

2022-2023 Neurological Surgery SNS Recruitment Updates

The specialty of Neurological Surgery continues to adapt to the changing pandemic landscape. We have used this opportunity to closely assess our past practices surrounding the medical student education, application, recruitment, and interview process in order to optimize future practices. Through surveys of key stakeholders, evaluations, and national discussion, the Society of Neurological Surgeons, comprised of the academic leaders and residency program directors in our field, has developed the following guidelines for the 2022-2023 recruitment cycle.

1. Medical Student rotations with graded autonomy, or Acting Internships (AI), are integral to the recruitment process in the specialty of neurological surgery for:
 - a. Student experience in the depth and breadth of neurological surgery prior to committing to a specialty.
 - b. Education in preparation for internship.
 - c. Evaluation to assist programs and students during the Match process.

In order to optimize neurosurgical exposure, education, and evaluation for applicants to neurological surgery, no more than three 3-4 week Acting internship (AI) experiences are recommended. The SNS recommends in the MS4 year:

- **One (1) 3-4 week Home program AI experience**
- **Two (2) 3-4 week External program AI experiences**
 - o 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.
 - o 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.
 - o Rotations should be based upon the SNS Goals and Objectives for Acting Internships <https://www.societyns.org/medical-students/external-medical-student-rotations>

2. ERAS Supplemental application pilot

Neurological Surgery is one of 15 specialties participating in the 2022-2023 Supplemental Application Pilot. This Supplemental Application is an optional application in addition to the standard ERAS application that allows students to better describe their formative experiences in order to get a better understanding of the applicant. The proposal does an excellent job of illustrating applicant characteristics for us to pilot as potential additions to the future ERAS application. Additionally, students can designate interest in specific geographical locations (or that location is not a factor for them). They will also be able to specify particular interest in a certain number of programs set by each specialty, or “signal” that program. Programs will only see a signal to their program, but not other programs or whether the applicant has chosen to signal. The maximum number of signals for each applicant to neurological surgery is 8. They do not have to signal their home program or AIs, though that is optional. Participation in the Supplemental Application is optional for both individual applicants and programs.

Full details can be found here: <https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-residencies-eras/supplemental-eras-application-eras-2023-cycle> [students-residents.aamc.org]

For program directors and administrators, the new supplemental application system will be presented and discussed at the SNS annual meeting in Detroit, May 21-24 [SNS Annual Meeting webpage \[cns.us2.list-manage.com\]](#).

Additional ERAS Webinars will be held May 12th and 19th. Registration is Required:

[Advisor Webinar on May 12th @ 1:00pm ET \[aamc.elevate.commpartners.com\]](#)

Registration Required:

[Applicant Webinar on May 19th @ 1:00pm ET \[aamc.elevate.commpartners.com\]](#)

3. Letters of Evaluation

The SNS has been involved in optimizing the evaluation of medical student applicants. It is important to understand that both applicants and programs value high quality letters of evaluation (LOE). Over the past 2 years, neurological surgery has piloted and collected data on letter of recommendation templates. We continue to optimize the SNS template and educate programs and supervising faculty about its use, in order to develop a fair and balanced evaluation and prevent “grade inflation” (i.e., for example, the score of “Top 1-6%” should be awarded to only about 1 in every 20 applicants). As the application process changes in response to the loss of USMLE I scores, recommendation letters reflecting both home and AI rotation performance will likely have additional influence in the application screening process. A structured, national policy regarding LOEs will assist with these changes.

In alignment with the recommendation to undertake 1 Home and 2 External AI rotations, the SNS recommends that each applicant obtain the following recommendations:

- **One (1) Home program: SNS Standardized Letter of Evaluation (LOE)**
- **Two (1) External programs: SNS Standardized Letters of Evaluation (LOE)**
- **One (1) Individual free-form Letter of Recommendation (LOR)**

At each program, LOEs should be written by an evaluation committee, which will commonly involve the department chair, PD, and core education faculty who have worked with each AI. LOEs should provide a fair and balanced evaluation of each applicant. The free-form letter (LOR) may come from any individual mentor at the home or external rotation programs who knows the applicant well: clinical, research, or other.

The SNS will provide an updated LOE template by May 15, 2022, at the society website (<https://www.societyns.org/medical-students/external-medical-student-rotations>).

- ### 4. Neurological Surgery supports a hybrid system of initial virtual interviews and an optional in-person component for 2022-2023.
- The use of an in-person recruitment component is subject to institutional regulations and is thus likely to vary between programs. The SNS is therefore developing additional guidance regarding the in-person component in order to support equity, fiscal responsibility, and informational value for applicants.

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