

General Advice to EM Applicants

How can I learn more about the specialty of Emergency Medicine? (Gus M Garmel, MD)

Journals

- Academic Emergency Medicine
- American Journal of Emergency Medicine
- Annals of Emergency Medicine
- Emergency Medicine Clinics of North America
- Journal of Emergency Medicine

Textbooks

- Hamilton GC, et al. Emergency Medicine: Approach to Clinical Problem-Solving. 1991.
- Harwood-Nuss AL, et al. Clinical Practice of Emergency Medicine. 3rd ed. 2000.
- Roberts JR, Hedges JR. Clinical Procedures in Emergency Medicine. 3rd ed. 1998.
- Rosen P, et al. Emergency Medicine: Concepts and Clinical Practice. 4th ed. 1998.
- Tintinalli JE, et al. Emergency Medicine: A Comprehensive Study Guide. 5th ed. 2000.

Web sites

- www.embbs.com (The Emergency Medicine and Primary Care Home Page)
- www.emed.org (Emergency Medicine online)
- www.eMedHome.com (different types of emergency medicine information)
- www.emedicine.com (free on-line EM textbook)
- www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/PubMed (PubMed for journal article searches)
- www.ncemi.org (National Center for EM Informatics)
- www.mdconsult.com (free 10-day trial for physicians includes clinical information)

Residency program web sites

The most convenient resource may be the SAEM Residency Catalog that includes all approved EM residency programs, and direct links to almost all individual residency program web sites.

Professional organizations

- AAEM (American Academy of Emergency Medicine): www.aaem.org
- ABEM (American Board of Emergency Medicine): www.abem.org
- ACEP (American College of Emergency Medicine): www.acep.org (Many state chapters of ACEP also have their own web sites with varying amounts of information about the specialty).
- CAL-ACEP (California Chapter – ACEP): www.calacep.org

- CORD (Council of Residency Directors): www.cordem.org
- EMRA (Emergency Medicine Residents' Association): www.emra.org
- SAEM (Society for Academic Emergency Medicine): www.saem.org

How do I apply to emergency medicine residencies? (Wendy Coates, MD)

Set up a meeting with an EM Faculty Advisor. If you have no access to an EM Advisor, visit the SAEM Virtual Advisor Program. At the beginning of your fourth year, you and your advisor should: Select a number of programs and visit their websites. Prepare a personal statement reflecting your interest in emergency medicine. Obtain 3-4 letters of recommendation. (At least one should be from an emergency physician who has worked with you.) Letters by EM Faculty should use the standardized letter of recommendation (SLOR). Submit your application using the ERAS system. Information on how this works is available through the student affairs office at your medical school. Schedule interviews during the months of November through early February.

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.

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 all emergency medicine residencies, a medical student rotation list useful for contemplating outside electives (also on the home page), the Newsletter which is published

monthly (except May) 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 \$75 (includes monthly journal, Academic Emergency Medicine and \$50 for membership without the journal subscription). 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.

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 \$55, plus applicable chapter dues. If you join ACEP only the dues are \$30.

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.

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.

Become computer literate Lots of information is available at your fingertips. All emergency medicine residency programs are listed on the SAEM Residency Catalog, which has links to all residency program home pages and e-mail links to the residency directors. Major emergency medicine organizations such as SAEM, ACEP, AAEM, and AEP all have web sites. Joining the emed-I list will give you an idea of issues of interest to emergency physicians. Run from UCSF,

this is a forum where many emergency physicians air their views. To subscribe, send e-mail to: listserv@itsrv1.ucsf.edu , skip subject and then in body write: Subscribe Emed-I . You will get approximately 5-10 e-mails/day.

Putting Your Best Foot Forward: Preparing Your Residency Application (Gus M Garmel, MD) A well-balanced application is essential for individuals interested in the specialty of emergency medicine, as the field is extremely competitive. Your application must address:

Scholarship: Academic achievement is key. The ability to master pre-clinical material and excel in multiple clinical clerkships suggests that intellectual success is likely at several levels. This is of particular importance given the variety of challenges that emergency medicine residents and physicians face in their practice.

