

Residency Club: Fourth Year Panel

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Fourth Year Rotations

Q: How did you choose your fourth year rotations?

A: Whatever block(s) interview season falls in, do not choose your required rotations for those blocks. Choose a variety of rotations that interest you.

Q: Why did you choose APPE-RT?

A: The programs are supportive for providing you with a longitudinal project. The continued mentorship throughout the year was beneficial. The biggest downfall of APPE-RT is the lack of diversity in choosing sites.

Q: What about your fourth year rotations were most helpful during interviews?

A: Patient care. Create an excel spreadsheet at the beginning of fourth year and document unique experiences with patients and providers. Sometimes it's not what you know, but who you know. Start forming relationships and get your name out there. Keep in mind each day at your site is an interview. Ask preceptors for letters of recommendation early on (i.e. by the end of the summer/early fall).

Q: How would you describe your work-life balance during fourth year?

A: Most people are able to work a few weeknights and two weekends per month. Make sure to let your boss know about what commitments you will have as a fourth year student (i.e. conferences).

ASHP Midyear Meeting (In December)

Q: How many programs did you talk to at the residency showcase?

A: Its do-able to talk to 6 programs each day (3-4 days total, 3 hour sessions). Do your research before hand to narrow down which booths to visit. Mostly talked to current residents to get questions answered. The ACCP meeting is an excellent additional opportunity to talk to residency directors in a laid back setting.

Q: What is PPS?

A: If you're thinking administrative programs or a PGY-1 program in pediatrics, you will be involved in PPS. Essentially, its half-hour speed dating. You post your profile online and the program can invite you to an interview at Midyear. It serves as your first round of interviews.

Q: How did you prepare to go to the Residency Showcase?

A: Map out your action plan. Start with a program that is familiar. As a general rule, you should not take up 10-15 minutes of the program's time. Very few programs collected business cards. You do not need to bring copies of your CV. If you are focused on administration, you do not need to attend the showcase. Plan to attend the Wisconsin reception and network with current residents/pharmacists.

Q: What kind of questions did you have prepared ahead of time to ask at the showcase?

A: What's the vision of the program? Where is the program going to be in 5 years? It's helpful to Google residency showcase questions to ask. It's ok to still ask questions that have answers posted on the website if you're searching for more honest answers (i.e. What was your favorite rotation? What is the staffing model like at your hospital?). Try to keep the number of questions you ask to a minimum.

Application

Q: How many programs did you apply to and how did you narrow it down?

A: Panelists applied to 5-12 programs. Use your mentors and ask for their input on programs. Can start by looking at places with specialties for PGY-2 programs using the ASHP online residency directory. You need to figure out what is most important to you (i.e. location, PGY-2 programs).

Q: What is PhORCAS?

A: PhORCAS is the PharmCAS equivalent for residency.

Q: What was the most challenging/frustrating part about PhORCAS?

A: Asking references and being patient. You have to upload your CV as a document and copy all of the additional information into separate boxes. Programs are able to search by these 'boxes' if they do not want to read your entire CV. Make sure to proof-read!!

Q: What costs do I need to budget for?

A: Midyear = \$1000, PhorCAS = \$150 initially + \$50/per program after 4, Match = \$100, Traveling expenses = \$100-\$5000

Q: How did you find time to go to all of your interviews?

A: Save your professional days (7 days, only 5 can be used per block). Can start block 5 a week early or complete hours over spring break. Tell preceptors up front for block 5 that you will need flexibility. Research rotations are extremely flexible during block 5.

Q: What advice do you have for second or third years to prepare for the application process?

A: Think about your mentors now. Continue to strengthen and build those relationships. Challenge yourself and discover your passion.

Letters of Intent/Recommendation

Q: What advice do you have regarding letters of intent?

A: You will need to write a letter of intent for each program. Utilize mentors and the writing center here on campus.

Q: What 'bucket' did your letter of recommendation writers fall into?

A: Preceptor/Mentor, APPE-RT Program Director, Pharmacist/Manager. May be better to spread across different institutions if possible. Most require 3 letters of recommendation, but some require 4. Best to ask 4 individuals in case one falls through. They can write residency site-specific comments on the application. These are typically not letters, but instead answers to questions and a short paragraph at the end. Ensure that your letter writers are going to hit the "highly recommend" button on the application. Check in with writers as time passes.

Q: What did you provide your letter of recommendation writers?

A: CV, areas of interest. Add flexibility of meeting in-person with writers. Use example table (attached). Ask letter writer to send highlights of letter to you to address during interviews.

Interviews

Q: How did you prepare for interviews?

A: Utilize the UCSF compilation of questions (attached). Be prepared for behavioral-based questions mainly. Be willing to talk about mistakes you made. Best to schedule interviews that you are really interested later on since you improve with time. Be ready to answer "Tell me about yourself" (aka your elevator speech). All answers should be 1.5 - 3 minutes tops. Most programs will ask why you chose their program specifically. Use the STAR method (situation, task, action, resolution) for behavioral-based questions.

Q: What clinical questions were you asked during interviews?

A: Heart failure, pneumonia, DVT/PE, stroke. Know your antibiotics too. Review CAP and heart failure guidelines if you wish to feel more prepared. Be confident. Use your experience from fourth year rotations to help you. Overall, they are looking at your thought process for dealing with complex patients. Some questions were verbal, others were on paper. Some programs let you use resources.

Q: What does a typical interview day look like?

A: It varies. Most are 4-8 hours. Some are one-on-one, others were with another candidate or two. Often rotate to different interviewers. Residency program director sells program to you, they provide you lunch, interview with different preceptors for a half hour or so, wrap up with a clinical case. Be prepared with questions to ask preceptors that are interviewing you. Some programs take you out to dinner the night before. Most programs interview 4-5x as many applicants as they have spots open. Google questions to ask current residents, preceptors, and program directors. Can ask, "What advice do you have for a new resident?" or "What 3 words would you use to describe your program?"

Q: What question did you struggle answering and how did you adapt?

A: Questions that set you up for a negative answer. State what happened, the resolution, and put a positive spin on it. How would your preceptors or friends describe you? From an admin standpoint, know what is happening overall in the field of pharmacy and the future of pharmacy.

Various Questions

Q: What happens if you do not match?

A: You will receive an email saying that you did or did not match. Can then participate in the second match and/or scramble. Have a week to reapply for the second match. For 2015-2016, 1200 applicants did not match and 200 programs did not fill their spots. Fairly certain that you do not need to fill out PhORCAS for a second time or pay an additional fee.

Q: What other advice do you have?

A: Don't feel discouraged if you do not get an interview at certain programs. Conflict can be turned into healthy conversation. Reach out to current residents/preceptors at programs who are UW graduates.

Q: When researching programs prior to Midyear, did you contact directors before hand?

A: Would recommend waiting for Midyear to ask questions. Only ask questions beforehand if you are on an international rotation, or cannot attend Midyear.

Q: How early should you start researching programs/filling out PhORCAS?

A: PhorCAS opens early November. May want to fill out basic part of the application early on. Then can choose when to look into programs prior to Midyear. If thinking administrative, need to start looking into programs during block 3, because PPS is at Midyear.