



FOURTH YEAR PLANNING GUIDE AY 2023-2024

Please note that certain specialties are not included in this guide because no information was submitted. If you are planning to apply into such a specialty, please reach out to a UMass specialty advisor or Student Affairs for guidance.

Please reference the Specialty Contact List to reach out to a current MS4's applying into your field of interest.



GENERAL INFORMATION

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have questions about this document or its contents, please reach out to the Peer Mentoring Program at peermentoring@umassmed.edu.

ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

This document was produced by the Peer Mentoring Program through responses of the class of 2021-2024. This document represents the experiences of students only and does not replace meetings with a faculty advisor.

AWAY ROTATIONS

Away rotations may or may not be required depending on your specialty. If you do complete an away rotation, it will count toward the elective credit that you will need to graduate. True sub-internships will count as Type A electives while other rotations may count as B1 electives.

PROGRAM TYPES

Depending on your specialty, you may have the option to apply to different types of programs. Refer to each specialty's page in this document to see which types of programs are available.

Categorical programs

All years of training will take place at the same institution. During the first year (internship), there will likely be some specialty-specific training, but most of the year will be spent developing a foundational knowledge of medicine or surgery. All integrated surgical sub-specialty programs are categorical.

Advanced programs

These do not include an internship year and require a separate preliminary or transitional year program, which may or may not be at the same institution.

Preliminary/transitional year programs

Preliminary year programs consist of an internship year in medicine, surgery, or pediatrics. Transitional year programs are similar but provide rotations in both medicine and surgery. Both types of programs typically require a separate application and interview. The specialty into which you are applying will dictate which type of program you should complete.

CHANGES DUE TO COVID

Due to the pandemic, many changes to the residency application process were implemented during AY 2020-2021. As of AY 2022-2023, away rotations have returned to pre-COVID times where there are no restrictions. However, interviews largely remain virtual to support equity among applicants. There may be in-person open houses depending on specific specialties/programs. Some programs are offering in person interviews, and more may follow in the coming years.



ANESTHESIOLOGY

SUB-INTERNSHIPS

An anesthesiology sub-internship is not required but is strongly recommended given it is available at UMass. If applying to a preliminary year program, consider doing an acting internship in that specialty for a letter. Anesthesiology sub-internships will count as type B1 electives, while a separate acting internship is needed to satisfy UMass graduation requirements.

ADVISORS

Previous students have found the UMass Assistant Program Director, UMass specialty advisors, and 3rd year clerkship/ sub-internship directors to be valuable advisors. If you have not done so already, you should reach out to one of these faculty to serve as your advisor. Students also found prior applicants and LC mentors to be helpful.

SPECIFIC ADVICE

The Surgical ICU and pain electives were identified as good rotations to express interest and get letters. There are two options for SICU: Memorial and University. Memorial is a 9 bed SICU with mainly thoracic, gen surg, and OB surgical patients as well as some medical. University is a 16-bed unit with mainly transplant and trauma patients.

While both SICUs are staffed by anesthesia attendings (university is also staffed by trauma attendings), sign-up for memorial is through anesthesia and university is through surgery.

PROGRAM TYPES

You will have the option to apply to both categorical and advanced programs. If you apply to an advanced program, you will need to complete a preliminary year program in medicine or surgery or a transitional year program. Many programs have both categorical and advanced spots and it is strongly suggested to apply to both options. Most anesthesia applicants will apply to medicine and/or transition year prelims. Please refer to the General Information page for more information.

AWAY ROTATIONS

Away rotations are not required but are often recommended. If you are looking to leave the Northeast for residency, you can consider doing an away rotation in your area of choice to prove to the selection committee that you are committed to moving to that area. An away rotation can help you stand out at a program in which you are highly interested, but a poor performance can hurt you, so be prepared to work hard during these rotations.

Applications for away rotations can be through VSLO or institution-specific applications. They will open at various times during the spring, with some as early as January, so be sure to check each program's date online. Some away rotations require LORs, personal statements, and transcripts, be sure to check requirements early.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

You will need a minimum of 3 letters of recommendation (LORs) to apply into anesthesiology. At least 2 of these should be written by an anesthesiologist. LORs written by physicians in other specialties are also accepted. Non-clinical letters are welcome including service and research. If you are applying to a preliminary year program in medicine or surgery, you will need a chair letter from the Department of Medicine or Department of Surgery.



DERMATOLOGY

SUB-INTERNSHIPS

A dermatology sub-internship is required by the specialty. For your preliminary year application, consider doing an acting internship in that specialty for a letter (this is not necessary though, you will be able to schedule a meeting with the IM Chair for a letter regardless of your Sub-I schedule). Dermatology sub-internships will count as type A electives, while a separate acting internship is needed to satisfy UMass graduation requirements.

ADVISORS

Previous students found the UMass Program Director, residency program faculty, research/clinical mentors, sub-internship director, and specialty advisors to be valuable advisors. If you have not done so already, you should reach out to one of these faculty.

SPECIFIC ADVICE

Students suggest going to Grand Rounds (Q-Derm) and networking with faculty and mentors. Consider taking a research year if you only just decided on Dermatology. It is helpful to meet with a mentor to see if a research year would be useful/necessary.

Some programs have supplemental applications, which should be completed even if designated as optional. This is less common since the ERAS supplemental application has been implemented. Information on program specific supplementals can be found on the program's website.

INTERNSHIP YEAR

You will be required to complete a separate internship year before starting your dermatology training. This can be a preliminary year program in medicine, surgery, or pediatrics or a transitional year program. Please refer to the General Information page for more information.

AWAY ROTATIONS

Away rotations are strongly recommended. They will give you an opportunity to secure additional letters of recommendation and express your interest. If you are looking to leave the Northeast for residency, you can consider doing an away rotation in your area of choice to prove that you are committed to moving to that area. An away rotation can help you stand out at a program in which you are highly interested, but a poor performance can hurt you, so be prepared to work hard .

