



## Timeline for Application to Dermatology

Use this general guide to help prepare for applying to dermatology residency.

Be sure to talk to your career advisor to create a schedule that works best for you.

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### MEDICAL SCHOOL M1

- | **Talk with an academic advisor** in your Office of Medical Education about how to get early exposure to the field.
  - | **Attend Dermatology grand rounds and conferences** during your M1-M2 years to get exposure to the field and meet faculty and residents.
  - | **Make an appointment** with the dermatology clerkship director OR residency program director to introduce yourself, discuss shadowing opportunities in dermatology, and how to work on small research projects (case reports, chapters).
  - | **Ask your academic advisor** or dermatology residency program director to identify a dermatology faculty mentor in your home school.
  - | **Try to establish a relationship with dermatology residents** at your home institution. Make your initial interest in dermatology known to them. Share that you would be interested in writing up an interesting case with them.
- If they have consult rounds, ask if you can shadow sometime (this is also a good time to find interesting cases for write-ups and/or presentations).
- | **Get involved** in extracurricular activities. Exhibiting sustained volunteerism, teamwork, and/or leadership throughout medical school is valued.
  - | **Develop relationships** with faculty, advisors, and mentors on your campus.
  - | **Identify summer research opportunities** in dermatology.
  - | Familiarize yourself with the Mentorship Programs available to medical students, such as the **American Academy of Dermatology (AAD) Diversity Mentorship Program** [aad.org/member/career/awards/diversity](http://aad.org/member/career/awards/diversity), and the **Skin of Color Society (SOCS) Mentorship Program and Observership Grant** [skinofcolorsociety.org/mentorship-programs/](http://skinofcolorsociety.org/mentorship-programs/).
- Programs may be primarily aimed at 3rd and 4th year medical students who need a mentor that will help them polish their application for dermatology residency to make it as good as possible. Mentors are encouraged to help with publications and letters of recommendation. Other mentorship programs available to medical students include: **Women's Dermatologic Society (WDS) mentorship program** [womensderm.org/awards/award-programs/mentorship-award-program](http://womensderm.org/awards/award-programs/mentorship-award-program).
- | **Keep learning the M1 curricular content** as your first priority.
  - | **Use an USMLE Step 1 Review book** to review along with your medical school curriculum. This will help identify key board fodder early, along with USMLE Step 1 Style practice questions.

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### SUMMER BETWEEN M1 & M2

- | **Attend Dermatology grand rounds and conferences** to get exposure to the field and meet faculty and residents.
- | **Participate in summer research opportunities** in dermatology (at your school if possible). Try to obtain a publication in a highly regarded dermatology journal as a result of your research.
- | **Seek opportunities** to volunteer in dermatology and shadow a dermatologist.
- | **Meet with your identified faculty mentor** to reflect on M1 year and create a plan for M2 year.

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## MEDICAL SCHOOL M2

- Keep learning the M2 curricular content as your first priority.
- Create a concrete study plan for USMLE Step 1 exam. Although this exam is now pass/fail, it is still important to study for this exam to help solidify the pre-clinical curriculum.
- Complete research projects or writing projects that have been started.
- Continue to develop relationships with faculty, advisors, and mentors on your campus.
- Attend Dermatology grand rounds and conferences during your M1-M2 years to get exposure to the field and meet faculty and residents.
- Meet with your identified faculty mentor to reflect on M2 year and create a plan for M3 year.
- Make an appointment with the Dermatology Clerkship Director (or if appropriate/available the Program Director or Chair) to introduce yourself and convey your interest in the field. Attend the meeting with a printed version of your up-to-date curriculum vitae.
- (re)Establish a relationship with dermatology residents at your home institution. Make your initial interest in dermatology known to them. Share that you would be interested in writing up an interesting case with them. If they have consult rounds, ask if you can shadow sometime (this is also a good time to find interesting cases for write-ups and/or presentations).
- Apply for the American Academy of Dermatology (AAD) Diversity Mentorship Program by November of your M2 years if you plan to complete this mentorship during the first 6 months of your M3 year [aad.org/members/leadership-institute/mentoring/find-a-mentor/diversity-mentorship-program](http://aad.org/members/leadership-institute/mentoring/find-a-mentor/diversity-mentorship-program). Ask your advisor to help you choose a mentor from the AAD's mentor list who has a track record of helping mentees improve their application.
- Apply for the Skin of Color Society Mentorship Programs in the Fall to begin the following March. The SOCS Mentorship Program is a comprehensive program that connects young physicians and medical students with an approved skin of color expert from SOCS. If matched with a mentor, the program last for up to one year. Other group mentoring opportunities may be available throughout the year for those who apply but are not matched with a mentor [skinofcolorsociety.org/mentorship-program/](http://skinofcolorsociety.org/mentorship-program/). The SOCS Observership Grant awards grants to help cover travel, room, and board costs for medical students (2nd-4th year) to enable study with a SOCS mentor identified by the applicant [skinofcolorsociety.org/observership-grant/](http://skinofcolorsociety.org/observership-grant/).

