2021-2022 Application Cycle

Our goals for this application cycle based on the Association of Professors of Dermatology Program Director Task Force:

- Encourage a consistent approach to residency recruitment across dermatology programs.
- Advocate for equity in the recruitment process, particularly given the unequal burden of COVID-19 on certain populations and in certain geographic areas.
- Decrease the application burden on students and programs.
- Minimize health risks for all parties during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis.

Recommendations:

- **Away rotations**
  - Limit to 1 in-person away rotation
  - Exception may be made for those students without a home dermatology program

- **Application review**
  - We understand the challenges in reviewing, but maintain our support for holistic review of applications, particularly given the unique and unequal impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on research, clinical, volunteer, and other extracurricular experiences.
  - We recommend against the use of Step 2 CK or CS as mandatory elements of the application process or for offers of interviews
  - Our program will use a supplemental application to assist in holistic review of candidates.
    - UF Dermatology will be participating in the supplemental ERAS application offered through the AAMC’s ERAS program.
    - Applicants will be required to complete the MyERAS application
    - Participation in the supplemental ERAS application is optional.

- **Letters of recommendation**
  - We recommend at least one letter of recommendation from a dermatology faculty member, but suggest that other letters from non-dermatology specialties be allowed and given equal weight, particularly for students without a home dermatology program.
  - We recognize that committing to provide letters may be challenging during this time for many reasons. Faculty members may consider writing letters of recommendation reflecting resident
input and/or departmental support, or collaborating with colleagues for a joint letter.

- **Interviews**
  - Interviews will be held virtually for both internal and external candidates to ensure equity.

**Additional recommendations for students:**

- **Application process**
  - We understand that many research projects and volunteer experiences have been halted, delayed, or changed secondary to the COVID-19 pandemic. Efforts that students have put forth in these areas are valuable and will be taken into account by programs during application review regardless of outcome.
  - Given that testing centers have delayed or canceled administration dates for USMLE Step 2 CK, and that the NBME has suspended Step 2 CS administration, we have encouraged programs to forego these tests as required elements of the application process this year. USMLE scores are only a minor component of one’s application; students should not consider alternative application plans due to the absence of these scores alone. Please refer to individual program websites to determine whether Step 1 score cut-offs are used and/or whether Step 2 scores are recommended/required.
  - We recommend at least one letter of recommendation from a dermatology faculty member but recognize that this may be difficult for students without a home dermatology program. We urge programs to review applications holistically and give equal weight to letters of recommendation from faculty in other specialties. Students should consider faculty with whom they have worked closely, regardless of the specialty.
  - While programs strive to perform holistic review on all applications, this is more challenging when faced with increasing number of applications per available position.
    - For US allopathic first-time applicants, we recommend applying to at most 40-60 programs. Applicants are encouraged to seek individualized advice from dermatology and medical school advisors to guide their decision regarding number of applications to submit. This advice should account for USMLE Step scores, clerkship grades, research, and extracurricular activities.
• Applicants can visit ApplySmart to review data available from the AAMC on dermatology residency applications and returns.

• Interviews
  o We encourage all programs to conduct virtual interviews for all students.
  o Given the potential increased flexibility and reduced costs associated with virtual interviews, we recommend that students regulate the number of interviews they accept. Data from NRMP show that the probability of matching plateaus at >95% after 12 contiguous ranks. Limiting the number of interviews a student accepts to 12-15 will allow more students opportunities to interview with programs that might constitute a better fit.

As dermatology residency program directors, we recognize that the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in increased disparities in strength of applications due to lack of opportunity for students with smaller home programs or in areas more affected by this crisis, particularly as some students may additionally be struggling or have struggled with personal or family COVID-19 illness during this time.

In this time of great personal and professional stress, we hope that by addressing specific concerns, students will feel more comfortable approaching the process and maintaining their application plans, knowing that we will take into consideration the multitude of extrinsic factors affecting applications this year. Additionally, we hope that consistent practices among programs will allow for an improved application process for both students and programs this cycle and beyond.