Applications for away rotations can be through VSLO or institution-specific applications. They will open at various times during the spring, with some as early as February, so be sure to check each program's date online. These are often filled on a first come first serve basis, so it is important to submit applications as soon as possible. It may be helpful to respectfully reach out to connections at the program if you do not receive any communication from the program after a few months.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

You will need a minimum of 3 letters of recommendation (LORs) to apply into dermatology, but your application will be more competitive if you have 4. It is best to have all your LORs written by dermatologists. If you are applying to a preliminary year program in medicine or surgery, you will need a chair letter from the Department of Medicine or Department of Surgery, respectively.



EMERGENCY MEDICINE

SUB-INTERNSHIPS

Plan to do 2-3 emergency medicine sub-internships during the summer to secure letters. This will include 1 sub-internship at UMass and at least 1 away rotation. In 2023, 2 core sub-internships were recommended with 3 permissible under certain circumstances. You will get one letter for each sub-internship that you complete. Emergency medicine sub-internships will count as type A electives, while a separate acting internship is needed to satisfy UMass graduation requirements.

ADVISORS

Previous students found the UMass Program Director, other residency program faculty, sub-internship director, and UMass specialty advisors to be valuable advisors. If you have not done so already, you should reach out to one of these faculty to serve as your advisor. Feedback from the class ahead of you is wonderful, but should not replace advisors.

SPECIFIC ADVICE

You will need to take ECPS during the E1 block (May 2024).

Some programs offer you an interview during your away rotation. Preparing your CV and personal statement early is advisable.

If you become a student member of the Emergency Medicine Residents' Association (EMRA) for \$70, you receive a new member kit and digital access to numerous helpful resources. One resource is an entire book on how to apply into EM and is very helpful.

EMRA Match is an EM specific, well-organized residency directory with specific program information and links to program websites.

Link: <https://webapps.emra.org/match/>

STANDARDIZED LETTER OF EVALUATION

Instead of the typical narrative letter of recommendation, you will receive a Standardized Letter of Evaluation (SLOE). Here is an example:

<https://emed.wisc.edu/education/medical-students/standard-letters-of-evaluation>

The SLOE provides objective data points and ranks you in comparison to other applicants. Most programs require at least 2 SLOEs. You will receive one SLOE from your UMass sub-internship and additional SLOEs from your away rotations.

Additional SLOEs can be submitted from EM electives (e.g., ultrasound) or off-service rotations. These SLOEs are not required and are less important for your application but can be useful for attaining the 3 letter minimum for applying. These non-sub-internship SLOEs are considered lower quality than those from sub-internships.

Traditional letters of recommendation may be submitted but recognize that because SLOEs are used to evaluate you clinically, a traditional letter could instead serve as a character reference or to provide insight into your contribution to scholarly work, for example.

AWAY ROTATIONS

Away rotations are required. You will need to complete at least 1 to have enough SLOEs to apply, but many students choose to complete 2 to get exposure to different programs or geographical regions. The department will provide 2024 specific information in the spring. A rotation at Baystate is another way to obtain an additional SLOE, but away rotations at other institutions are preferable for putting your foot in the door.

If you are looking to leave the Northeast for residency, you can consider doing an away rotation in your area of choice to prove to the selection committee that you are committed to moving to that area. An away rotation can help you stand out at a program in which you are highly interested, but a poor performance can hurt you, so be prepared to work hard.

Applications for away rotations can be through VSLO or institution-specific applications. They will open at various times during the spring, with some as early as January, so be sure to check each program's date online.



ENT (OTOLARYNGOLOGY)

*Information from 2021-2022 guide. May not be up to date.

SUB-INTERNSHIPS

You should plan to do 3 ENT sub internships during the summer to secure letters of recommendation. This will include 1 sub-internship at UMass and at least 2 away rotations. You will get one letter of recommendation for each sub-internship that you complete. ENT sub-internships will count as type A electives, while a separate acting internship is needed to satisfy UMass graduation requirements.

ADVISORS

Previous students found the UMass Program Director, other residency program faculty, sub-internship director, and UMass specialty advisors to be valuable advisors. These were chosen based on interactions in the hospital and work on research projects. If you have not done so already, you should reach out to one of these faculty to serve as your advisor.

SPECIFIC ADVICE

Students are advised to become involved in ENT research projects as early as possible, do away rotations, and apply broadly. Consider taking a research year if you only just decided on ENT. It is helpful to meet with a mentor and review your CV to see if a research year would be useful/necessary.

AWAY ROTATIONS

Away rotations are strongly recommended, and you should plan to do at least 2. They will give you an opportunity to secure additional letters of recommendation and express your interest. If you are looking to leave the Northeast for residency, you can consider doing an away rotation in your area of choice to prove to the selection committee that you are committed to moving to that area. An away rotation can help you stand out at a program in which you are highly interested, but a poor performance can hurt you, so be prepared to work hard during these rotations.

Applications for away rotations can be through VSAS or institution-specific applications. They will open at various times during the spring so be sure to check each program's date online.

This year, there were limited opportunities for away rotations due to COVID, as these away rotations were kept open for students without home ENT programs.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

You will need 3-4 letters of recommendation (LORs) to apply into ENT. You may need a chair letter from the Department of Otolaryngology. You should have 3 letters written by otolaryngologists, but non-ENT LORs are also accepted.



FAMILY MEDICINE

SUB-INTERNSHIPS

An acting internship in family medicine during the summer is not required. However, students found it useful to complete one during the summer to gain additional experience and secure a letter of recommendation. An acting internship in family medicine will also satisfy UMass graduation requirements.

ADVISORS

Previous students found the clerkship and acting internship directors, family medicine department chair, residency program faculty, and UMass specialty advisors to be valuable advisors. If you have not done so already, you should reach out to one of these faculty to serve as your advisor.

SPECIFIC ADVICE

If interested in family medicine, reach out to Dr. Frank Domino to be included on an email list. Through this list, you will be invited to sessions about writing a personal statement, interviewing, and making a rank list.

AWAY ROTATIONS

Away rotations are not required. However, if you are seriously interested in a program and/or looking to leave the Northeast for residency, you can consider doing an away rotation in your area of choice to prove to the selection committee that you are committed to moving to that area. An away rotation can help you stand out at a program in which you are highly interested, but a poor performance can hurt you, so be prepared to work hard during these rotations.

