



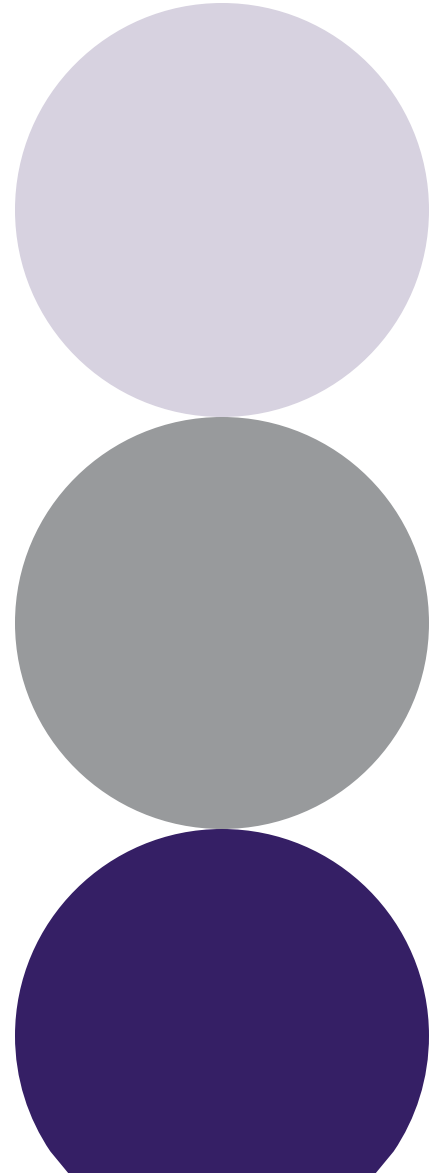
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Advice for the 2023–24 Ophthalmology Residency Match Season

June 7, 2023



Speakers and Moderators



Chris R. Alabiad, MD



Lisa Kelly, MD, MEd



Janice Law, MD



Jeff Pettey, MD, MBA



Nicholas J. Volpe, MD



Fasika Woreta, MD, MPH



MODERATOR
Rukhsana G. Mirza, MD, MS



MODERATOR
Dan W. Knoch, MD



Q&A ASSISTANCE
Prithvi S. Sankar, MD



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Purpose of this Webinar

- In this 90-minute webinar with Q&A, department chairs, medical student and resident educators in ophthalmology, as well as those who also hold roles in the dean's office will share guidance about applying for this year's ophthalmology residency match. Presenters will cover tips related to personal statements, rotations, letters of recommendation, virtual interviews, assessing residency program fit, integrated internships, and more.
- We will give you the latest available information regarding this year's match.
- Attendees will receive a handout with links to useful resources.
- This webinar and associated handout will be posted





Overview of the Topics

- SF Match Timeline and What's New? – **Rukhsana Mirza, MD, MS**
- The Ophthalmology Elective – **Lisa Kelly, MD, MEd**
- Identifying Mentors for LORs / What's a Good Letter? – **Janice Law, MD**
- Advice from the Dean's Office – **Chris Alabiad, MD**
- Ophthalmology Residency Process – Developing (Telling) Your Story/Personal Statement – **Nicholas Volpe, MD**
- How to Assess a Residency Program – **Fasika Woreta, MD, MPH**
- Advice for the 2023-24 Match Cycle: Interviews/Scheduling/Open Houses – **Jeff Pettey, MD, MBA**
- Open Q/A

Speakers have no conflicts to disclose



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Housekeeping

- Use the **Q&A function** to ask questions and communicate with panelists.
- This webinar is being recorded.





POLL



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SF Match Timeline and What's New?

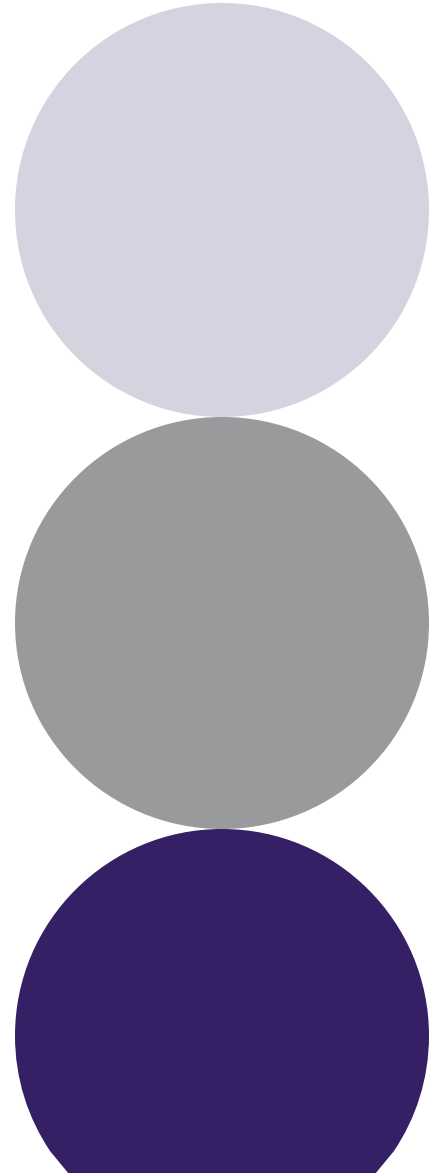
Rukhsana G. Mirza, MD, MS

Ryan-Pusateri Professor of Ophthalmology

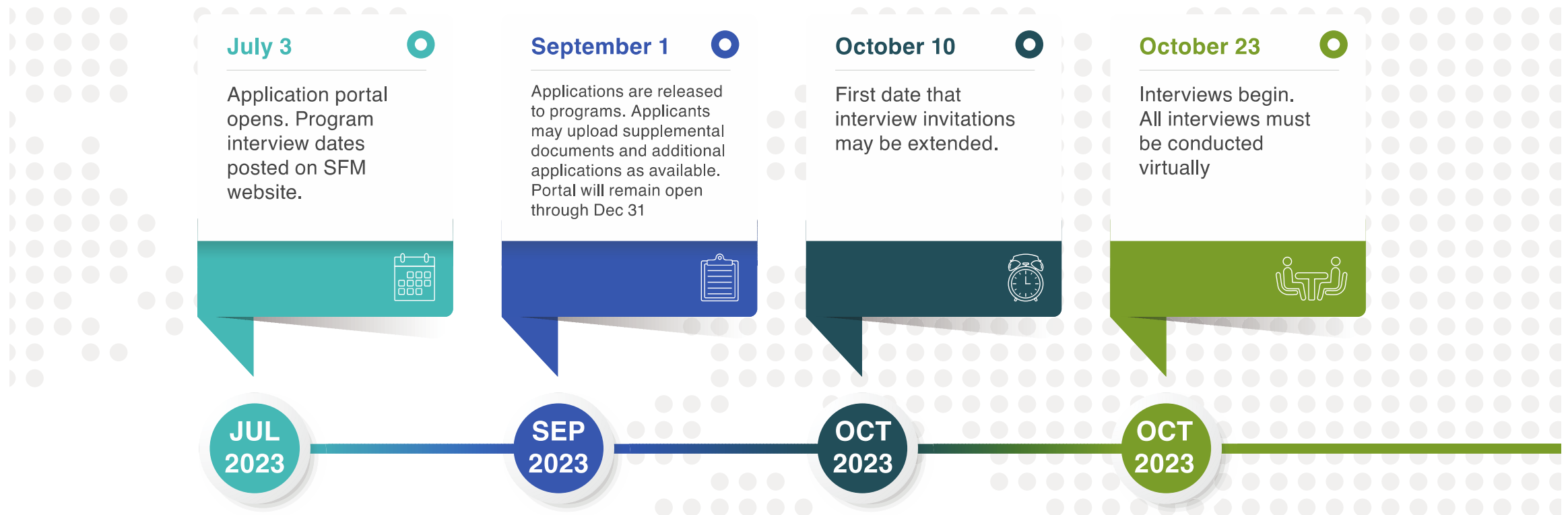
Professor of Ophthalmology and Medical Education