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## MEDICAL SCHOOL M3

- Prioritize performance in core clerkships (medicine, surgery, ob/ gyn, and peds). Performance on clinical clerkships is of primary importance to seek a residency position.
  - By this time, you should have a well-established relationship with a dermatology faculty advisor. Meet at least once during the year to review your application timeline and discuss your M4 schedule.
  - Make an appointment with the dermatology Chair to introduce yourself and convey your interest in the field. Attend the meeting with a printed version of your up-to-date curriculum vitae.
  - Reconnect with the dermatology residency program director to convey your continued interest in the field. Attend the meeting with a printed version of your up-to-date curriculum vitae.
  - Consider which faculty, advisors and mentors on your campus, with whom you've developed relationships, you'll approach to write letters of recommendation for your applications. Maintain your relationship with them by meeting once or emailing an update.
  - Attend any career informational sessions held by dermatology
  - Apply to the American Academy of Dermatology (AAD) Diversity Mentorship Program to plan for a M4 elective experience (if not done previously). Many students complete their mentorship month in the summer after their M3 year but before residency applications are due. If your medical school allows you to defer a required rotation during your M3 year, it's a good idea to complete your mentorship month during your M3 year, as it will give you more time to do a project during the month and get the resulting publication accepted before September of your M4 year, when your application is due. The Diversity Mentorship grant website is [aad.org/member/career/awards/diversity](http://aad.org/member/career/awards/diversity).
  - Consider arranging an 'away rotation' at a program that interests you. M4 dermatology rotation slots fill quickly. Your mentors and local residents at your institution can help you decide where to visit. If you have a home dermatology program, it is recommended that you complete no more than 2 away electives.
- Investigate:
- Dermatology residency programs in the U.S. [apps.acgme.org/ads/Public/Programs/Search](http://apps.acgme.org/ads/Public/Programs/Search)
  - Minorities in Medicine to get information on groups underrepresented in medicine. [students-residents.aamc.org/choosing-medical-career/medical-careers/deciding-if-medicine-you/minorities-medicine/](http://students-residents.aamc.org/choosing-medical-career/medical-careers/deciding-if-medicine-you/minorities-medicine/)
  - FREIDA (AMA Residency and Fellowship Database) [ama-assn.org/medical-students/preparing-residency/freida](http://ama-assn.org/medical-students/preparing-residency/freida)

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## MEDICAL SCHOOL M4

- **Prepare for and take the USMLE Step 2 exam** before September so that your score can be submitted with your application.
- **Attend Dermatology grand rounds and conferences** to expand exposure to the field and remain connected to faculty and residents.
- **Complete a clinical dermatology rotation** at your home program. Seek feedback on your clinical performance, which can also be used for your away rotations.
- **Prepare for clinic**, read up on patients, and find ways to be helpful in clinic, such as by setting up biopsy trays and anticipating your teams' needs. Be actively engaged in patient care.
- **Consider arranging to do an 'away rotation'** at a program that interests you. Your mentors and local residents at your institution can help you decide where to visit. Treat the away rotation as a lengthy interview.
- **Complete ERAS application.** Have your mentors review your application and personal statement. Do a spell check!
- **Turn in your ERAS application** before the first day that programs begin to review applications (date varies, check ERAS website).
- **Signal the residency programs you are most interested in.** Dermatology offers 3 gold signals and 25 silver signals. Make sure to signal your home/away programs if they are in your top 28. It is likely that most applicants will only receive interviews from signaled programs.
- **Ask for letters of recommendation no later than August 15** if possible. Who writes your letter and how well they know you is an important part of your application. Provide letter writers with your curriculum vitae, draft personal statement and ERAS cover sheet. The majority of your letters should be from dermatology.
- **Prepare your personal statement.** Describe specific experiences and anecdotes to illustrate your abilities and qualities that make you a good candidate for their program. Share your narrative and include parts that are not found easily in the rest of your application. Consider highlighting distance traveled and any formative life experiences.
- A few residency programs have secondary essays. **Work on secondary applications.**
- **Plan for most interviews to be scheduled from November through January.**
- In February after your interviews, **submit your "Rank Order List"** on the NRMP website, indicating your residency choices in order of preference.