Applications for away rotations can be through VSLO or institution-specific applications. They will open at various times during the spring, with some as early as January, so be sure to check each program's date online.

PERSONAL STATEMENT

Occasionally, you may be expected to include program-specific information in your personal statement. This is often the case if you are applying outside of the Northeast, although some programs within the Northeast may also expect it. Look at program websites to see if they require responses to Secondary Questions or answers to specific questions included at the end of your personal statement. This information is NOT on ERAS. Programs will either email you after submission and/or not review your application until these questions are completed.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

You will need a minimum of 3 letters of recommendation (LORs) and a maximum of 4 to apply into family medicine. At least one of these should be written by a family medicine physician, although LORs written by physicians in other specialties are also accepted.



GENERAL SURGERY

SUB-INTERNSHIPS

Plan to do at least 2 UMass general surgery subls in the summer, likely June and July. Options include ACS, MIS, pedi surg, Haidak, trauma, thoracic, transplant, Surg Onc, colorectal. MIS, ACS, and pedi surg satisfy your AI requirement (you cannot double count an AI towards the Type A/B graduation requirement, so plan your schedule accordingly.) The goal of these rotations is a LOR, so identify letter writers early and tell them you're planning on asking for a letter at the end of the rotation. Avoid rotations like vascular and plastics that have their own residency. Know that attendings change frequently on ACS and trauma, which can make face time for letters harder.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

You will need a minimum of 3 letters of recommendation (LORs) to apply into general surgery. Only submit letters from surgeons. If you don't know who to ask for a LOR, talk to your residents or former students. Although most programs no longer require a Chair letter, some still do. Email Dr. Litwin's administrator (Jeanne Bigelow) early to schedule a meeting with him for a Chair letter.

ADVISORS

If you are planning to apply to general surgery, schedule meetings with both Dr. LaFemina and Dr. Carroll early. Dr. LaFemina is the PD and is extremely well versed in the process. Dr. Carroll is an excellent educational resource who will help connect you with people. Your attendings on Subls and letter writers are also helpful.

AWAY ROTATIONS

Away rotations are not required but are highly recommended. Only one away rotation is sufficient unless you are couples matching or dual applying. Aways should be done after your UMass subls (a good plan is UMass subls in June/ July/maybe August, then an away in August/September.) An away rotation outside of New England can also help show you'd leave New England for residency. Away rotations are audition rotations, so be prepared to work hard during these rotations. It is also a good idea to do an away on a service that you also did at UMass so the learning curve is less steep (ex. do a SONC away if you did SONC here.) Only do an away rotation at a place you would seriously consider for residency (and a place where you will be realistically competitive at.) Applications for away rotations can be through VSLO or institution-specific applications. They will open at various times during the spring, with some as early as January but most being March-April, so be sure to check each program's date online. APPLY EARLY - away rotations are filled based on a first come-first served basis.

SPECIFIC ADVICE

It's best to take Step 2 in May, before you start Subls. That way you will have a Step 2 score to guide making a program list, and you will likely not have time to study for Step on subls.

Surgery sub-I's are challenging, expect to work long hours. You will also be expected to take call and work 24-hour shifts. Plan your summer accordingly and try to get ahead on your applications by working on your ERAS activities/personal statement early in the summer.

PRELIMINARY/TTRANSITIONAL PROGRAMS

There are two paths in general surgery residency: categorical and preliminary. Most will apply for a categorical position. Prelim years are either for people who are doing a year of surgery before their ultimate residency destination (IR, etc.) or those who may not be as competitive for a categorical position. Discuss with your advisors if you have questions.



INTERNAL MEDICINE

SUB-INTERNSHIPS

Plan to do a medicine acting internship during the summer to secure a letter of recommendation. One sub-internship is required for application. An acting internship in medicine will also satisfy UMass graduation requirements.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

You will need a minimum of 3 letters of recommendation (LORs) to apply into internal medicine. One of these must be a chair letter from the Department of Medicine. You will receive more information about the chair letter from the Department of Medicine during the summer.

You may submit additional letters of recommendation written by physicians in other specialties, although it is generally encouraged to submit letters written by medicine faculty. You may also submit research letters if that is a part of your application you hope to highlight.

NOTE ABOUT PROGRAM TYPES

When choosing programs, you will see that many institutions offer both categorical and preliminary positions. Be sure that you are applying to the categorical positions.

AWAY ROTATIONS

Away rotations are not required, and many students do not do any, but they may be helpful in certain circumstances. If you are looking to leave the Northeast for residency, you can consider doing an away rotation in your area of choice to prove to the selection committee that you are committed to moving to that area. An away rotation can help you stand out at a program in which you are highly interested, but a poor performance can hurt you, so be prepared to work hard during these rotations.

Applications for away rotations can be through VSLO or institution-specific applications. They will open at various times during the spring, with some as early as March, so be sure to check each program's date online.

ADVISORS

Previous students found the UMass Program Director, UMass specialty advisors, and clerkship and acting internship directors to be valuable advisors. If you have not done so already, you should reach out to one of these faculty to serve as your advisor.



INTERNAL/EMERGENCY MEDICINE

*Information from 2019-2020 guide. May not be up to date.

SUB-INTERNSHIPS

At least 3 sub-internships should be completed during the summer, including 1 sub-internship in medicine and 2 sub-internships in emergency medicine. An acting internship in medicine will also satisfy UMass graduation requirements.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

You will need a minimum of 3 letters of recommendation (LORs) to apply into internal medicine/emergency medicine. At least 2 letters must be Standardized Letters of Evaluation (SLOEs), and at least 1 letter must be a medicine letter. Additional letters of recommendation written by physicians in other specialties are accepted.

ADVISORS

Previous students found the UMass Program Directors, other residency program faculty, and sub-internship directors to be valuable advisors. If you have not done so already, you should reach out to one of these faculty to serve as your advisor.

AWAY ROTATIONS

Away rotations are required. You will need to complete at least 1 away rotation in emergency medicine to have enough SLOEs to apply.

If you are looking to leave the Northeast for residency, you can consider doing an away rotation in your area of choice to prove to the selection committee that you are committed to moving to that area. An away rotation can help you stand out at a program in which you are highly interested, but a poor performance can hurt you, so be prepared to work hard during these rotations.

