

Guidance Statement from the Association of Program Directors in Vascular Surgery
Regarding the 2023/2024 Application Cycle

On behalf of the APDVS Executive Council (Lee JT, Coleman DM, Sheahan M, Pearce BJ, Velasquez G)

Thank you to all Program Directors and program leadership for your engagement, participation, and energy in making the 2022/2023 Match cycle a success for Vascular Surgery. We saw a record number of applications for residency and fellowship as interest in our specialty continues to improve. The efforts of our collective group in recruitment, innovation, and adaptation to changing landscapes of interview processes have led to successful Match rates for the past several years. This immediate past year, the APDVS successfully launched the Vascular In-person for Students In the maTch (VISIT) Trial with preliminary data suggesting over half of our applicants adjusted rank lists based on visits to programs. While our training programs continue adjusting and learning how to best interview based on local rules and optimizing the Match for their institution, we should strive to remain consistent in our recruitment efforts in terms of equity, fairness, and transparency in the interview process. In particular, medical student away rotations have been and likely will continue to be governed by local institutional and regional policies.

In response, the APDVS issues the following guidelines to vascular surgery program directors in the United States regarding the upcoming application cycle for Integrated Vascular Surgery Residencies.

Recommendations:

The priorities in offering these recommendations are to promote an equitable and transparent application, interview, and match process, as well as to safeguard the vascular surgical education of medical students. In light of these priorities, our recommendations are as follows. We ask that each program director and institutional leadership team review the documents from the AAMC ([Interviews in GME, Where Do We Go From Here?](#)). Briefly summarized, the table below gives general recommendations which we want to offer to our APDVS membership.

Table 1. Reasons you might choose one interview format over another and steps to success for each.

Interview Format	Reasons You Might Choose an Interview Format	Steps to Success
Virtual Only	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many applicants are out-of-state or require travel. • Commitment to reducing carbon footprint. • Flexibility in scheduling. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer virtual recruiting activities to all applicants. • Develop technology standards and training for faculty conducting virtual interviews.
Hybrid (<i>i.e., an applicant can select either in-person or virtual interviews</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mix of local and out-of-state applicant pool. • Need to showcase less well-known or rural area. • Flexibility in scheduling. • Gives applicants and faculty choice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement policies, procedures, and interviewer training to ensure standardization across formats and to mitigate risk of bias. • Ensure admissions/selection committees are blinded to interview format. • Inform applicants about steps taken to make the hybrid approach equitable. • Offer virtual recruiting activities to all applicants.
In-Person Only	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most applicants are not out-of-state or do not require extended travel plans. • Need to showcase less well-known or rural area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer financial support to applicants who may need it for travel.

- **We recommend individual programs review options presented by the AAMC and carefully consider advantages and risks of the different options. Mitigation strategies should be outlined to applicants by individual programs based on what they choose to offer.**
- **Programs are encouraged to send out interview invitations for integrated Residency between Monday, October 24th and Monday, October 31st and allow up to one week for the candidates to respond before extending an offer to a different applicant. As programs select interview dates this fall and winter, a publicly available calendar will be on the APDVS website to attempt to avoid conflicts as possible.**

- **Holistic review of applications is strongly recommended as part of the Vascular Surgery residency selection process. This includes:**
 - **USMLE Step 1 and COMLEX Level 1 scores should be de-emphasized since it is PASS/FAIL in the 2023-2024 Application Cycle.**
 - **Programs should disclose how Step 2 and COMLEX Level 2 will be considered.**
- **We strongly urge programs to only offer the number of interviews positions available and disclose expectations to applicants about interview response time.**

The situation is constantly evolving. The APDVS will continue to monitor and may periodically issue further guidance to promote a safe and equitable match process.