Northwestern University/ Feinberg School of Medicine

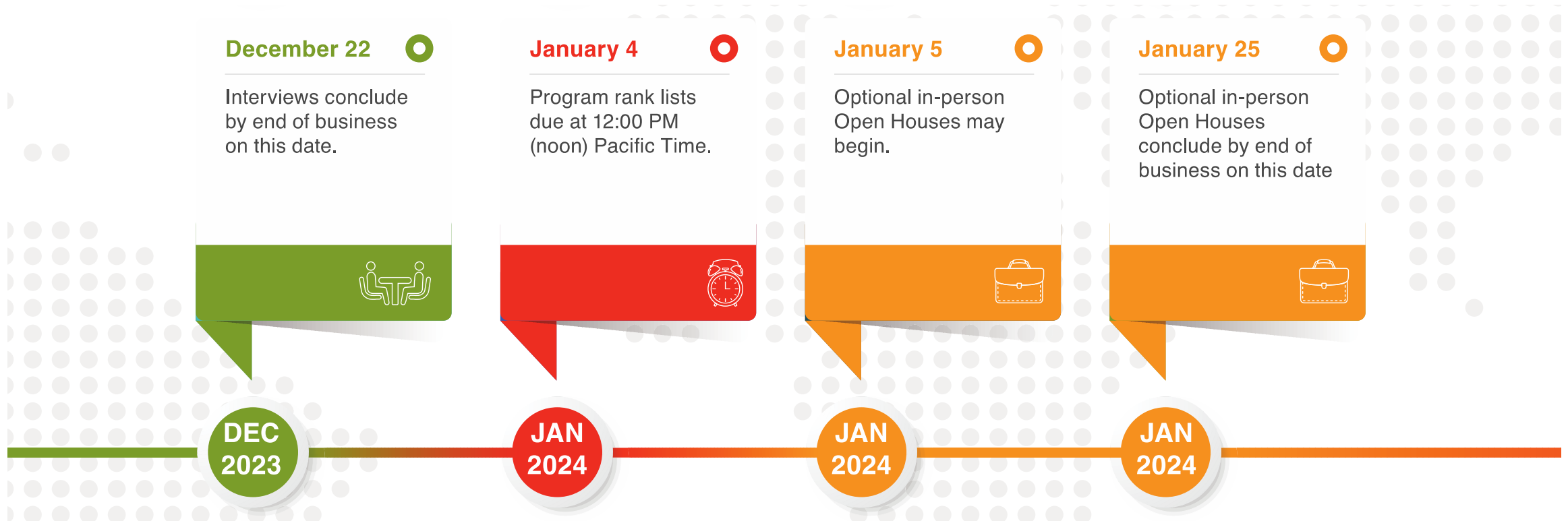
June 7, 2023



Ophthalmology Residency Match Timeline 2023–24



Ophthalmology Residency Match Timeline 2023–24



Ophthalmology Residency Match Timeline 2023–24



**Subject to change if circumstances dictate*



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Personal Statement

- Changed in 2021
 - In order to increase diversity within the profession and to obtain a more holistic review of applicants, the former one-page personal statement has been replaced.
 - 500-word autobiographical sketch.
 - The application will contain a list of several short essay questions, and applicants will be asked to choose two of them to answer. (250 words each)
 - The questions will remain unchanged from last year
 - Can be customized for program





Research Section

- Some stylistic revisions to more easily distinguish published articles and national presentations from other types of research





USMLE Step 2

- Applicants are required to submit USMLE Step 2 scores if taken



Altus Suite - Pilot

- Multi-level assessment of ophthalmology residency applicants
 - Professionalism
 - Social intelligence
 - Value alignment
- Will not be utilized by the SF Match this year





