BRIDGES TO RESIDENCY
CAREER ADVISING PROGRAM
UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

The Residency Counseling Checklist (RCC) Process

The Residency Counseling Checklist will be a blueprint for your residency application process. Please take the advice given based on years of experience assisting students succeed in the Match process. If you receive different advice from another faculty member or from reading things online, please discuss with your Advisory Dean or Dr. Gonzaga before changing your plans. The majority of students who do not Match or end up having to SOAP have not heeded the advice given.

1) Complete all sections **I, II, III, and IV** on the attached form before your meeting with your AD in May.

✓ It's okay if you don't have everything figured out: use it as a brainstorming document and put down your preliminary thoughts and ideas. It is also okay to not yet have a CV or personal statement completed prior to your initial meetings with your Advisory Dean and departmental advisors.

2) See the checklist of things to review (Part II). Spend time reviewing your prior Careers in Medicine work, the Interactive Charting Outcomes website, and the Residency Explorer tool.

3) Between now and the end of May schedule a meeting with your departmental advisor to discuss the following:

✓ What is/are your final choice(s) of specialty. If unsure, add a rough "percentage" (e.g., 50% IM, 50% Psychiatry)
✓ How competitive are you as an applicant for your first-choice specialty? (Step score, clerkship grades, research, activities)
✓ How many programs does your advisor suggest you apply to?
✓ Should you consider applying for a parallel plan (additional or backup specialty?)
✓ What can you do over the coming months prior to submission to strengthen your application?
✓ Who should you request Letters of Recommendation from?
✓ Do you need standardized letters? Do you need departmental/ "chair" letters for this specialty?
✓ What are good resources/websites they recommend for residency application in the specialty?

4) Update your Residency Counseling Checklist (RCC) after discussion with your departmental advisor

5) Your MS4 ERAS **meeting with your advisory dean will not be scheduled until you have completed this document.**

6) While meeting with your Advisory Dean, and later with departmental advisor, you will review all checklist sections and receive advising for each area and next steps. To get the most out of the ERAS meeting, please review the resources on the checklist (Part II) and come prepared with your questions and what you need the most advisement about.

7) Often one meeting is not enough with your departmental advisor and/or Advisory dean, especially if you are uncertain or in between a few specialty choices. We will discuss if additional meetings need to be scheduled. It is important to keep your Advisory Dean informed if there are any changes so we can help advise you, including assisting in identifying another departmental advisor in the event you change specialties.

This RCC has been adapted from the original RCC created by the Mayo Clinic Alix School of Medicine.

RESIDENCY COUNSELING CHECKLIST

- Students must complete Part I, II, III, and IV of the checklist prior to their Residency Counseling meeting with your advisory dean. Upon completion of these steps, students will be scheduled to meet with their advisory dean.
- Feel free to indicate "?" if uncertain of any answers as this will be a working document
- Reminder: students must complete this checklist and review with their Departmental Advisor **prior** to meeting with the Student Affairs Dean.
- Highlighted sections to be completed by your advisory dean.

Part I: (before May 2027)

Student name:	**Name of Departmental Advisor:**
Date of MS4 Scheduling and Residency Counseling Meeting(s) with Advisory Dean:	**Did you review the checklist with your Depart. Advisor?** YES ☐ NO ☐ **Date of Meeting you review with your Depart. Advisor:**

Part II: Background Research (before May 2027)

Please review the following websites to gather detailed information regarding your specialty choice prior to your Residency Counseling meetings. Check the boxes to show you have reviewed each website.

☐ **Careers in Medicine Residency Preference Exercise: https://careersinmedicine.aamc.org/prepare-residency/residency-preference-exercise**
What factors are most important to you?

☐ **NRMP Residency Match Data**: https://www.nrmp.org/main-residency-match-data/

☐ Results of **NRMP Program Director Survey**
- Learn what Program Directors deem important when making interview and rank list determinations nationally
- https://www.nrmp.org/match-data/2024/08/charting-outcomes-program-director-survey-results-main-residency-match/

☐ Results of the **NRMP Applicant Survey**
- Learn what factors applicants weigh in selecting programs to interview and rank
- https://www.nrmp.org/match-data/2024/09/charting-outcomes-applicant-survey-results-2024-main-residency-match/

☐ Results of the **NRMP Charting Outcomes in the Match**
- Learn characteristics of students who matched to their preferred specialty
- https://www.nrmp.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Charting_Outcomes_MD_Seniors_2024-2.pdf

☐ **Interactive Charting Outcomes in the Match**
https://www.nrmp.org/match-data/2024/08/charting-outcomes-usmle-step-2-ck-exam-baseline/
Input your specialty, your step scores, and CV components and play around to see impacts of each

☐ **Residency Explorer Tool**: https://www.residencyexplorer.org/Account/Login (use your AAMC login)
- Put in your data (e.g., Step Scores, research experiences, etc.) and use the tool to explore programs

☐ **ERAS for Application Information**: https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-residency/applying-residencies-eras/
- Review and bookmark this site for information about the application process

☐ **Prior UPSOM MATCH lists**:
- See what programs students have chosen in prior years. Consider noting which graduates you might like to contact for additional information.