Applications for away rotations can be through VSLO or institution-specific applications. They will open at various times during the spring, so be sure to check each program's date online.

SPECIFIC ADVICE

It is critical to identify faculty advisors early, as significant planning is needed to schedule all the required sub-internships prior to application submission. Applicants should be able to readily articulate their motivation for applying to the combined program, including future career plans. Applicants should plan to apply to all 12 programs.



INTERVENTIONAL RADIOLOGY

SUB-INTERNSHIPS

2-3 sub-internships are suggested by the specialty and to secure letters of recommendation. For your preliminary year application, consider doing an acting internship in that specialty for a letter. Interventional radiology sub-internships will count as type A electives, while a separate acting internship is needed to satisfy UMass graduation requirements.

ADVISORS

Previous students found the UMass Program Director, other residency program faculty, current residents, research/clinical mentors, sub-internship director, and UMass specialty advisors to be valuable advisors. If you have not done so already, you should reach out to one of these faculty to serve as your advisor.

SPECIFIC ADVICE

Get involved in national societies such as SIR, RSNA, and ACR. Apply broadly since IR is very competitive. Many programs suggest applying to both IR and DR at their institution.

INTERNSHIP YEAR

You will be required to complete a separate internship year before starting your interventional radiology training. This can be a preliminary year program in medicine or surgery or a transitional year program. Please refer to the General Information page for more information.

AWAY ROTATIONS

Away rotations are strongly recommended. Before COVID, applicants generally completed 1-2. They will give you an opportunity to secure additional letters of recommendation and express your interest. If you are looking to leave the Northeast for residency, you can consider doing an away rotation in your area of choice to prove to the selection committee that you are committed to moving to that area. An away rotation can help you stand out at a program in which you are highly interested, but a poor performance can hurt you, so be prepared to work hard during these rotations.

Applications for away rotations can be through VSLO or institution-specific applications. They will open at various times during the spring, with some as early as March, so be sure to check each program's date online.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

You will need a minimum of 3 letters of recommendation (LORs) to apply into interventional radiology. In general, programs suggest 3 letters, 1 from IR and 2 from medicine, surgery, or other specialties. A fourth letter can be from a research mentor or additional IR physician. If you are applying to a preliminary year program in medicine or surgery, you will need a chair letter from the Department of Medicine or Department of Surgery, respectively.



MEDICINE/PEDIATRICS

SUB-INTERNSHIPS

Plan to do an acting internship in either medicine or pediatrics during the summer to secure a letter of recommendation and complete the graduation requirement. Most do medicine AI as it is easier to plan logistically. Additionally, plan to do electives in both medicine and pediatrics that interest you and consider the Med/Peds Westborough clinic rotation as you will secure a Med/Peds faculty letter here.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

You will need 4 letters of recommendation (LORs) to apply into medicine/pediatrics. In addition, you will need a chair letter from the Department of Medicine, and a chair letter from the Department of Pediatrics unless you only apply to programs that do not require them (~1/4 require them). Assign chair letters to programs requiring them as found on each program website. Otherwise, 3 of the 4 LORs should be written by physicians you have worked with in medicine and pediatric rotations and the 4th LOR can be from someone who knows you well. Additional letters may be obtained you can mix and match letters with different programs based on their emphasis/culture.

AWAY ROTATIONS

Away rotations are not required. However, if you are looking to leave the Northeast for residency, you can consider doing an away rotation in your area of choice to prove to the selection committee that you are committed to moving to that area. An away rotation can help you stand out at a program in which you are highly interested, but a poor performance can hurt you, so be prepared to work hard during these rotations.

Applications for away rotations can be through VSLO or institution-specific applications. They will open at various times during the spring, with some as early as January, so be sure to check each program's date online.

ADVISORS

Previous students recommend meeting with the UMass Program Director prior to ERAS due date to discuss your specific case and relative competitiveness of programs. They will host a UMass Med/Peds application advice night with the current residents. Other Med/Peds residency faculty, and UMass specialty advisors are also found to be valuable advisors. The full list of Med/Peds faculty can be found on the department website, the range of career options may impress you!

SPECIFIC ADVICE

Students not in Alpha Omega Alpha (AOA) or with lower Step scores / MS3 grades may need to apply to more programs. 2023 average applications per US MD ~30.



NEUROLOGY

SUB-INTERNSHIPS

A neurology “sub-internship” during the summer is not required. However, a neurology elective is highly recommended to secure a letter. If you are interested in more outpatient rotations, find a faculty member to sponsor your own student-designed elective. For more inpatient exposure, you can also consider the neuroICU elective too. Lastly, consider doing an acting internship in medicine during summer of 4th year for internal medicine preliminary programs.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION (LOR)

You need a minimum of 3 LORs, at least one of which is written by a neurologist. It can be nice to have at least one LOR outside of neurology too. Regardless, the best letters are always the ones that can speak most specifically to you. You can send a max of 4 letters per program but these do not all need to be the same for each program. Many internal medicine preliminary year programs will require a chair letter from the Department of Medicine. You will hear early in 4th year regarding this (not difficult at all).

ADVISORS

Previous students found Dr. Daniello, the residency faculty, clerkship director, and UMass specialty advisors to be valuable advisors. If you have not done so already, you should reach out to one or more faculty for guidance.

PROGRAM TYPES

Residency is 4 years (1 year IM + 3 years neurology). There are four general “types” of program structures:

1. Four year “categorical” program at one institution
2. Three year “advanced” program (need to find separate IM preliminary program)
3. Three year advanced program + guaranteed/linked IM preliminary year at the same institution
4. Three year advanced program + preference for selection in their IM preliminary year at the same institution

If you apply to an advanced program (not type 1), you will need to complete a preliminary year program in medicine before starting your neurology training. With every subsequent application cycle, more programs are shifting to type 1 and 3 while far fewer remain type 2. Unfortunately, the best move is to look at each program’s website to see what is offered since some institutions may simultaneously have a mixture of types 1, 3, and 4.

In general, always apply to the linked program in types 3 and 4, even if you are not very interested in that IM program. You can still apply to unlinked programs and rank them higher.

