

SNS Policy on External Medical Student Rotations and Interviews in the 2021-2022 recruitment cycle

In light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the usual scheduling of Sub-internships, Acting-internships, away medical school rotations in neurosurgery (Sub-Is), and in-person interviews pose a challenge. **Safety, education, and equity** for our students, our institutions, our patients, and our communities, are paramount in the following decisions.

External rotations for medical students are integral to the application process for:

1. student experience in the depth and breadth of neurological surgery prior to committing to a specialty.
2. education in preparation for internship.
3. letters of recommendation to assist programs in the evaluation of medical student applicants.

The Society of Neurological Surgeons supports continued study of the pros and cons of virtual interviews post-pandemic. We have performed an in-depth study and discussion of interview practices with multiple stakeholders, including medical student applicants and programs, in order to inform our recommendations. It is imperative to utilize lessons learned from the virtual recruitment cycle last year to minimize costs and maintain equity, however it was clear from applicants that there were many aspects of programs that they could not fully evaluate, which is critically important in the 7-year training process for neurological surgery. Over 92% recommended against another all-virtual platform.

In order to ensure a safe and equitable experience for all applicants and programs during this pandemic, the specialty of neurological surgery should abide by the recommendations described below:

1. **Each neurosurgery applicant will be limited to one (1) external neurosurgery rotation which must start on or after June 1, 2021. Neurological surgery leadership unanimously agrees that external rotations are critical to our specialty and plans to return to two (2) external neurosurgery rotations in 2022-2023.**
2. **Given the importance of the applicant experience in neurological surgery prior to committing to a career path, each student should do 1-2 rotations of neurological surgery at their home institution (minimum 4 weeks).**
 - a. Students without a home program should perform 2 rotations of neurological surgery at the closest ACGME accredited program (adopted home program), or 1 rotation at the “adopted home program” and 1 external rotation.
 - b. The SNS encourages students to gain a diverse medical education through rotations in a broad spectrum of subspecialty medical and surgical rotations in addition to neurosurgery, in preparation for residency.
 - c. Rotations should be based upon the SNS Goals and Objectives for Acting Internships <https://www.societyns.org/medical-students/external-medical-student-rotations>
3. **Neurological Surgery supports a hybrid system of initial virtual interviews and an optional secondary in-person component for 2021-2022.** Data-driven development of a national policy to ensure equity, fiscal responsibility, and education for the in-person component of the recruitment cycle in ongoing.
4. **Direction regarding letters of recommendation and details on interview policy will be forthcoming.**

The SNS will continue to closely monitor the situation and issue new guidance as necessary.