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@rg_mirza



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The Ophthalmology Elective

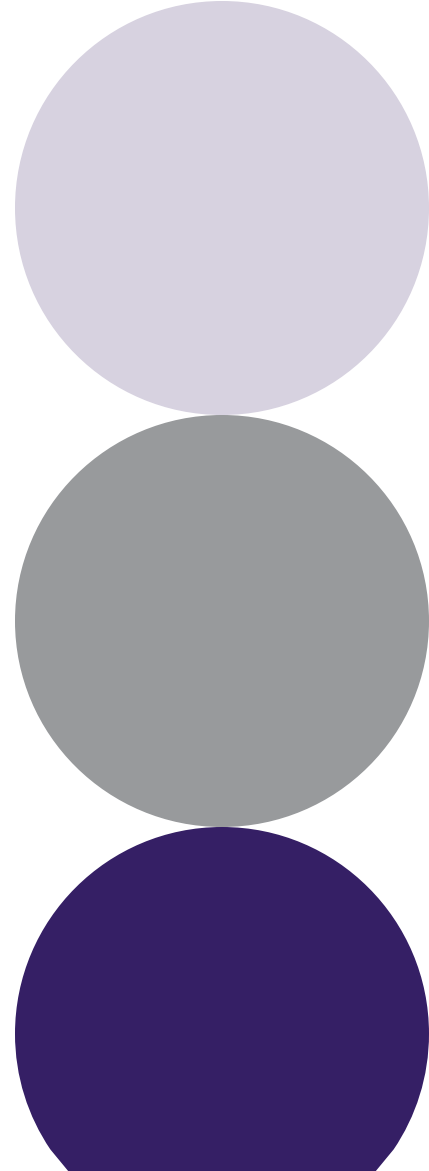
Lisa Kelly, MD, MEd

Professor

Director of Medical Student Education

Department of Ophthalmology

University of Cincinnati College of Medicine





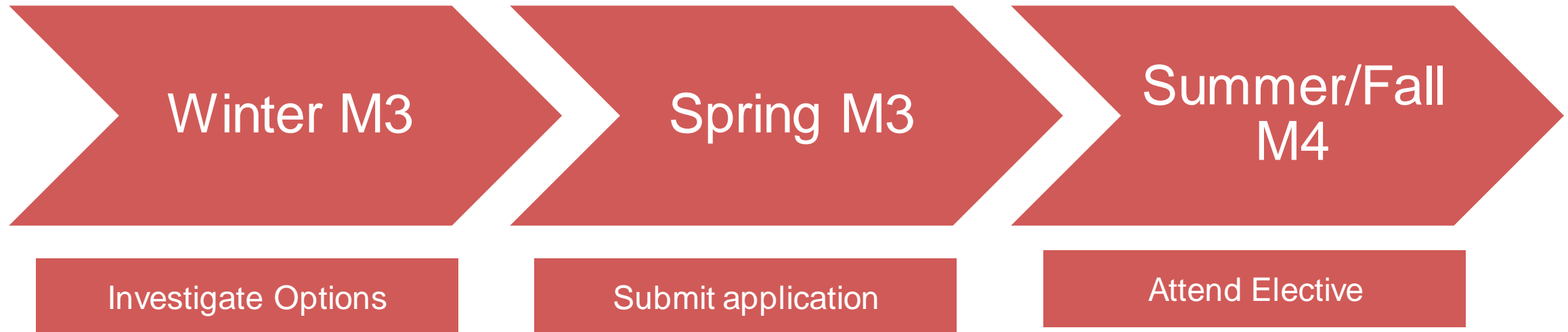
Ophthalmology Electives

Home Institution Electives

Away Electives

- Not required to successfully match in ophthalmology
- M4 elective at a location other than your home institution
- An opportunity to broaden your experience and exposure to ophthalmology.
- Coordinated by the AAMC VSLO (Visiting student learning opportunities) via application process

Away Elective Timeline



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Why Do an Away Elective?

Pro

- Exposure to a new ophthalmology learning environment
- Opportunity to work with a mentor
- Concentrated exposure to a particular topic of interest in ophthalmology
- Increased chance of being offered a residency interview

Con

- Financial cost
- Opportunity cost
- Schools have different academic calendars
- You may not get your first choice of program(s)

Determining Where to Do an Away Elective

- Consult with your mentor(s)
- Seek advice from older students and residents
- Consider desired geographic locations
- Consider locations where you will have social support
- Consider programs with clinical strength in your area of interest
- Consult Texas Star or Doximity for program information



How to Ace the Application Process

- Study and understand the VSLO application process
- Visit individual program websites for additional information
- Start your investigation early
- Stay organized – consider creating a spreadsheet
- Know which immunizations are required
- Arrange a social support system if possible - housing, transportation and daily living.



Put your Best Foot Forward on Away Electives

- Know as much as you can about the program
- Read about the faculty that you will work with
- Review the syllabus and know what will be expected of you
- Have a support system in place for housing and transportation
- Make sure that your clinical ophthalmology skills are polished
- Practice your presentation skills
- Review your fund of knowledge
- Be pleasant to everyone that you interact with



Long-term Benefits

- Let faculty and residents know of your interest in the away residency program
- Send thank you notes/ follow-up email letting key faculty know that you appreciated the opportunity
- Stay connected via research projects or other opportunities. This is an opportunity to enhance your professional network and identify potential mentors.



Take Aways

- Consider doing an away elective early
- Study the VSLO process – know it well
- Be clear about your goals and objectives
- Optimize your application
- Be prepared to do an outstanding job during your away elective



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References

- VSLO application process <https://students-residents.aamc.org/visiting-student-learning-opportunities/visiting-student-learning-opportunities-1>
- Texas Star <https://www.utsouthwestern.edu/education/medical-school/about-the-school/student-affairs/texas-star.html>



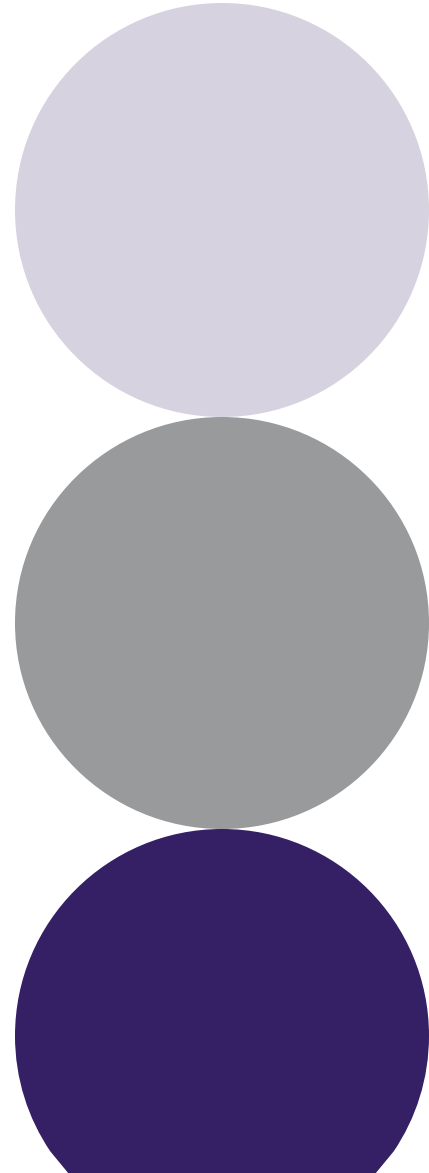
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Identifying Mentors for LORs: What's a Good Letter?

Janice C. Law, MD
Vanderbilt Eye Institute
Vice Chair for Education
Director of Medical Student Education



What's in a recommendation letter?

- The context the letter writer knows you
- Review of achievements
- Specific and personal examples
 - of your performance
 - aspects that set you apart
- What qualities you will bring to the residency
- Explain any hardships or challenges



Identifying a mentor for letters

Ask yourself... *Note – only one letter needs to come from an ophthalmologist*

- Who has seen and interacted with me in these domains:

- Clinical reasoning
- Patient care team
- Research (Analytical skills and writing)



- Who has witnessed my:

- Leadership or service
- Communication skills
- Professionalism/Integrity

- Who can speak to my strengths?
 - What are they? List them.



The ASK

- Initiate in person or email, but always follow up with email
 - Let people know your intentions early (i.e. after a rotation or before a rotation)

- Be sure adequate time is given to write (4-6 weeks)

- Set up a one-on-one meeting
 - Discuss key attributes you want to highlight
 - Discuss concerns you have about your application



- Before the meeting, email these:
 - Updated professional CV
 - Personal statement or autobiography
 - Ask if you need to prepare anything else
 - Photograph (optional)

- After the meeting:
 - Follow up with thank you email
 - Include deadline reminder, submission details (ie. Match ID) & short summary of meeting
 - Ask if it would help to send a reminder email when deadline is closer





Unique situations

- What if mentors say no?
- What if they ask you to draft your own letter?
- What if you mainly worked with residents/fellows?
- How do you address the following in your letter?
 - Reapplying
 - Probation
 - Remediation
 - Hardships



Opportunities to enhance or deepen interactions

- Virtual mentoring
- Research or case reports
- New initiatives
- Invitations and outreach
- Shadowing
- QI projects



Mentee expectations

Screen shot this!



