

SNS Policy on **Virtual Recruitment** during the COVID-19 pandemic

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the usual resident interview cycle has been disrupted. As with the medical student sub-internship rotation policy, **safety, education, and equity** for our students, our institutions, our patients, and our communities, are paramount in the following decisions.

The interview cycle is integral to the application process for:

1. the applicant to experience and understand the offerings, responsibilities, and culture of each neurosurgery training program in which they are interested.
2. the training program to evaluate interested students to ensure a group of qualified and competent applicants to submit to the ERAS MATCH.

In-person visits and interviews require travel, which increases potential spread of disease. Additionally, given differing levels of disease impact in different regions, most institutions are not allowing medical students or programs to participate in in-person interviews or rotations. There has been clear national guidance from the NRMP, AAMC, and other governing bodies that all recruitment processes should occur virtually for the 2020-2021 interview cycle. We recognize and respect the need for program individualism and encourage most elements of the virtual recruitment process to be organized at the local level. However, in order to minimize disease spread, to minimize financial burden, and to ensure the most equitable experience for all students and all programs during this pandemic, the following guidelines have been issued by the leadership of the specialty of neurological surgery:

1. **All interviews should occur virtually.**
 - a. This includes interviewing applicants who have performed a sub-internship experience at your institution.
2. **All recruitment should occur virtually.**
 - a. There can be no in-person visits prior to, during, or after the interview cycle, prior to the MATCH.
3. **Per the external medical student rotation policy, letters of recommendation should come from the student's home institution, including at least two (2) from neurosurgical faculty and one (1) from general surgery, or other non-neurosurgery related surgical specialty.**
 - a. Letter templates are provided at the [SNS website](#)
 - b. Letters of recommendation from external rotations will be looked upon unfavorably (with the exception of the sub-I rotation for those students without a home program).
4. **The SNS continues to discourage "second looks", however if there are circumstances in which follow-up to the interview experience is needed, this should be performed virtually.**
 - a. No in-person second looks to visit the campus, meet with faculty, or engage with residents should be performed in this interview cycle.

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