AWAY ROTATIONS

Away rotations are not necessary, but a minority of students choose to pursue them. This is most useful if you are very interested in a particular program or geographical region that is not the northeast. Doing an away rotation in another region can show that you are committed to moving to that area. An away rotation can help you stand out at a program in which you are highly interested, but poor performance can also hurt you, so be prepared to work hard during these rotations.

Applications for away rotations can be through VSAS or institution-specific applications. They will open at various times during the spring, with some as early as March, so be sure to check each program’s date online.



NEUROSURGERY

SUB-INTERNSHIPS

Plan to do at least 4 neurosurgery sub-internships during the summer to secure letters of recommendation. This will include 1 sub-internship at UMass and at least 2 away rotations. You will get one letter for each sub-internship that you complete. This year, a general surgery letter and 2 UMass sub-internships were required due to COVID. Neurosurgery sub-internships will count as type A electives, while a separate acting internship is needed to satisfy UMass graduation requirements.

ADVISORS

Previous students found the UMass Program Director, sub-internship director, and UMass specialty advisors to be valuable advisors. If you have not done so already, you should reach out to a faculty member to serve as your advisor.

Students are advised to become involved in Neurosurgery research projects as early as possible. Consider taking a research year if you only just decided on Neurosurgery. It is helpful to meet with a mentor and review your CV to see if a research year would be useful/necessary.

AWAY ROTATIONS

Away rotations are required. Historically, students complete at least 2 in order to apply into neurosurgery. Doing an away rotation will increase your chances of receiving an interview at that institution. This year, students were limited to 1 away rotation due to COVID.

If you are looking to leave the Northeast for residency, you can consider doing an away rotation in your area of choice to prove to the selection committee that you are committed to moving to that area. An away rotation can help you stand out at a program in which you are highly interested, but a poor performance can hurt you, so be prepared to work hard during these rotations.

Applications for away rotations can be through VSLO or institution-specific applications. They will open at various times during the spring, with some as early as January, so be sure to check each program's date online.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

You will need 4 letters of recommendation (LORs) to apply into neurosurgery. One of these should be a chair letter from the Department of Neurosurgery. You should plan to get a LOR from each away rotation that you complete. If you do an away rotation and do not get a letter, it may be considered a red flag. Do not plan to submit LORs written by physicians in other specialties.



OBSTETRICS/GYNECOLOGY

SUB-INTERNSHIPS

You should plan to do OB/GYN sub-internships during the summer to secure letters of recommendation. There are multiple types of sub-internships. OB/GYN sub-internships will count as type A or B1 electives, while a separate acting internship is needed to satisfy UMass graduation requirements. Some advisors recommend doing either a Maternal Fetal Medicine and/or Gynecologic Oncology sub-internship, as programs like to see completion of a traditionally “more intense” sub-internship. TIP: look at both Worcester and Baystate offerings.

ADVISORS

Previous students found the UMass Program Director, other residency faculty, UMass specialty advisors, residents, and clerkship and sub-internship directors to be valuable advisors.

The UMass OB/GYN faculty will reach out to facilitate sessions on aways, applications, and interviews, so reach out to the OB/GYN faculty to let them know you are interested in the specialty.

SPECIFIC ADVICE

APGO.org is a great resource that provides a comprehensive overview of the ob-gyn application cycle standards. In recent years, students have applied to more programs due to COVID and the increased competitiveness of the specialty. In 2022, program signaling was introduced with applicants receiving a total of 18 signals to send to programs of high interest and the majority of applicants’ interviews tend to be at signaled programs. There is a single preliminary interview release date each year, but more interviews also get released after that date.

AWAY ROTATIONS

Away rotations are not required, but they are often recommended. If you are looking to leave the Northeast for residency, you can consider doing an away rotation in your area of choice to prove to the selection committee that you are committed to moving to that area. An away rotation can help you stand out at a program in which you are highly interested, but a poor performance can hurt you, so be prepared to work hard during these rotations.

Applications for away rotations can be through VSLO or institution-specific applications. They will open at various times during the spring, with some as early as January, so be sure to check each program’s date online. Most programs require a CV and a few may ask for a letter of recommendation. Try to prepare these documents in January as many programs begin reviewing applications right after they open.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

You will need a minimum of 3-4 letters of recommendation (LORs) to apply into OB/GYN. Be sure to consult each program’s website well before applications are due. Most programs will request one of the letters be a Standardized Letter of Evaluation (SLOE) letter, which at UMass is completed by the Department of OB/GYN Chair. You will submit 2-4 individuals to OB/GYN admin that you would like to have contribute to your SLOE.

For the other 2-3 other letters, it is preferable to have them written by OB/GYN faculty. LORs written by physicians in other specialties are also accepted, but make sure you have at least one strong OB/GYN letter.



OPHTHALMOLOGY

SUB-INTERNSHIPS

Plan to do an ophthalmology sub-internship during the summer to secure a letter of recommendation. Ophthalmology sub-internships will count as type B1 electives, while a separate acting internship is required for UMass graduation requirements.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

You will need a minimum of 3 letters of recommendation (LORs) to apply into ophthalmology. A chair letter from the Department of Ophthalmology is not required, but it can help your application. At least one LOR should be written by an ophthalmologist, although LORs written by physicians in other specialties are also accepted.

ADVISORS

Previous students found the residency program faculty to be valuable advisors. If you have not done so already, you should reach out to one of these faculty to serve as your advisor.

Students are advised to become involved in Ophthalmology research projects as early as possible. Consider taking a research year if you only just decided on Ophthalmology. It is helpful to meet with a mentor and review your CV to see if a research year would be useful/necessary.

ALTUS SUITE

In the 2022-23 cycle, all applicants were required to complete the Altus Suite (Casper, Snapshot, Duet) as part of a pilot program. Casper (situational judgment test) dates were offered in July/August.

PROGRAM TYPES

By July 2023, all programs are required to be joint or integrated with an intern year. These intern years are completed at the same hospital as the ophthalmology residency. Integrated interns are overseen by the ophthalmology program, while joint interns are overseen by medicine or surgery. You will not need to apply to separate preliminary or transitional year internships. The AUPO has Medical Student Resources online including FAQs and prior match statistics.