- **Commitment:** To fully participate in the mentoring relationship
- **Responsibility:** To accept responsibility for his/her career development
- **Honesty/Authenticity:** To communicate honestly with the mentor and communicate often
- **Proactive:** To take initiative in seeking help and feedback from the mentor
- **Receptive:** Willingness to listen, learn, and change
- **Follow through:** To implement feedback and complete tasks



Thank You and Good Luck!

Janice.Law@Vanderbilt.Edu



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Advice from the Dean's Office

Chris Alabiad, MD

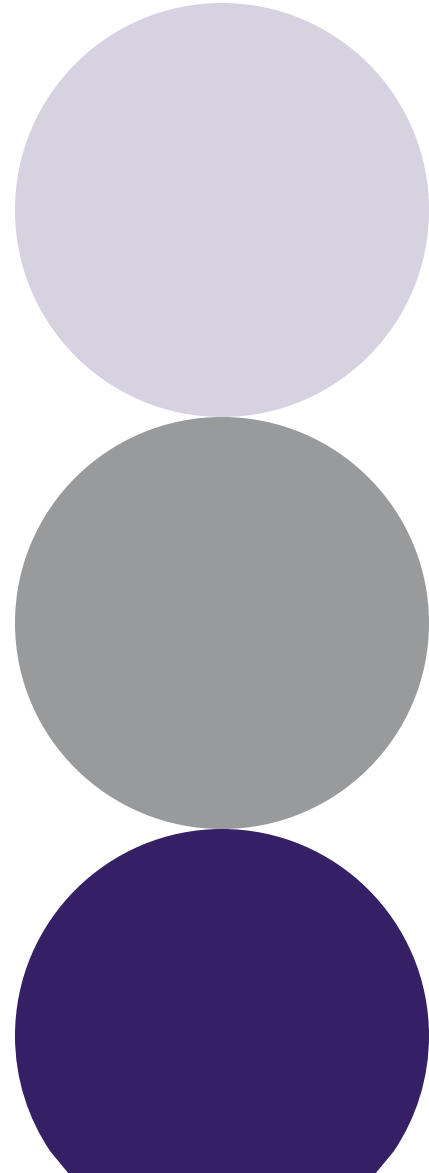
Assistant Dean for Student Affairs

Ophthalmology Residency Program Director

Professor of Clinical Ophthalmology

Bascom Palmer Eye Institute

University of Miami Miller School of Medicine



Is Ophthalmology the Right Career for Me?

- Gauging interest
 - Local shadowing opportunities
 - Virtual opportunities: Grand Rounds, Lectures, Conferences
- Identify an Ophthalmology Mentor
- Local Ophthalmology Interest Group
- Mentorship Programs
 - AAO Minority Ophthalmology Mentoring Program
 - Rabb Venable Program
 - Women in Ophthalmology



How do I stack up against the crowd?

Ophthalmology Residency Match

Feb 2023

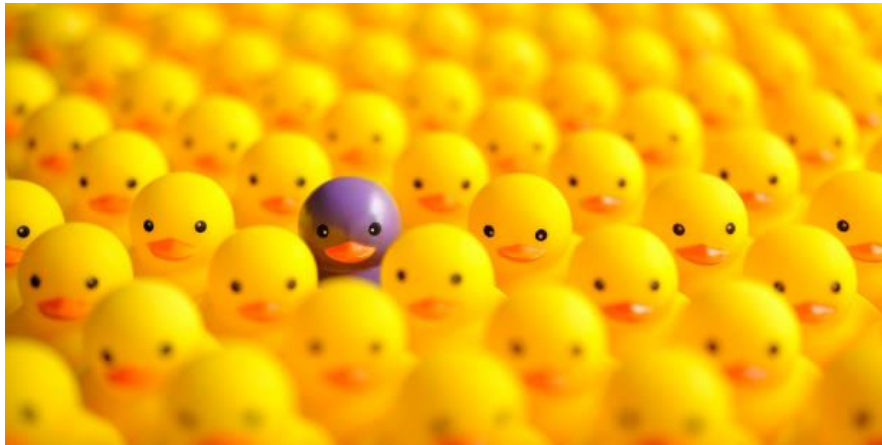
TOTAL APPLICANTS REGISTERED AND PARTICIPATED PER CATEGORY	Matched/			
	Registered #	Participated	Matched	Participated (%)
US Allopathic Seniors	588	565	442	78%
US Allopathic Graduates	76	62	30	48%
US Osteopathic Seniors	58	49	22	45%
US Osteopathic Graduates	15	7	3	43%
International Applicants	118	59	17	29%
TOTAL	855	742	514	69%



How do I stack up against the crowd?

Factors to Consider:

- Class Rank
- Research Accomplishments
- Unique Interests/Talents
- Adversity Overcome
- Supportive Mentor(s)
- Leadership/Service
- USMLE Step 2 CK Score
 - Most will only have P/F USMLE Step 1 Score



How Does One Improve Their Odds?



- No "one size fits all" answer
- Can't undo certain metrics
- But you can ...
 - Try to do well on USMLE Step 2 CK
 - Demonstrate dedication to/passion for the field through research, service, and leadership





Speaking of USMLE Step 2 CK...

- How important is it?
- When should one take it?
- How long to prepare for it?
- What if score comes in after application submission?



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What Options Can I Consider if I Don't Measure Up?

- Are you “Ophthalmology or bust”
 - Consider a research year
 - Not a guarantee to secure a match the following year
- Are you happy in any clinical setting?
 - Consider double applying (increasing trend)
 - Has pros and cons
 - Will take some discretion and strategizing with your advising dean



Taking a Year Off for Research/Other Degree



- Important factors:
 - Identify a supportive mentor with a track record of success
 - Identify a research topic that stimulates you
- Consider applying for a research fellowship
 - NIH Medical Research Scholars Program
 - RPB Medical Student Research Fellowship
 - Home institution student research programs





Working on the MSPE/Deans Letter

- Work closely with your advising dean on 3 noteworthy characteristics
- Review your clerkship narratives for accuracy



It's Time to Apply! Where Do I Apply?

- Tips to applying SMART:
 - IGNORE THE RANKINGS!! This is about YOU!
 - Reflect on YOUR learning style and career goals
 - Do you prefer an independent vs closely supervised environment?
 - Is research a big component of your future career?
 - Could you be fellowship bound vs comprehensive ophthalmology?
 - Are there “life” mentors and “career” mentors you identify with at the program?
 - How important is proximity to your family/social support system?
 - Talk to your ophthalmology mentor to identify programs aligning with above



Thank you!



