



Information for Fourth Year Upstate Medical Students: Planning a Residency in Pediatrics

The American Academy of Pediatrics offers additional information for medical students and residents on their “YoungPeds Network,” <http://tinyurl.com/AAPstudentResource>.

To be considered for this specialty, what is the Step 1 score range?

Students generally score above 200 for pediatric residencies. In our program, we have accepted applicants in a range of scores from just below 200 to above 250.

If your score is low and you feel it does not reflect your abilities, do not let that deter you from applying to a good pediatric program. When developing rank order lists, programs look closely at letters of reference, class rank/quartile and your interview experience.

Do students need to be at the top of the class to be competitive in this specialty?

There are 194 pediatric categorical residency programs in the US. In 2014, there were 2,640 positions available and 3,993 applications for those positions. Of these, 2,065 were US applicants. The pediatric programs enrolled 1,818 US seniors, with the rest of the positions filled by non-US graduates. That means US seniors filled 68.9 percent of the positions. You have a good chance of getting a pediatric residency if you are a US graduate. (See <http://www.nrmp.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Main-Match-Results-and-Data-2014.pdf>.) Note that each state is different. The percent of accepted US graduates ranges from 9.4% (NJ) to 93% (CO). New York State had 362 positions in 2014, and 186 were filled by US graduates.

Your class quartile will likely be considered when programs rank you (just like USMLE scores). If you are at the top of your class, you can consider very competitive programs. If you are at the bottom of your class, your chances will depend on the number of US graduates that are applying during your graduating year. Try not to go too crazy applying to many schools. Please talk to one of our pediatric faculty for help in refining your list of programs and assistance with your personal statement.

Is research a strong consideration for candidacy in this specialty?

Anything that you do that enables your application to stand out from others will be beneficial to you. If you have an interest in an area of research, many programs will identify a faculty member with the same interests who will interview you. It will be important to come prepared to share your enthusiasm for whatever projects you have listed on your CV. Large pediatric programs with strong fellowship programs often look at the research component of your portfolio. In general, however, research is not a strong consideration for candidacy in pediatrics.

How important are away electives? Acting internships?

An acting internship can be an important time for you to learn inpatient pediatrics and prepare for some aspects of residency training. Your application can be enhanced by a strong letter from an attending who knows your work well. You may find that the acting internship is a good

opportunity for you to show your best work. However, if you do not get an opportunity to do an acting internship prior to sending in your residency applications, it is not an essential part of the application packet. In fact, some people recommend doing the acting internship after your rank order list is submitted, reducing the pressure to “perform” and giving you a more realistic opportunity to learn.

Away electives can be helpful in guiding you to learn about other programs. For example, if you are interested in a pediatric program in your home town, an away elective at that institution can help you to get the insider’s view of the program. The Upstate Golisano Children’s Hospital offers many pediatric electives with excellent faculty, and we hope that you will consider taking electives here as well.

If students did well on Step 1, should they try to take Step 2 before the rank order lists are due?

Most of our applicants have taken Step 2 prior to the due date of the rank order list. Upstate students, even if they have done well on Step 1, are at a disadvantage if they do not take this exam because it limits comparability to other schools and students. If you have a low score on Step 1 and have not taken Step 2, you are at a disadvantage.

Should letters of recommendations all come from this specialty or should you also have others?

You should get letters from faculty that know you the best and who are willing to write a “good” or “strong” letter for you. You should have at least two of the three from clinical pediatric faculty so that it does not look like you are applying to other residency programs and are using pediatrics as a backup.

What do you want students to know about your program in particular?

Our program is a medium-sized program located in a children’s hospital within a hospital. Our faculty numbers are large, with a 1:1 faculty to student ratio and with a depth of specialty representation that is unusual for a program of this size. Our patient population is varied and includes a diverse representation from over 17 counties. Faculty and residents are dedicated to teaching, and we have a strong advisor program. We support our residents in their individual goals, including research, advocacy, underserved, international health and other interests through our unique pathways program. Graduating residents seek positions in primary care or subspecialties with equal zeal, and almost all graduates are able to find positions in their first choice of subspecialty program. Our American Board of Pediatrics pass rate over the past five years is at the national average. Faculty and residents are a close-knit group, and we are continuously trying to improve our program.

Does your specialty require a chair’s letter?

Not all programs require a chair’s letter. Our program only requires three letters, and we do not require a letter from the chair. We find that letters from faculty that know you well are far more helpful. Our chair, Dr. Welch, sets up appointments for fourth year students beginning in the week after Labor Day. He will meet with you, review your portfolio and write a supportive letter within 48 hours of the meeting. Dr. Welch will also use the chair letter meeting to review your tentative list of programs, discuss any particular strengths or possible weaknesses in your application, critique your personal statement, and provide any additional information or help.