Specialty:

First choice specialty or First choice specialty at this time:
National Match Rate:
Factors deemed important by program directors:

Second choice specialty (if you have one at this time):
National Match Rate:
Factors deemed important by program directors:

Part III: Education and Documentation. (before May 2027)

Other Degree during Med School? YES ☐ NO ☐ Type of Degree:	**Clinical reintegration plan needed?** (e.g. for students who have been away from rotations obtaining other degrees) YES ☐ NO ☐ Date and Location:
Any Leave of absence (LOA)? YES ☐ NO ☐ Date: Type:	**List any mentors you have in addition to your Departmental Advisor:**
Specialty Choice: At matriculation/early in medical school my choice was:	**Scores:** Step 1: Step 2 date: *If not registered, register by:* **Need score prior to getting interview invites?** YES ☐ NO ☐
First choice specialty at this time: *Explain why this specialty:*	

Applying for a Parallel ("back-up") plan: YES ☐ NO ☐ *Explain why this specialty:*	
Need Prelim / Transitional Year (TY): YES ☐ NO ☐ What mix of programs (TY or Prelim Surgery, IM, FM, Pediatrics?)	

Letters of Recommendation (LOR): *See document for general guidance information by specialty* *List potential LOR writers and their specialty below:*		**CV Draft**: List publications, presentations, leadership, and community service on your CV. Please complete no later than May. Finalize CV by the time you ask for letters.	**Personal Statement Draft**: ***Finish a rough draft by June 1st.** Early completion to allow time to gather feedback.
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			

Ongoing Research:
(list research mentors, projects, brief description of each)

Clerkships and Sub-I's Grades: (indicate pending if not completed)	
Medicine:	OB/Gyn:
Surgery:	Pediatrics:
Psychiatry:	Neurology:
Family Medicine:	Sub-I(s):

Does the student need additional research mentoring?
☐ Yes ☐ No
Research Mentor Recommendation:

Part IV: Thematic Strengths and Weak Points (before May 2027)

Please list the thematic strengths in your application (e.g., the road you traveled to get to Pitt Med, strengths in research in XX, service of XX type, challenges you've overcome while in medical school, etc.):

1.

2.

3.

Please list the weak spots in your application (e.g., Step failure, LP on clerkships, etc.):

Part V: Wellness (Summer 2027)

Please share any concerns you have about your wellness, rising stress and/or anxiety levels. Do you have strategies in place to mitigate? (Please note that we can discuss during the meeting if you prefer to not indicate here.)

Part VI: Summary Plan. (May-June 2027)

Departmental Advisor + Advisory Dean Meeting Summary Plan: Discuss with Departmental Advisor, final plan to be completed during your meeting with the Student Affairs Dean

Specialty:

First choice specialty or First choice specialty at this time:

# of Programs to apply:

 # Interviews needed:

Type of Program: _____

# of signals (if application):

Parallel plan:

YES ☐ NO ☐

If yes, Type of Program/Specialty:

 # Interviews needed:

# of programs to apply:

Were you told you need to dual apply? **YES ☐ NO ☐**

Prelim / TY:

YES ☐ NO ☐

If yes, Type of Program: Prelim IM/Peds/FM/SX or TY

# of programs to apply:

Additional advisors needed in specialty?

YES ☐ NO ☐

Fourth Year Schedule (as it related to residency applications):

June:	**Oct:**
July:	**Nov:**
Aug:	**Dec:**
Sept:	**Jan:**

Letters of Recommendation Details:

Chair/Departmental letter needed (based on specialty)?

YES ☐ NO ☐

Immigration (visa) considerations:

YES ☐ NO ☐

If yes, plan:

Away rotations:

1. _____
2.
3.

Schedule Away Rotations no later than:

Couples Matching?

YES ☐ NO ☐

If YES, with who?

Signaling Plan:

For Students Applying in dermatology, interventional radiology, neurosurgery, orthopedic surgery, otolaryngology, PM&R, plastic surgery, ophthalmology, or urology

How would you characterize your competitiveness for this specialty?

How do your qualifications compare to other students pursuing the specialty, and the types (e.g., academic, community) and locations of programs you're pursuing?

What advice or feedback have you received about the application process, programs, and your qualifications from departmental career-specialty advisor in your specialty of choice?

Parallel Plan Strategy

Do you have a parallel plan? YES ☐ NO ☐

If yes, what is it and why?

How have you prepared yourself for this alternative specialty? YES ☐ NO ☐

If no, why not?

If you do not match, what will be your plan?
o Research year _____
o Preliminary Year – Surgery, medicine or transitional _____

Explain your understanding of the Supplemental Offer and Acceptance Program (SOAP)?

Student Action Items

- ✓ Continue Specialty Exploration, review specialty-specific websites, and talk to M4's who are applying currently
- ✓ Register for Step 2CK
- ✓ For additional information, meet with:
  - *Specialty Program Director or Associate Program Director*
  - *Career Advisor*
  - *Other faculty / Consultants*
  - *Residents (see prior MATCH lists)*
  - *Graduating MS4 students who have matched in your specialty of interest*
- ✓ For additional information review: **Program Directors Association Guides for Residency Applicants**:
  - Review https://cmss.org/opda/
- ✓ Request Letters of Recommendation (LORs must be uploaded directly to ERAS by the letter-writer by mid-September)
- ✓ Complete CV
- ✓ Complete personal statement
- ✓ Create a separate email account for applications
- ✓ Make a plan for monitoring of email account 24/7 (with someone else to monitor when you are not available)
- ✓ Review VSLO for most away rotation application materials: https://students-residents.aamc.org/visiting-student-learning-opportunities/visiting-student-learning-opportunities-1 _____

IMPORTANT STUDENT CHANGES

Meet with Associate Dean for Student Affairs/Registrar for schedule changes: YES ☐ NO ☐

Follow-up meeting with Associate Dean for Student Affairs: YES ☐ NO ☐ **Date:**

Change Career Advisor:
YES ☐ NO ☐
If yes, what specialty?