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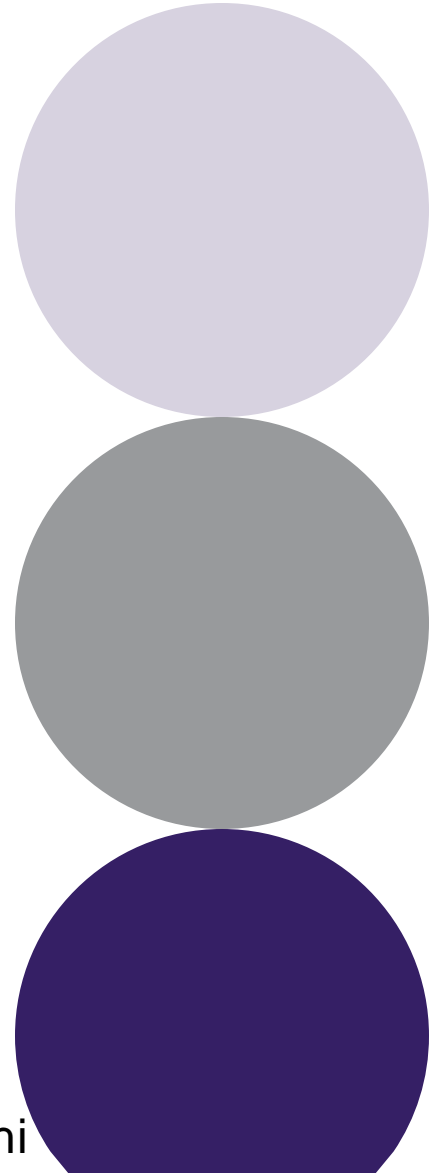
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Ophthalmology Residency Process

Developing (Telling) Your Story/Personal Statement

Nicholas J. Volpe, MD
Professor and Chair
Department of Ophthalmology
Northwestern University
Feinberg School of Medicine

Acknowledgement to Drs Carter and Gandhi





YOUR Story: 20–30 years in the Making

- Don't minimize the whole story by over playing the “checking the box” things you did when you decided to apply to ophthalmology
- Authenticity is critical
- Prior to filling out your application, it is important to reflect on your experiences
- How have you gotten to where you are now?
- Your unique path
- What have you overcome?
- What drives you?
- What experiences will demonstrate the person you are now and the resident and physician you will be?
 - Life events, experiences in school, research, clinical care, community service, advocacy etc.
- Your dreams and aspirations, role models





Considerations

- If there is a noticeable gap or concern in your application this could be addressed in the autobiographical statement or short answer section.
 - Examples: time off for medical or academic reasons, academic probation
 - This is a personal decision.
 - Discuss this with a trusted advisor
- Remember this is a sophisticated audience looking for likeminded applicants
- Talk to residents and mentors about what they love and why they chose
 - Do you agree and can you capture that vision and energy?





Personal Statement

- **Autobiographical Statement:**
 - A chance to share your journey to ophthalmology and what distinguishes **you** as an applicant
 - 500 words

- **Short Answer Questions:**
 - Applicants will choose **two short answer questions** (250 words each)





Personal Statement

- If you're inspired now and want to get started...
 - Work on an outline of your proudest accomplishments
 - Look over your CV for experiences to highlight
 - Reflect on the personal qualities you want to share with the committee
 - Character and uniqueness
 - Tell your story-specific and most recent better than generic and old
 - Have a theme better than chronological rehash
 - More current issues and future aspirations less history/steps
 - Series of crucibles—events that shaped your story and decisions
- Work through drafts and revisions
- Solicit opinions
 - Ask mentors, family and friends to review
- Don't misspell O-p-h-t-h-a-l-m-o-l-o-g-y
- These steps will help you gather your thoughts for your interview





Personal Statement: Short answer questions

Last Year's Questions (Choose 2; 250 words each):

- *What does resilience mean to you? Describe a situation in your personal or professional life where you have demonstrated resilience.*
- *If you were to start an ophthalmology residency program, what would be the three core values you would base it on?*
- *Describe a way in which you will add diversity to your residency class. This may relate to your background, upbringing, life experiences, professional/personal interest, or educational path.*
- *Describe an important mentor and relate how that person has been helpful to you.*



Personal Statement: Do's

- Customization
- Applicants may create and save multiple personal statements and assign specific statements to specific programs
 - Can be a way for you to “signal” your interest to certain programs
- ✓ Do use this as a chance to tell your story
 - Prior careers
 - Impactful experiences especially service, research, international
 - Gaps in your training
 - some idea of your plan
 - Weak spots in your application (carefully)
- ✓ Do have a second set of eyes on your work



