Internships:

Ready to get started on your first year of post-graduate training?

Here’s some help to get you started.

According to AOA definitions, an internship is an educational program requiring extensive participation in patient care. It serves as the link between pre-doctoral and post-doctoral clinical training and provides a year of maturation and transition from application of pre-doctoral knowledge to clinical decision-making skills. The internship exposes graduates to core disciplines including internal medicine, family practice, general surgery, obstetrics/gynecology, pediatrics and emergency medicine.

Internships are offered in the following formats:

- Traditional rotating internship: provides a broad-based, rotating curriculum covering each core discipline.
- Special emphasis internship: provides a broad-based curriculum covering each core discipline with an emphasis in a particular specialty area but does not grant residency credit but fulfills only internship requirements.
- Specialty track internship: provides the majority of rotations in a specific specialty but also provide exposure to the core disciplines. This program grants joint credit for the internship and first year of residency training.

If you are thinking about practicing in a state which requires a traditional rotating osteopathic internship, (Florida, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Oklahoma, West Virginia) you must begin your search on the opportunities link on the AOA website:  http://opportunities.aoa-net.org/index.htm

Depending on your field of interest, you may want to choose an internship within an institution you want to stay at for residency, or which is linked to a specific residency program.

Make sure to start working on your applications early. Registration for internship and residency is now done electronically on ERAS at http://www.aamc.org/students/eras/start.htm.

As you are working on applications, here are some tips:

- Get started early! Make sure to work on personal statements and obtain letters of recommendation well in advance! It may even be helpful to begin requesting letters from your preceptors in your third year so that you will have plenty of opportunity to get a few really strong ones.
- When trying to add a little spice to your application, consider adding details that an interviewer may find interesting. Despite what you may read in some places, you can put hobbies on your application, but don’t put boring adjectives such as “reading” instead put “reading English literature” or instead of “exercising” put “cross-country skiing.” Specific interests may give you an edge and a connection to an interviewer!
- Practice questions before your interviews and go to each website before the interview to learn more about the program. The most common question you will be asked is what questions do you have for me? Sound easy? Think again – especially on interview number gazillion!
• Think about questions to ask your interviewers about topics such as mentoring, didactics, changes in the program, elective time, research opportunities, etc. Stay away from benefits, resident free-time, work hours, and anything about the word “malignant.”
  o Let program directors know if you are couples matching, you can get each other interviews!!!
• Consider sending written Thank you notes to all program directors and/or interviewers after all interviews. There is no hard and fast rule, but all correspondence with programs goes into your file that is reviewed when their rank committee meets. It can’t hurt to look like you’re very interested in their program.
• Keep in mind your future goals and tailor your internship experience to those goals!

For positions beginning in 2006, the AOA is implementing the Electronic Residency Application Service (ERAS) for students to use to apply to programs. ERAS is a separate and distinct service from the Match. ERAS is used by students to apply to programs, while the Match determines the final placement of students into programs. Information on the use of ERAS to apply to osteopathic programs is available by clicking the Students and Residents option.

Interviews are conducted according to schedules announced by individual training institutions. Students are responsible for contacting individual institutions and for arranging their own interviews. It is advisable to interview with several programs in order to make an informed decision regarding the best program for your individual needs.

Prior to submitting preferences for the Match, students and institutions are expected to communicate openly and honestly with each other, to ensure the best possible match of interns and training programs. Institutions must provide complete and accurate information to applicants concerning the position(s) available, including all requirements for eligibility for appointment.

Students and institutions may express their interest in each other and may discuss their expected rankings of each other. Institutions may inform their most preferred applicants that they are in a favored position, and students may similarly inform their most preferred programs. However, institutions and students must not make statements implying or requesting a commitment, and must not pressure each other to reveal their ranking intentions. Although institutions or students may volunteer how they plan to rank each other, they must not request such information. Volunteered information must be limited to "very likely", "likely", or "unlikely" to rank in a top position.

Students and institutions must not make any verbal or written commitments or contracts for appointment prior to the release of the Match results. Any such verbal or written commitments are non-binding and have no effect on the Match. Institutions shall not impose or enforce local requirements in an attempt to subvert the fair application of these rules. Institutions violating Match rules by requesting ranking information from students, or by requiring students to make verbal or written commitments or contracts before the release of the Match results, may be sanctioned by the AOA and prohibited from recruiting in the subsequent Match.