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## RESIDENCY APPLICATION SERVICES

- **Familiarize yourself with residency application services**  
ERAS Electronic Residency Application Service  
[aamc.org/services/eras-for-institutions](http://aamc.org/services/eras-for-institutions)  
NRMP National Residency Matching Program  
[nrmp.org/](http://nrmp.org/)
- **Become familiar with the Residency Timeline**  
[students-residents.aamc.org/eras-tools-and-worksheets-residency-applicants/2024-eras-residency-timeline](http://students-residents.aamc.org/eras-tools-and-worksheets-residency-applicants/2024-eras-residency-timeline)
- **Become familiar with the SOCS Resources** including the guide on *How To Obtain a Position in a Dermatology Residency Program*  
[skinofcolorsociety.org/dermatology-resources/](http://skinofcolorsociety.org/dermatology-resources/)

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## GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Attend Dermatology grand rounds and conferences** during your M1-M2 years, and again when free during M4 year.
- **Attend any career informational sessions** held by dermatology each year (M1-M4).
- **Keep a journal about your experiences** to use later for essays and interviews (M1-M4).
- For any meeting with dermatology faculty or residents, **prepare several direct questions to ask that can help you navigate the application process** based on your current medical school year. Bring a printed copy of your curriculum vitae to meetings and share if appropriate.
- If you do not have a home dermatology program or cannot identify a local mentor, **seek a mentor through the American Academy of Dermatology (AAD)** [server.aad.org/mentorship/search/Default.aspx](http://server.aad.org/mentorship/search/Default.aspx) and the **Skin of Color Society (SOCS)** [skinofcolorsociety.org/mentorship-programs/](http://skinofcolorsociety.org/mentorship-programs/).
- **Join the Skin of Color Society**  
[skinofcolorsociety.org/](http://skinofcolorsociety.org/).
- **Participate in activities** to help the underserved or your community or reduce healthcare disparities. Many programs are putting more emphasis on a "culture of caring" in addition to grades and USMLE results.
- **Become a leader** in some organization at your medical school. Many dermatology programs are seeking to train future leaders in dermatology.

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## INTERVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS

- | **Prepare for your interviews** by reviewing questions and doing mock interviews.
- | **Know every detail on your application.** Prepare a 2-sentence and 2-paragraph answer on every activity listed.
- | **Review the dermatology residency program website**, including the program and faculty, prior to a scheduled interview. Attend webinars that are hosted by your preferred programs.
- | **Conduct mock interviews with trusted mentors on web-based platforms** (e.g., Zoom). Consider recording the session to evaluate your eye contact, engagement and nonverbal communication.
- | **A dermatology residency interview requires professional dress.** The best choice is a comfortable suit and shoes without any flashy accessories. Be prepared for variable weather during the winter months if conducting in person interviews.
- | **If you're flying, carry your interview clothes** with you.
- | **It is important to talk to residents** from each program during your interview experience.
- | **Remember you are being interviewed throughout the process**, from interacting with staff when scheduling the interview to the very end of the interview day.
- | **Always have questions prepared** to ask of each interview.
- | **Prepare examples** that illustrate how you are a good team player and also examples of how you are a leader.
- | **Make sure to arrive on time** for the interview day.
- | **Do not speak to anyone in an overly-familiar way.** You must be professional with everyone.
- | **Do not drink more than one glass of alcohol** if it is offered in a welcome dinner.
- | **Do not send post-interview thank you letters or letters of intent**

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awareness and excellence  
in skin of color dermatology*

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