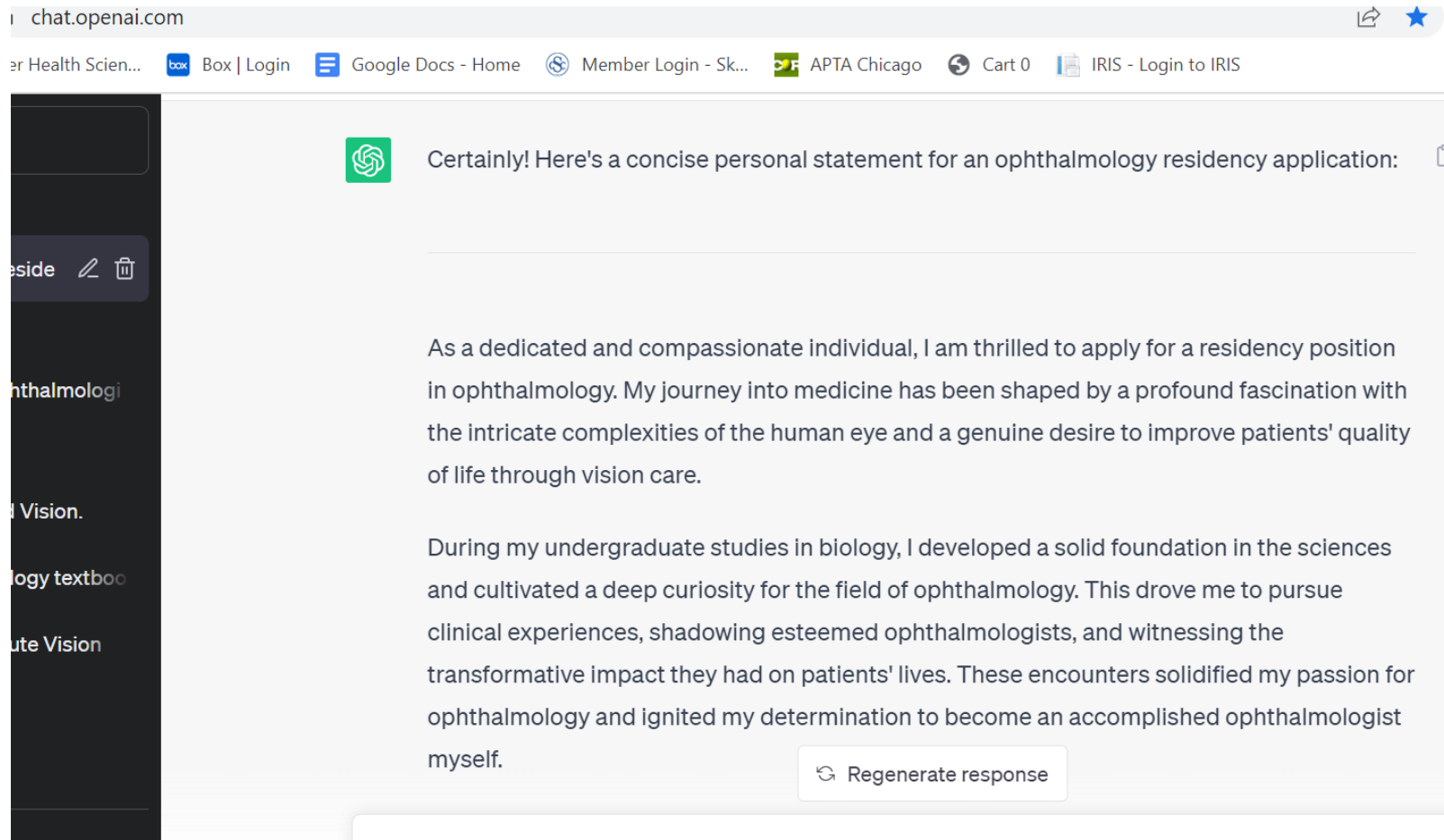


Personal Statement: Do's

- Careful with personal ophthalmology stories (grandpa's cataract)
- Don't be redundant, overconfident or lacking purpose, don't plagiarize!
- Don't explain why ophthalmology is interesting in general
- Avoid empty statements – “I am a hard worker that likes taking care of people”
- Don't over-customize or spend time on a negative-think first impression
- Don't use cliché phrases that are likely overused- “The eyes are the window to the soul”
- Be careful about nontraditional statements (poems, songs etc.)
- Remember this may be the only things some of your interviewers look at



Definitely Not!!





Questions for the Panel



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How to Assess a Residency Program