The Rank Order Lists submitted by students and programs for the Match will be the sole determinant of their respective preferences for the Match. Only the official Match results constitute binding obligations between students and institutions.

**Participating in the Match**
The Match is administered on behalf of the AOA by National Matching Services Inc. (NMS). Each student must register directly with NMS in order to be eligible for participation in the Match.

To register for participation in the Match, each student must complete an Applicant Agreement and return it, together with the Match registration fee, to NMS. Click here to obtain instructions and forms from the National Matching Services web site that can be used to register for the Match. Agreements and fees should be received at NMS by October 13, 2006.

The AOA charges a fee of $65.00 U.S. to each applicant who registers for the Match. This registration fee is non-refundable, and is collected by NMS on behalf of the AOA. Payment of the applicant fee to National Matching Services Inc. must be by check or money order drawn on a U.S. or Canadian bank, or by an International postal money order (NOT a U.S. postal money order). Only signed Agreements sent with the full $65.00 U.S. applicant registration fee payable to National Matching Services Inc. will be accepted.

Following receipt of the Agreement and fee, NMS will send a confirmation of registration directly to each student registered for the Match by e-mail.

By the end of November, NMS will provide additional information on the Match to registered students and institutions. Students or institutions intending to participate in the Match who have not received an information package by the end of November should contact NMS at (416) 977-3431 or (716) 282-4013.

Following interviews, students will identify on their Rank Order Lists, in numerical order of preference (first choice, second choice, etc.), the internship programs where they would like to serve as interns. Students should include on their Rank Order Lists only those programs where they would agree to accept a contract. Likewise, institutions identify on the programs' Rank Order Lists the students to whom they are prepared to offer contracts, in numerical order of preference. The results of the Match are binding for both the students and the institutions.

Students may list as many or as few programs as they wish on their Rank Order Lists. However, listing too few programs may decrease the probability of a match taking place.

Match participants will be required to enter their Rank Order Lists for the Match via the internet. All students and programs must submit their completed Rank Order List no later than January 26, 2007.

There are rare circumstances when, at the last moment, an approved internship program is discontinued or does not participate in the Match process. If this should happen, any student's Rank Order List indicating such a program will be processed without that program. This will have the effect of moving the remaining programs up in the preference ranking.

COUPLES: Two applicants who are participating in the Match at the same time and who wish to coordinate their matches (e.g. obtain positions in the same location) may participate in the Match as a “Couple”. The matching of couples to positions in proximity to each other involves special procedures which allow the members of a couple to submit “pairs” of program rankings. Instructions regarding the submission of Rank Order Lists by couples will be included in the information provided to students in November.
The AOA accredits three kinds of internships:

Traditional Rotating: Institutions have flexibility in designing the composition of a traditional rotating internship. When interviewing for positions, students should discuss and negotiate directly with the institution about the specialty curricula included in a rotating internship.

Special Emphasis: The focus of the internship is within a particular specialty, but the internship DOES NOT reduce the total number of years of postdoctoral training required for specialty training. Special emphasis internships can be offered in anesthesiology, emergency medicine, family medicine, general surgery, psychiatry and diagnostic radiology.

Specialty Track: The internship may reduce the total number of years of postdoctoral training. Specialty track internships can be offered in internal medicine, internal medicine/pediatrics, obstetrics/gynecology, otolaryngology/facial plastic surgery, pediatrics, and urological surgery. Such programs can only be offered by institutions with existing AOA-approved osteopathic residencies in these specialties.

In addition to specialty training within an internship, many positions are offered in the Match as combined internship/residency programs, as described in the next section. These programs link the internship program directly with a residency program for subsequent training in a particular specialty.

During discussions with students, institutions should indicate the various options for specialty training and program types offered by the institution, and indicate how they expect applicants to designate preferences for each of the specialty curricula on their Rank Order Lists. As discussed above, for a match between a student and an institution to occur, both must indicate the same internship program on their Lists. It is the responsibility of the institution and the students to ensure the correct Code Numbers for each program are used when submitting Rank Order Lists. In previous years, a few expected matches did not in fact occur because the student ranked a particular program in the institution while the institution ranked the student on a Rank Order List for a different program.

If you are applying to only allopathic programs, you can start looking for residencies directly. Please see the allopathic residency page for more information.