

### **Tips to help observers match into a residency program**

- All communications with a program should be formal. Use proper grammar, proper spelling, proper greetings, etc. Never send an email in haste. Improper communications may result in your application not being reviewed. This is true for both observership and residency applications.
- Many programs list communication preferences on the web site. Often programs prefer email communications and very minimal phone inquiries.
- Always visit a program's web site to review specific program requirements and learn what makes a program unique. Due to volume, many programs will not respond to email or phone call inquiries on program requirements.
- Visit the NRMP web site to review deadlines and procedures for applying to residency programs.
- It can be difficult to be an observer given associated constraints with observerships. Ensure you follow each program's constraints, but also make the most of your experience.
- An observership may help obtain residency interviews, but it does not guarantee a residency interview with the program where you completed the observership.
- Clinical observerships are a good way to learn about how specific rotations and hospital systems work in the United States. Take advantage of these by being as integrated into the team as possible. Meet with the faculty and supervising resident early in the month regarding expectations. Treat the month like an interview. If you would like a letter of recommendation, do not ask on your first day. It's better to spend a couple weeks with your team before requesting a letter. A letter is not guaranteed!
- When applying to residency programs, make sure your application in ERAS is complete! Your application may not be reviewed if you do not have a complete application. Often programs list their application requirements on their web site.
- Have someone (preferably a person with English as first language) read your personal statement and give you feedback. Make sure there are NO grammatical or spelling errors. After reading your personal statement, one should have a grasp on the following: Who you are, why you are choosing medicine, what makes you unique, and future clinical aspirations. Your personal statement should be a maximum of 1 page single spaced.
- There are many web sites and books that offer tips for getting into a residency program and some are targeted to International Medical Graduates. Read them prior to applying to programs or completing observerships. Always treat an observership as an interview.