Research: Whether in emergency medicine or other fields, clinical- or lab-based, even the "simplest" form of research (including manuscript preparation) demonstrates an understanding of academics, the ability to follow-through, and a sense of direction. Research and writing are also examples of creativity. Resourcefulness, the ability to get along with others, commitment, and work ethic are crucial for successful research.

Leadership: Leadership roles provide insight into character. Positions with medical school admissions, ethics, or curriculum committees, EM interest groups, or elected positions such as class officer suggest responsibility, dedication, and the respect of peers.

Volunteerism: Community activism, school-related activities (medical and non-medical), or responsibilities with religious organizations balance academics. Volunteering at student-organized clinics not only helps the community, but also provides additional patient care experiences and, in some instances, the opportunity to teach and supervise other students.

Interests: A wide variety of interests contribute to personal wellness. In addition, an application reviewer or applicant interviewer might share one of these interests. Your listed interests should be kept reasonable in number and scope.

Commitment: Candidates must demonstrate commitment to excellence, personal growth, and the specialty of emergency medicine.

6 P's of successful applicants

Personality
Performance
Productivity
Projects
Professionalism
Preparation

Hot topics in EM

HCFA E/M documentation guidelines ABEM continuous certification Ambulance diversions
EMTALA / COBRA Patient satisfaction Physician wellness Physician productivity and ED
efficiency Outcomes research and Evidence-Based Medicine Ultrasound

What you can do now to become a stronger applicant in Emergency Medicine

Learn about the specialty Discuss career objectives Find a good mentor(s) Start and/or finish
projects Design your 4th-year curriculum carefully (consider Anesthesiology, Cardiology,
Orthopedics, ICU/CCU, Pediatric EM, Ophthalmology, Otolaryngology, Radiology, Dermatology,
Research) Plan your 4th-year rotations early (elective rotations at many hospitals fill, especially
EM)

Pearls

- Learn about careers in EM in addition to the specialty itself
- Your application is only as good as its contents, and only part of the application process
- Be prepared for your interview
- Demonstrate enthusiasm, interest, and confidence at all times
- Have a question ready for each person who might ask if you have one

... in the long run, in the great battle of life, no brilliancy of intellect, no perfection of bodily
development, will count when weighed in the balance against that assemblage of ... moral
qualities, which we group together under the name of character.... - T. Roosevelt, The
Strenuous Life, 1900

Reference List for Medical Students Interested in Emergency Medicine Textbooks:

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Iserson KV. Iserson's Getting Into a Residency: A Guide for Medical Students. 5th ed. Tucson,
AZ: Galen Press, Ltd.;2000.

Keaney JK. The Rape of Emergency Medicine. 2nd ed. Santa Fe, NM: AAEM; 1992

Platt FW. Conversation Repair: Case Studies in Doctor-Patient Communication. Boston, MA:
Little Brown and Company; 1995.

Salluzzo RF, Mayer TA, Strauss RW et al, eds . Emergency Department Management:
Principles and Applications. St. Louis, MO: Mosby; 1997.

Schwenk TL, Whitman N. The Physician as Teacher. Baltimore, MD: Williams & Wilkins; 1987.

Zaslove MO. The Successful Physician: A Productivity Handbook for Practitioners.
Gaithersburg, MD:Aspen Publication;1998.

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Role of Emergency Medicine in the Future of American Medical Care. Conference Sponsored by the Josiah Macy, Jr. Foundation (April 17-20, 1994, Williamsburg, VA). New York, NY;1995.

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Crane JT, Ferraro CM. Selection Criteria for Emergency Medicine Residency Applicants. Acad Emerg Med. 2000;7:54-60.

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Finkel MA, Adams JG. Professionalism in Emergency Medicine. Emerg Med Clinics NA, 1999;17:443-450. Garmel GM. Letters of Recommendation: What Does 'Good' Really Mean? Acad Emerg Med. 1997;4:833-834.

Keim SM, Rein JA, Chisholm C, et al. A Standardized Letter of Recommendation for Residency Application. *Acad Emerg Med.* 1999;6:1141-1146.

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