taking a year off should **NOT** sign up for a photo unless there are extra slots remaining (Tyler will communicate)

Residency Resources Webpage



Pritzker School of Medicine

Apply Contact Give Learn Go

About Academics Admissions Community Service Scholarly Opportunities Resources Student Life



The Road to Residency

Everything you need to make your Match



RESOURCES

The Road to Residency

Everything you need to make your Match



RESOURCES

Residency Resources

- Class of 2026 Calendar
- Process and Data
- Match Websites
- Sample CV, MSPE, and LoR Request Information
- Personal Statement Guidelines
- Program Signaling
- Class of 2026 Meeting Materials (Updated after each meeting)
- Residency Virtual Open Houses
- The 2025-2026 Residency Process Book

Timeline for Regular Match

- April-June 2025
- April-July 2025
- April-August 2025

- Digital copy of Residency Process Book
- CV Template
- MSPE Survey link
- ERAS Photo link
- Class Meeting Materials

Complete your Application

May-July

Ask for letters of recommendation

Organize your CV (use the template)

Complete your personal statement

June

Receive your token & register for ERAS or other application

June-September

Complete the MyERAS or other residency application

September 2-23

Review MyERAS application carefully and submit

Mid September

Register with the NRMP

Steps in Applying to Residency

- Get to know the career advising team
- Select a specialty advisor
- Understand the components of an application
- Begin MSPE process
- Select programs for application

Choosing Programs to Send Applications

Considerations:

- Your list should have breadth and depth – give yourself plenty of options from the start!
- Is there a preliminary program requirement?
 - Anesthesiology, Dermatology, Neurology, Ophthalmology, PMR, Rad-Onc, Radiology
- Competitiveness
- Quality of the program
- Your own qualifications
- Geography
- Family

Your specialty advisor is instrumental in creating this list

Uncertainty and the Match

- Working with Uncertainty:
 - Do your homework (minimize uncertainty)
 - Account for less than total control (manage uncertainty)

RISK: Disorganization

- There are MANY components to a successful application, and it is critical to stay organized and pay close attention to details.
- This is NOT the time to disengage, procrastinate, or be uncommunicative

EXAMPLES

- Not registering for the NRMP Match on time
- Not assigning all the appropriate documents to programs in application
- Not applying for the appropriate preliminary programs
- Overlooking a program-specific application requirement
- Not taking care of/planning for a required Chair letter in a timely manner
- **RESPOND TO YOUR CAREER ADVISORS' COMMUNICATIONS**

Doing your Homework (Minimizing Uncertainty)

- Timely completion of application
- Careful attention to your personal statement
- Careful selection and management of your letters of recommendation
- Research target programs
- Access advice from advisors to refine all documents and the program list