Fasika Woreta, MD, MPH

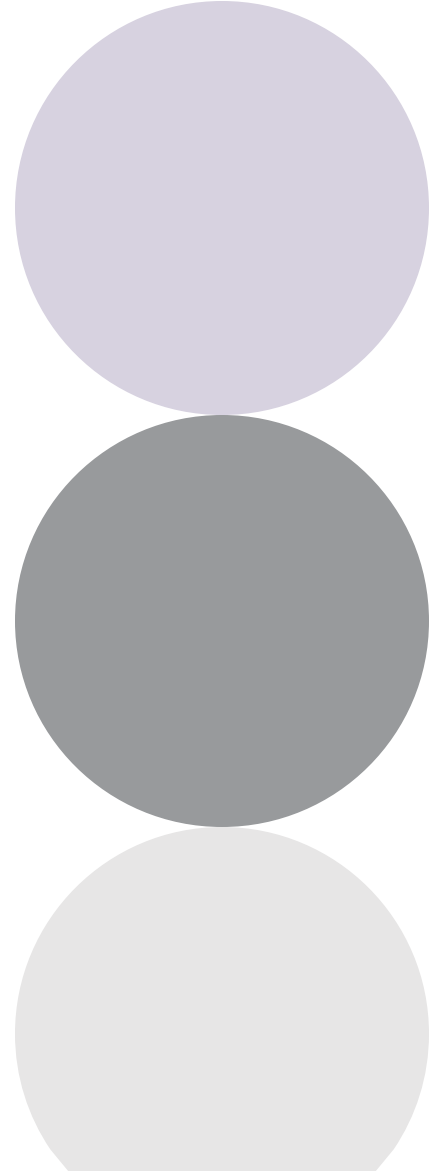
Associate Professor of Ophthalmology

Eugene de Juan, M.D. Professor of Ophthalmic Education

Residency Program Director

Wilmer Eye Institute, Johns Hopkins University School of
Medicine

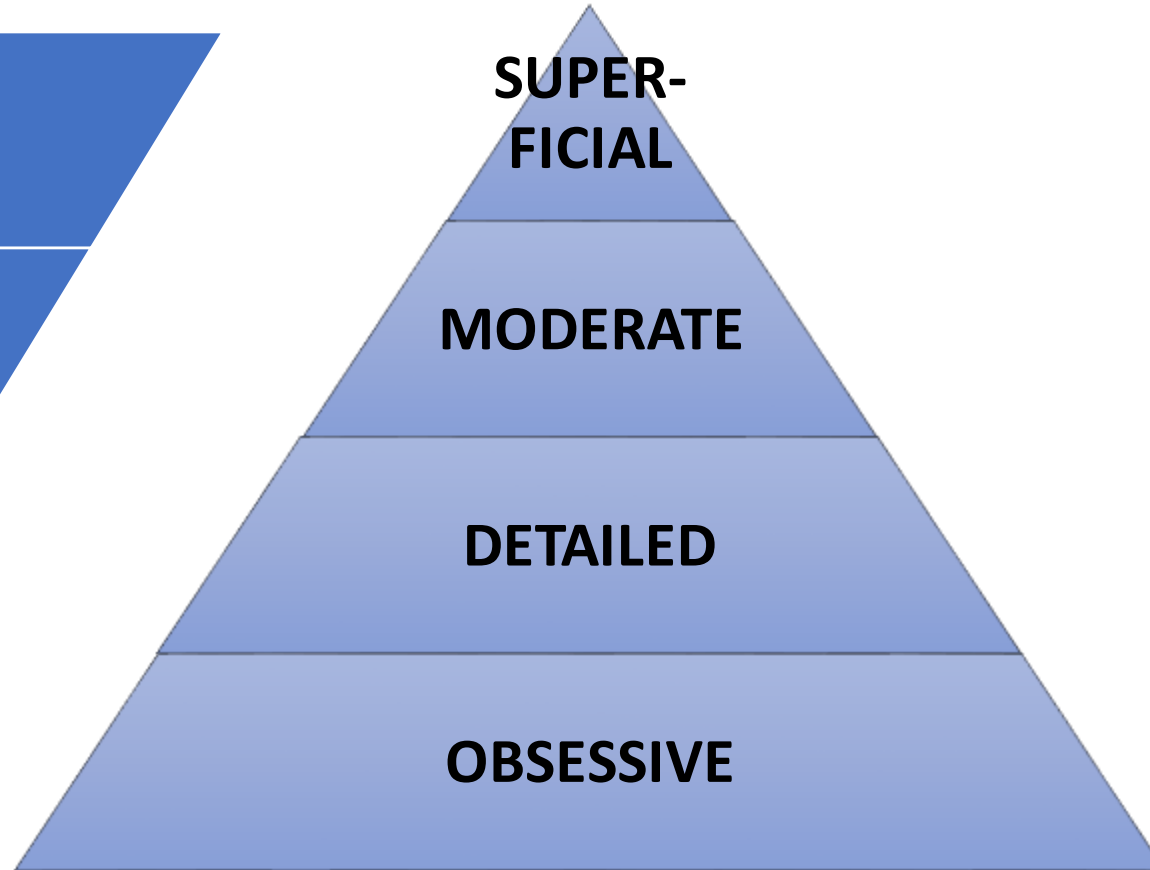
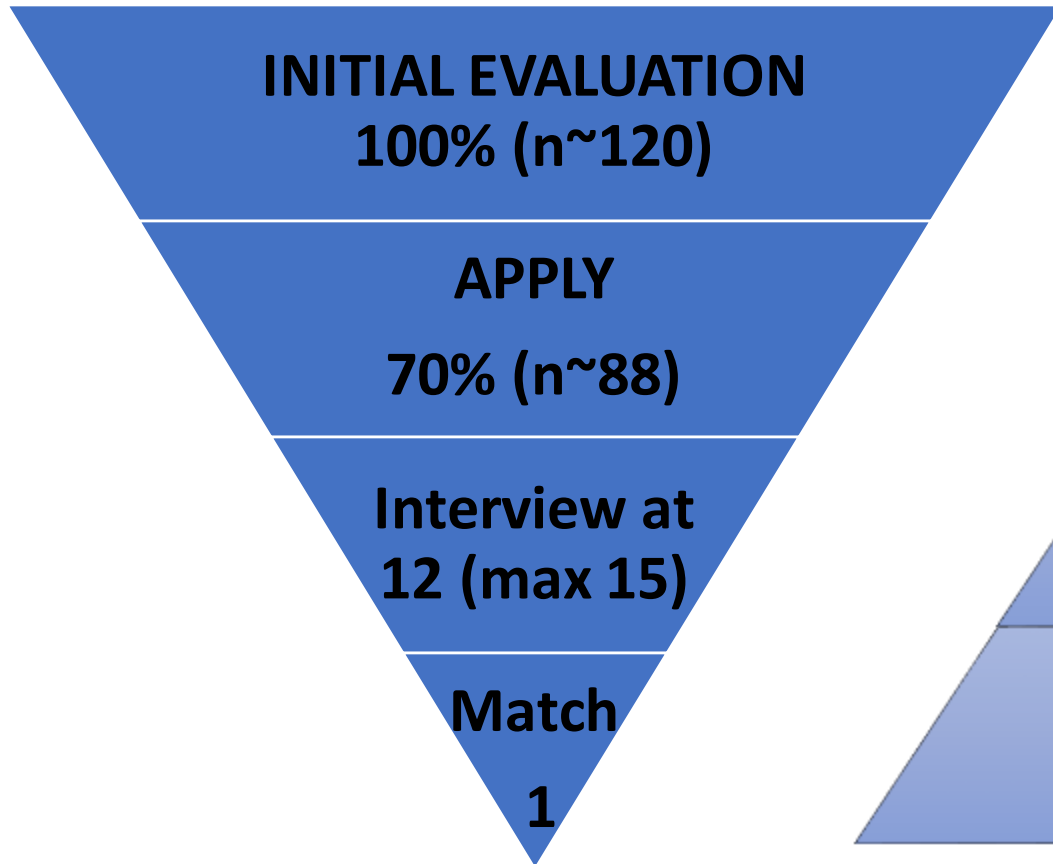
June 7, 2023





Slide Courtesy of Dr. Jeff Pettey, Residency Program Director, Moran Eye Center

Programs Assessed



Assessment Depth

Factors to consider..

- Program and institutional culture
- Program size
- Geographic location
- Number and quality of core faculty
- Exposure to various subspecialties
- Surgical experience
(Volume/breadth)
- Clinical sites (VA, County)
- Facilities including microsurgical training center
- Call experience
- Integrated/joint program
- Didactic curriculum
- Program accreditation status
- Fellowship match rates
- Board pass rate
- Research opportunities
- Mentorship quality
- Current resident satisfaction/wellness
- Parental leave policies
- Program mission

Among active U.S. allopathic senior medical students ranking residency programs across all specialties, these were the top five considerations.

- Desired geographic location—cited by 88%.
- Perceived goodness of fit—87%.
- Reputation of program—82%.
- Work-life balance—74%.
- Quality of residents in the program—73%.

Source: <https://www.ama-assn.org/medical-students/preparing-residency/which-factors-do-applicants-weigh-most-when-picking-residency>

Program Assessment TOOLS

- San Francisco (SF) Match
 - [Program profile information](#)
- [FREIDA™](#), the American Medical Association's Residency and Fellowship Database®
- [Doximity's Residency Navigator](#)

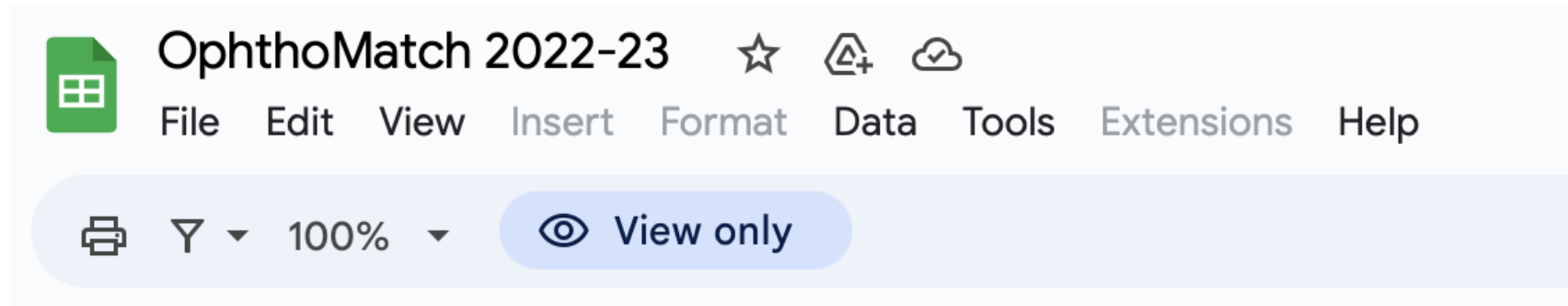


Program Generated Content

- Residency Websites
- Institutional Websites
- Virtual open houses
 - Prior to application season
- Live open houses
- Program materials given to interviewees
- Virtual grand rounds/teaching sessions
- Social media (Instagram, Twitter, Facebook)