AWAY ROTATIONS

Away rotations are not required, but they are often recommended. If you are looking to leave the Northeast for residency, you can consider doing an away rotation to demonstrate commitment to moving to that area. An away rotation can help you stand out at a program in which you are highly interested, but poor performance can hurt you, so be prepared to work hard. Applications for away rotations can be through VSLO or institution-specific applications. They will open throughout April, so be sure to check each program's date online.

SAN FRANCISCO MATCH

Ophthalmology programs participate in the San Francisco Match instead of the standard NRMP match. This means you will submit your rank list and find out your match results in January/February. You will still need to register for the NRMP match as joint programs require you submit a rank list for your intern year. Some programs require supplemental essays; check the SF Match program descriptions and program websites for requirements.

EYE EXAM

Some programs require an eye exam with stereo and color vision done within the last year. Check each program's website early to see if this applies.



ORTHOPAEDIC SURGERY

SUB-INTERNSHIPS

Traditionally, students do at least 4 Orthopaedic surgery sub-internships (1 at UMass, at least 3 away. In the era of no step 1 scores, a 5th sub would be advantageous.. Orthopaedic surgery sub-internships will count as type A electives, while a separate acting internship is needed to satisfy UMass graduation requirements.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

You will need 4 letters of recommendation (LORs) to apply into Orthopaedic surgery. One of these letters should be a chair letter from the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery. Most programs require electronic Standardized Letters of Recommendation (eSLOR), while some still accept traditional narrative letters. Most letter writers will complete both if you send the necessary ERAS and American Orthopaedic Association (AOA) links. Check each program's website for specific requirements. Do not plan to submit any LORs written by physicians in other specialties. It is important to obtain letters of recommendations from your away rotations and make sure to assign these away letters when applying to the corresponding institutions.

ADVISORS

Previous students found the UMass Program Director, other residency faculty, and residents to be valuable advisors. If you have not done so already, you should reach out to Dr. Nicola DeAngelis or Dr. Marci Jones.

Students are advised to become involved in Orthopaedic research projects as early as possible. It is helpful to meet with Dr. DeAngelis prior to applying for away rotations to review your CV and see if a research year would be useful/necessary.

STANDARDIZED LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION (SLOR)

The American Orthopaedic Association and the Council of Orthopaedic Residency Directors are moving away from the typical narrative LORs in favor of an electronic Standardized Letter of Recommendation (eSLOR). The instructions for sending this letter are attached here:

<https://www.aoassn.org/standardized-electronic-letter-of-recommendation-eslor/>

The eSLOR provides objective data points and ranks you in comparison to other applicants. Since many programs still accept traditional narrative letters, you may ask for both types of letters.

AWAY ROTATIONS

Away rotations are required in order for your application to be competitive. You should plan to do at least 3 away rotations. If you are looking to leave the Northeast for residency, you can consider doing an away rotation in your area of choice to prove to the selection committee that you are committed to moving to that area. An away rotation can help you stand out at a program in which you are highly interested, but a poor performance can hurt you, so be prepared to work hard during these rotations. The residents are a great resource to figure out the programs at which you may be interested in rotating.

Applications for away rotations can be through VSLO or institution-specific applications. They will open at various times in early spring so be sure to check each program's date online.

Students can also express interest in programs by attending virtual conferences, lectures, resident happy hours, and open houses, many of which are publicized on program websites or Instagram accounts.



PEDIATRICS

SUB-INTERNSHIPS

An acting internship in pediatrics during the summer (prior to the application deadline) is not required. However, most electives and sub-internships over the summer should be in Pediatrics to gain additional experience and secure letters of recommendation (LoRs).

Acting internship spots are limited at University campus. Placements are held via lottery to determine a University or Baystate campus spot. Alternatively, some students may have to do an acting internship in family medicine or internal medicine if there are space limitations.

Given the popularity of this specialty, Pediatric electives are also assigned via lottery. If you do not receive optimal electives, previous students have found it helpful to make a student-designed elective with a faculty of your choice.

ADVISORS

Previous students found the UMass Program Director, UMass specialty advisors, and clerkship and sub-internship directors to be valuable advisors. Reach out to Dr. Tim Gibson if you are considering Pediatrics. If you have not done so already, you should reach out to a faculty member to serve as your advisor.

AWAY ROTATIONS

Away rotations are not required. However, given virtual interviews, it can be helpful to get an in-person feel of a program you are particularly interested in. Additionally, if you are looking to leave the Northeast for residency, you can consider doing an away rotation in your area of choice to prove to the selection committee that you are committed to moving to that area. An away rotation can help you stand out at a program in which you are highly interested, but a poor performance can hurt you, so be prepared to work hard during these rotations.

Applications for away rotations can be through VSLO or institution-specific applications. They will open at various times during the spring, with some as early as January, so be sure to check each program's date online. The earlier you submit your away application, the better chance you have of solidifying away rotations early on.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

You will need a minimum of 3 letters of recommendation to apply into pediatrics. Some programs will also require a chair letter from the Department of Pediatrics, a letter from the Program Director, or a letter from the clerkship director. Be sure to consult each program's website well before applications are due. At least one letter should be written by a pediatrician, although LORs written by physicians in other specialties are also accepted.



PLASTIC SURGERY

SUB-INTERNSHIPS

Plan to do at least 3 plastic surgery sub-internships during the summer to secure letters of recommendation. This will include 1 sub-internship at UMass and at least 2 away rotations. Plastic surgery sub-internships will count as type A electives, while a separate acting internship is needed to satisfy UMass graduation requirements.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

You will need a minimum of 3 letters of recommendation (LORs) to apply into plastic surgery. Do not plan to submit any LORs that are not written by a plastic surgeon. There is a templated LOR form recommended to be filled out by your letter authors in addition to their letter. Instructions for how to send this form to your letter authors can be found on ERAS/PSCA.

ADVISORS

Previous students found the UMass Program Director and UMass specialty advisors to be valuable advisors. If you have not done so already, you should reach out to one of these faculty to serve as your advisor.