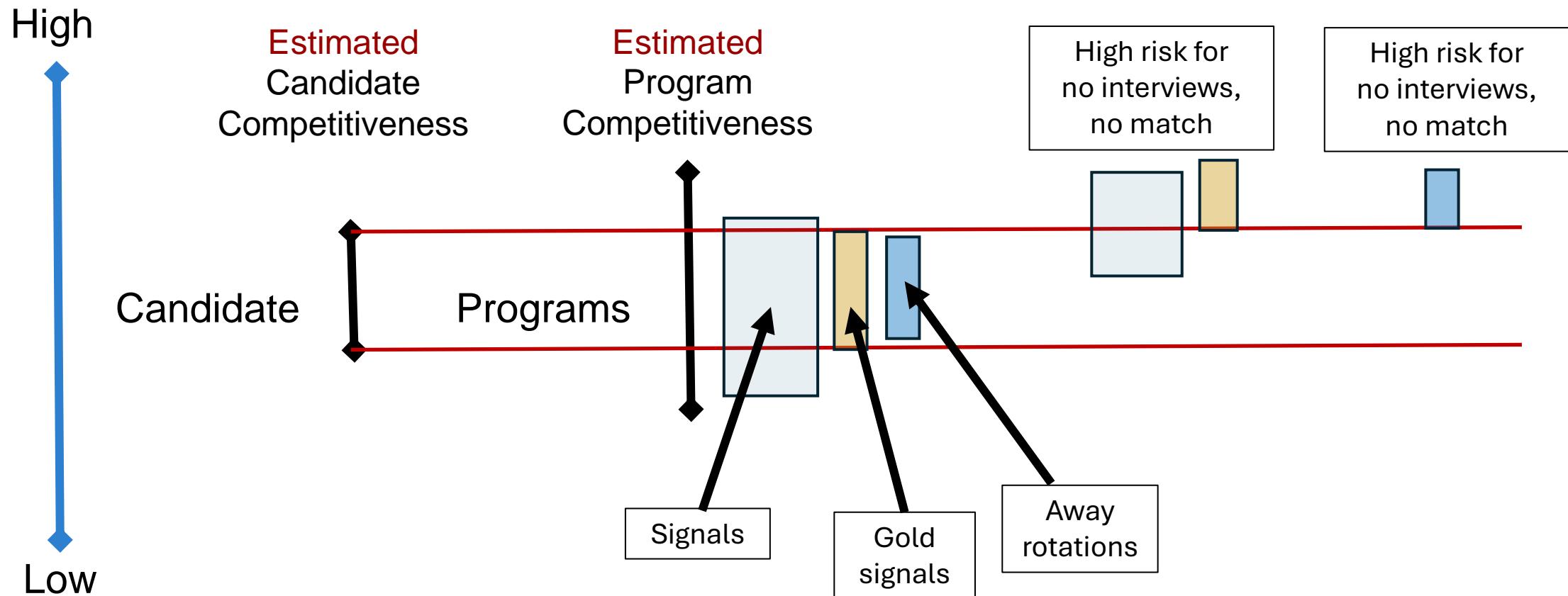
RISK: Lack of diversification

- We know the stakes are high in this process and you may have invested a lot in your plans, but ignoring the advice of advisors can prove costly.
- It's also important to know that the landscape of residency advising has changed significantly in the last few years. Do not rely on the attitudes or conventions of prior years.

EXAMPLES

- **“Dream” only Away Rotations**
- **Not properly diversifying program list**
- **Not properly diversifying program signals**
 - Example: An IM applicant with 15 signals (3 gold, 12 silver) receiving only 4 interviews
- **Applying to too few programs**

Account for Uncertainty



Steps in Applying to Residency

- Get to know the career advising team
- Select a specialty advisor
- Understand the components of an application
- Begin MSPE process
- Select programs for application
- Apply!

Steps in Applying to Residency

- Get to know the career advising team
- Select a specialty advisor
- Understand the components of an application
- Begin MSPE process
- Select programs for application
- Apply!
- Interview
- Rank your programs
- Graduate

The Career Advising Team...



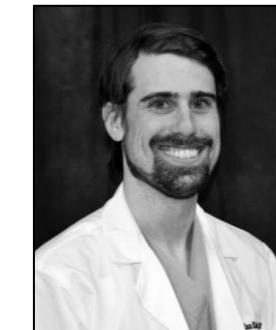
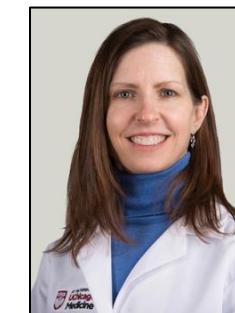
Is available to help at any point in the process



Has your best interest at heart



Believes in you and will be your advocate



Spring Quarter To-Do List

- Participate in the Lottery
- Complete annual OSHA requirements
- Fill out Careers in Medicine Medical Specialty Preference Inventory (MSPI) and Personal Values in Practice (PVIPS) scales
- Schedule meeting with your career advisor sometime this quarter (Feb. - March)
- Review the Residency Process Book (updated and out now!)
- Fill out the MSPE survey (March-June)
- Sign up for Residency App/Graduation photo
- Start putting together your CV
- Start drafting your personal statement
- Meet with Dr. Fromme for MSPE Meeting (March-July)
- Mark your calendar: May 11, MS4 Class Meeting #1!

MS4 Class Meetings

Monday, May 11 @ 5:00pm (*In Person!*)

MS4 Class Meeting #1: Residency Application Overview

Thursday, June 11 @ 5:00pm (*In Person!*)

MS4 Class Meeting #2: ERAS & Residency Applications in Focus

Monday, September 14th @ 5:00pm

MS4 Class Meeting #3: Interviewing for Residency

Tuesday, January 19th @ 5:00pm

MS4 Class Meeting #4: Preparing Your Rank List

Match Day

March 19, 2027!

