

Pre-application checklist - edited 2008

THINGS TO DO BEFORE APPLYING TO AN EMERGENCY MEDICINE RESIDENCY (Felix Ankel, MD)

Read the Macy report on Emergency Medicine

The Macy report: "The Role of Emergency Medicine in the Future of American Medical Care" was published in 1995. It gives good insight on emergency medicine as a specialty.

Know the major issues in Emergency Medicine

Look at the major emergency medicine journals: Academic Emergency Medicine, Annals of Emergency Medicine, the American Journal of Emergency Medicine, and the Journal of Emergency Medicine. Take an afternoon in the library and look at the editorials in these journals in the last 12 months. You will get a sense of issues important to emergency physicians. See who is on the editorial boards of these journals and who is writing chapters in the major emergency medicine textbooks. You'll find that it is still a relatively small world when it comes to academic emergency medicine.

Choose your mentor well

If you have been "assigned" one that is not an emergency physician, ask to set up an appointment with an emergency physician that has gone through or is a part of an emergency medicine residency program. Emergency medicine is such a rapidly changing field that advice is best gotten from people intimately involved in emergency medicine. Try the SAEM Virtual Advisor Program (editors note: SAEM VAP is out of service as of 2008 but plans are in motion to bring this program back).

Become a student member of the Society for Academic Emergency Medicine (SAEM)

Services offered include a subscription to the monthly journal Academic Emergency Medicine, a catalog of many emergency medicine residencies, a medical student rotation list useful for contemplating outside electives (also on the home page), the Newsletter which is published bi-monthly and a greatly reduced registration fee to attend the SAEM Annual Meeting, including a medical student forum. A one-day medical student session is offered at the Annual Meeting. Medical Student dues are reasonable and includes the monthly journal, Academic Emergency Medicine. Check out the Medical Student Section of the SAEM web site at www.saem.org for detailed information on all SAEM services and activities for medical students. (Dues info is currently available from the following web page:
<http://www.saem.org/saemdnn/AboutSAEM/Membership/JoinSAEM/tabid/82/Default.aspx>)

Become a student member of the American College of Emergency Physicians /Emergency Medicine Residents' Association (ACEP/EMRA)

Services offered include a subscription to Annals of Emergency Medicine, and Top 30 Problems in Emergency Medicine, newsletters and other material. Medical Student members of EMRA will receive "Emergency Medicine: The Medical Student Survival Guide" a handbook to use when applying to an emergency medicine residency. Call 800-798-1822, touch 5, to receive an application. Medical Student dues for ACEP and EMRA are reasonable, plus applicable chapter dues. If you join ACEP only, the dues are also reasonable. (editor's note: Telephone number may have changed as well as availability of this handbook - see web sites for dues and more at www.emra.org and www.acep.org)

Join the emergency medicine interest group (EMIG) at your medical school

If you don't have one, start one. SAEM and ACEP/EMRA/MSA can be a resource on how to start one.

Plan your fourth year well

This should include working at a place where you will get sufficient direct contact with EM leaders that can write you good letters. Although good letters from outside EM may be helpful, you should have at least one letter from an emergency physician. Plan on doing a fourth year elective at a place that has an emergency medicine residency program. SAEM has a list of elective away fourth year emergency medicine rotations. (Link to Medical Rotations is available from the home page at www.saem.org - as of 2008.)

Buy Ken Iserson's book: Getting into a Residency: A Guide for Medical Students

From Galen Press 800-442-5369. This has all the basics about applications, curriculum vitae, and personal statements. ACEP/EMRA also sells Emergency Medicine Focus: A Handbook for Medical Students and Prospective Residents edited by Theodore Delbridge, MD, that is helpful for students specifically interested in emergency medicine.

Read: Koscove EM. An applicant's evaluation of an emergency medicine internship and residency. Ann Emerg Med 19:774,1990

Although this is a few years old, a lot of the issues mentioned in this article are still pertinent when interviewing at emergency medicine residencies today.