Students are advised to become involved in Plastics research projects as early as possible. It is helpful to meet with an advisor to review your CV and see if a research year would be useful/necessary.

AWAY ROTATIONS

Away rotations are required. You will need to complete at least 2 in order to apply into plastic surgery. Some institutions will guarantee an interview and automatically rank you if you do an away rotation there, while others do not guarantee this.

If you are looking to leave the Northeast for residency, you can consider doing an away rotation in your area of choice to prove to the selection committee that you are committed to moving to that area. An away rotation can help you stand out at a program in which you are highly interested, but a poor performance can hurt you, so be prepared to work hard during these rotations.

Applications for away rotations can be through VSLO or institution-specific applications. They will open at various times during the spring, with some as early as January, so be sure to check each program's date online.

SUPPLEMENTAL APPLICATIONS

The Plastic Surgery Common Application (PSCA) is being piloted at many programs. There is currently a mix of programs requiring only the PSCA, both PSCA and ERAS, and only ERAS.



PM&R

*Information from 2019-2020 guide. May not be up to date.

SUB-INTERNSHIPS

Plan to do a PM&R sub-internship during the summer to secure a letter of recommendation. For your preliminary year application, consider doing an acting internship in that specialty for a letter. PM&R sub-internships will count as type A electives, while a separate acting internship is needed to satisfy UMass graduation requirements.

ADVISORS

Previous students found the UMass specialty advisors to be valuable advisors. If you have not done so already, you should reach out to one of these faculty to serve as your advisor.

INTERNSHIP YEAR

You will be required to complete a separate internship year before starting your PM&R training. This can be a preliminary year program in medicine or surgery or a transitional year program. Please refer to the General Information page for more information.

AWAY ROTATIONS

Away rotations are not required but are often recommended. If you are looking to leave the Northeast for residency, you can consider doing an away rotation in your area of choice to prove to the selection committee that you are committed to moving to that area. An away rotation can help you stand out at a program in which you are highly interested, but a poor performance can hurt you, so be prepared to work hard during these rotations.

Applications for away rotations can be through VSLO or institution-specific applications. They will open at various times during the spring, with some as early as January, so be sure to check each program's date online.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

You will need a minimum of 3 letters of recommendation (LORs) to apply into PM&R. If you are applying to a preliminary year program in medicine or surgery, you will need a chair letter from the Department of Medicine or Department of Surgery, respectively. At least one LOR should be written by a PM&R physician, although LORs written by physicians in other specialties are also accepted.



PSYCHIATRY

SUB-INTERNSHIPS

Plan to do 2 psychiatry sub-internships/rotations during the summer to secure letters of recommendation. Psychiatry sub-internships will count as type A electives, while a separate acting internship is needed to satisfy UMass graduation requirements.

ADVISORS

Previous students found the UMass Program Director, other residency program faculty, sub-internship and clerkship directors, and UMass specialty advisors to be valuable advisors. If you have not done so already, you should reach out to a faculty member to serve as your advisor.

AWAY ROTATIONS

Away rotations are not required, but they may be helpful in certain circumstances. If you are looking to leave the Northeast for residency, you can consider doing an away rotation in your area of choice to prove to the selection committee that you are committed to moving to that area. An away rotation can help you stand out at a program in which you are highly interested, but a poor performance can hurt you, so be prepared to work hard during these rotations.

Applications for away rotations can be through VSLO or institution-specific applications. They will open at various times during the spring, so be sure to check each program's date online.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

You will need a minimum of 3 letters of recommendation (LORs) to apply into psychiatry. At least 1 letter should be written by a psychiatrist, although your application is more competitive with 2.

You will also need a letter from the Department of Medicine (faculty or chair letter) that speaks to your ability to manage medically complex patients. LORs written by physicians in other specialties are also accepted.



RADIATION ONCOLOGY

SUB-INTERNSHIPS

Plan to do a radiation oncology sub-internship at another institution during the summer to secure a letter of recommendation, as UMass does not have a Rad Onc residency program. If applying to a preliminary year application, consider doing an acting internship in that specialty for a letter. Radiation oncology sub-internships will count as type A electives, while a separate acting internship is needed to satisfy UMass graduation requirements.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

You will need a minimum of 3 letters of recommendation (LORs) to apply into radiation oncology. At least one of these should be written by a radiation oncologist, although LORs written by physicians in other specialties are also accepted. For your preliminary year program, you will need a chair letter from the Department of Medicine or Department of Surgery.

RESEARCH

You will need extensive research experience to apply into radiation oncology. Consider reaching out to physicians in the UMass Radiation Oncology department about getting involved in their current research projects.

INTERNSHIP YEAR

You will be required to complete a separate internship year before starting your radiation oncology training. This can be a preliminary year program in medicine or surgery or a transitional year program. Please refer to the General Information page for more information.

AWAY ROTATIONS

Away rotations are required. You will need to complete at least 1 in order to apply into radiation oncology. One student in the class of 2020 completed 3 to get enough letters because UMass does not have a residency program. To prepare for this rotation, consider enrolling in the Radiation Oncology FCE to gain experience.

If you are looking to leave the Northeast for residency, you should consider doing an away rotation in your area of choice to express your commitment to moving. An away rotation can help you stand out at a program in which you are highly interested, but a poor performance can hurt you, so be prepared to work hard.

Applications for away rotations can be through VSLO or institution-specific applications. They will open at various times during the spring, so be sure to check each program's date online.

ADVISORS

Students have found the UMass specialty advisors to be valuable advisors. If you have taken the Radiation Oncology FCE, the course director may be open to mentoring you or helping you find a mentor.



RADIOLOGY

SUB-INTERNSHIPS

The electives Diagnostic Radiology (usually taken first if possible) and Hands-On Diagnostic Radiology are both recommended for obtaining a radiology letter and getting experience in the field but are not explicitly required. The Vascular/Interventional Radiology elective is recommended if applying IR. If applying to a preliminary year program, consider doing an acting internship in that specialty for a letter, as it is also needed to satisfy UMass graduation requirements.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

You will need a minimum of 3 letters of recommendation (LORs) to apply into radiology. If you are applying to preliminary year programs in medicine or surgery, you will need a chair letter from the Department of Medicine or Department of Surgery, respectively. One LOR should be written by a radiologist, and LORs written by physicians in other clinical specialties are recommended for the other letters.

