



Guidance Statement from the Association of Program Directors in Vascular Surgery Regarding the 2020/2021 Application Cycle

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused significant disruptions to medical education across the country. The 2020-2021 application cycle has already been affected by the cancellations of planned student rotations, which will likely persist throughout the upcoming academic year. 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. The priorities in offering these recommendations are:

- a. To protect the health and safety of medical students, patients, our colleagues, and our communities.
- b. To promote an equitable and transparent application, interview, and match process.
- c. To safeguard the vascular surgical education of medical students.

In light of these priorities, our recommendations are as follows.

1. Program directors should not offer visiting sub-intern rotations to students from other medical schools except in the rare instance where a rotation in vascular surgery is not available in that student's institution. We note that this guidance is consistent with the recommendations recently issued by the Coalition for Physician Accountability.
2. Program directors should discourage their home institution students from pursuing away rotations at other medical schools and centers.
3. Program directors should demonstrate flexibility in both the number and types of letters of recommendation required for applying to their programs.
4. Program directors should expect delays in USMLE Step 2 reporting and not require this as a prerequisite for a completed residency application.
5. While it is too early to issue definitive recommendations for the actual interview process, all program directors should at a minimum plan to offer virtual interviews to applicants who cannot travel due to COVID-19 related restrictions.

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.

Issued by the Executive Council of the Association of Program Directors in Vascular Surgery
May 12, 2020