Student Generated Content

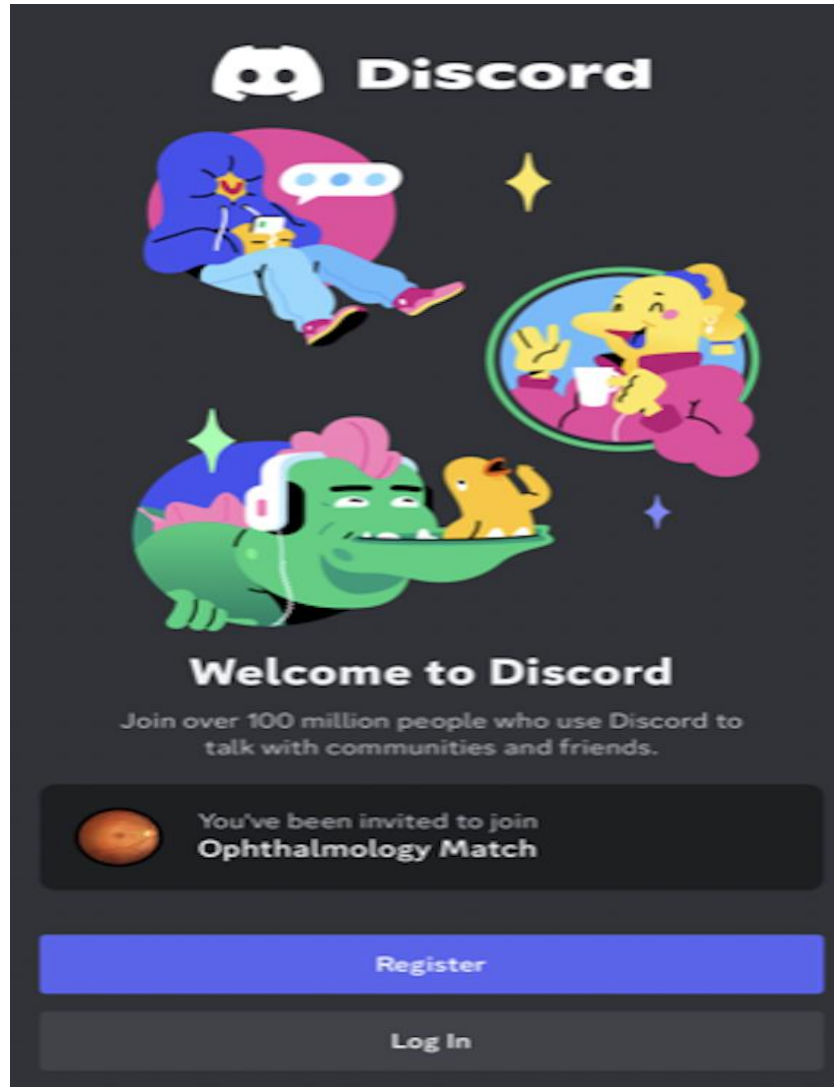
- Google doc (anonymous)



Navigation:				
Doximity Ranks	23 Webinars	2023 Awards	2023 Final Rank List	2023 Name and Shame
2023 Chat	23 Applicant Stats	2023 A vs B	2023 Final Match Result	2023 Fellowship Match
2018-20 Away Rotation Info	Program Interview Dates	2023 Program Swag	2023 Post Match Stats	AI Match Predictor
2023 Away Rotation Sheet	2023 # of Invites by Date	2023 Open Houses	2023 Unmatch + Research Fellowships	
2023 Supplemental Apps	2023 # of Invites by Date			
	Interview Questions		a	
	2023 Post-IV Reviews			

Best Swag
Best Coordinator
Least Prompt
Best Coordinator Email Sign-Off
Nicest PD
Best Social/Dinner
Best Interview Moment
Worst Interview Moment
Best Interview Break Activity
Friendliest Residents
Worst Interview Question
City You Wish You Had Visited
Most overused selling point

Student Generated Content



Current resident and alumni





Video Courtesy of Dr. Jeff Pettet, Residency Program Director, Moran Eye Center



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Advice for the 2023–24 Match Cycle: Interviews/Scheduling/Open Houses

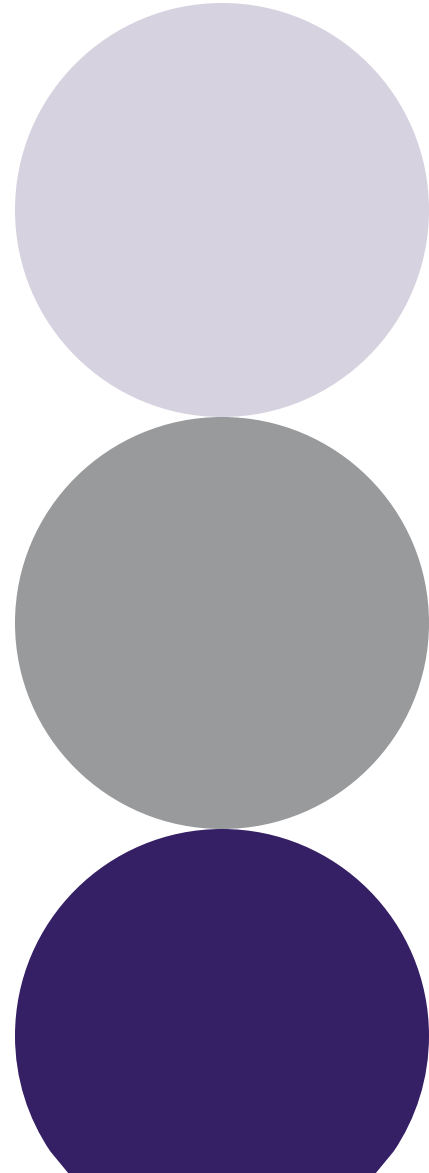
Jeff Pettey MD, MBA

Chair, SF Match Oversight Committee

Program Director Moran Eye Center

Dumke Endowed Professor for Global Education

Department of Ophthalmology, University of Utah





UPDATES

- No Acuity (formerly known as Altus) Assessments (Casper, Duet)
- Required to Submit step 2 scores if taken.
- Research activities and roles clearer to programs.





Interviews

- All interviews will be virtual
- Cap of 15 remains
- All are scheduled through the SFM Central Scheduler
 - Cannot hold overlapping interviews or more than 15
- **October 10:** First date programs extend interviews
- **October 23–December 22:** Interview season





Post Interview Process

- **January 4:** Program rank lists due
- **January 5–25:** Live, in-person open houses
- **January 30:** Applicant rank lists due
- **February 6:** Match day





Live Open Houses

- Optional for Programs and Applicants
- Up to 4 hours: Tours, socialize, assess culture etc.
- NO interviews, discussion of rank lists, or coercive activity permitted
 - Coercive activity should be reported to AUPO
- Easily scheduled like interviews through SF Match platform
- When?
 - **After** programs submit their rank lists
 - **Before** applicants submit their rank lists





THANK
YOU

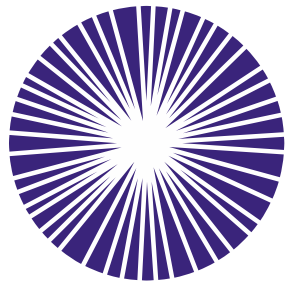
Best
of
Luck!



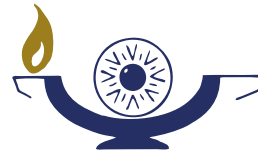
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