SPECIFIC ADVICE

Students recommend doing the Hands-on Diagnostic Radiology elective and an acting internship prior to applying.

INTERNSHIP YEAR

You will be required to complete a separate internship year before starting your radiology training. This can be a preliminary year program in medicine or surgery or a transitional year program. Please refer to the General Information page for more information.

AWAY ROTATIONS

Away rotations are not required in radiology, but they may be helpful in certain circumstances. If you are looking to leave the Northeast for residency, you can consider doing an away rotation in your area of choice to prove to the selection committee that you are committed to moving to that area. An away rotation can help you stand out at a program in which you are highly interested, but a poor performance can hurt you, so be prepared to work hard during these rotations.

Applications for away rotations can be through VSLO or institution-specific applications. They will open at various times during the spring, so be sure to check each program's date online.

ADVISORS

Previous students found the UMass Program Director and UMass specialty advisors to be valuable advisors. If you have not done so already, you should reach out to one of these faculty to serve as your advisor.



THORACIC SURGERY

*Information from 2021-2022 guide. May not be up to date.

SUB-INTERNSHIPS

Plan to do at least 2-3 thoracic surgery sub-internships during the summer to secure letters of recommendation. Thoracic surgery sub-internships will count as type A electives, while a separate acting internship is needed to satisfy UMass graduation requirements.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

You will need a minimum of 3 letters of recommendation (LORs) to apply into thoracic surgery. At least 2 should be from cardiac or thoracic surgeons. Some programs require chair letters, so check the program websites first. Do not plan to submit any LORs that are not written by surgeons.

ADVISORS

Previous students found the residency faculty and clinical faculty to be valuable advisors. If you have not done so already, you should reach out to her or another faculty member to serve as your advisor.

AWAY ROTATIONS

Away rotations are not required but are recommended. If you are looking to leave the Northeast for residency, you can consider doing an away rotation in your area of choice to prove to the selection committee that you are committed to moving to that area. An away rotation can help you stand out at a program in which you are highly interested, but a poor performance can hurt you, so be prepared to work hard during these rotations.

Applications for away rotations can be through VSLO or institution-specific applications. They will open at various times during the spring, so be sure to check each program's date online.

RESEARCH

It is highly recommended that you have research in the field for your application to be considered competitive. While publications are ideal, you can still apply with ongoing projects that have not yet been published.

It is helpful to meet with an advisor to review your CV and see if a research year would be useful/necessary.

SPECIFIC ADVICE

All thoracic surgery applicants should also apply to general surgery regardless of the competitiveness of their application. Many programs have a minimum Step 1 cutoff of 230 but do not publish this. Reach out to the thoracic surgery faculty as soon as you decide to apply.



UROLOGY

***Information from 2021-2022 guide. May not be up to date.**

SUB-INTERNSHIPS

Plan to do at least 2-3 urology sub-internships during the summer to secure letters of recommendation. This will include 1 sub-internship at UMass and at least 2 away rotations. Urology sub-internships will count as type A electives, while a separate acting internship is needed to satisfy UMass graduation requirements.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

You will need a minimum of 3 letters of recommendation (LoRs) to apply into urology. One of these should be a chair letter from the Department of Urology. Do not plan to submit any LoRs that are not written by a urologist.

ADVISORS

Previous students found the UMass Program Director and residency program faculty to be valuable advisors. If you have not done so already, you should reach out to one of these faculty to serve as your advisor.

It is helpful to meet with an advisor to review your CV and see if a research year would be useful/necessary.

AWAY ROTATIONS

Away rotations are required. You will need to complete at least 2 to apply into urology. One student in the Class of 2020 completed 3 to see different types of programs and to have more networking opportunities.

If you are looking to leave the Northeast for residency, you can consider doing an away rotation in your area of choice to prove to the selection committee that you are committed to moving to that area. An away rotation can help you stand out at a program in which you are highly interested, but a poor performance can hurt you, so be prepared to work hard during these rotations.

Applications for away rotations can be through VSLO or institution-specific applications. They will open at various times during the spring, with some as early as February, so be sure to check each program's date online.

AUA MATCH

Urology programs do not participate in the standard NRMP Match. Instead, they participate in the American Urological Association (AUA) Match. This means that you will submit your rank list and find out the results of your match in January.



VASCULAR SURGERY

SUB-INTERNSHIPS

Plan to do 3 vascular surgery sub-internships during the summer to secure letters of recommendation. This will include 1 sub-internship at UMass and at least 2 away rotations. Vascular surgery sub-internships will count as type A electives, while a separate acting internship is needed to satisfy UMass graduation requirements.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

You will need a minimum of 3 letters of recommendation (LoRs) to apply into vascular surgery. Maximum of 4 letters. These should be written by vascular surgeons from your sub-internships.

Keep in mind that if you plan on dual-applying into general surgery, you should get at least one letter from a general surgeon. This most likely will require doing a sub-internship with general surgery as well.

ADVISORS

Previous students found the UMass Program Director and Department Chair to be valuable advisors. If you have not done so already, you should reach out to her or another faculty member to serve as your advisor. Oftentimes, faculty at away rotations will also serve as advisors and are great to get advice/guidance from.

AWAY ROTATIONS

Away rotations are required. You will need to complete at least 1, but 2 is preferred, in order to apply into vascular surgery.

If you are looking to leave the Northeast for residency, you can consider doing an away rotation in your area of choice to prove to the selection committee that you are committed to moving to that area. An away rotation can help you stand out at a program in which you are highly interested, but a poor performance can hurt you, so be prepared to work hard during these rotations. The UMass sub-internship in Vascular Surgery will prepare you well for these away rotations.

Applications for away rotations are mostly through VSLO. They will open at various times during the spring, so be sure to check each program's date online.

RESEARCH

It is highly recommended that you have research in the field for your application to be considered competitive. While publications are ideal, you can still apply with ongoing projects that have not yet been published. Most importantly, the research is to demonstrate interest in the field. They will want to learn more about it during interviews, so make sure you are involved in the project and can explain your roles.