HOW TO INTERVIEW
for a
Residency Position

L. D. Britt, M.D., M.P.H., F.A.C.S., F.C.C.M.

Brickhouse Professor and Chairman
Program Director, General Surgery Residency
Department of Surgery
Eastern Virginia Medical School

Chief, Department of Surgery
Sentara Hospitals - Norfolk

Norfolk, Virginia
Why Do You Want To Be A Surgeon?
A Practicing Surgeon Is A ......

Caring physician
Skilled technician
Effective communicator
Dedicated teacher
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What Can You Expect?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Long hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rigorous training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential conflict career vs. family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lots of new information</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Competitiveness of Surgery - General

### 1998 MATCH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>U.S. Applicants</th>
<th>Total Applicants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Categorical</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ranked positions</td>
<td>9,805</td>
<td>11,947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matched positions</td>
<td>853</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Match rate</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
<td>97.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PGY-1 only</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ranked positions</td>
<td>1,071</td>
<td>2527</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matched positions</td>
<td>391</td>
<td>541</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Match Rate</td>
<td>40.4%</td>
<td>55.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

254 Programs, 1,024 Categorical Positions, 969 PGY-1 Positions

Eastern Virginia Medical School
**SURGERY - GENERAL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>204</th>
<th>Applicants</th>
<th>(Am. Med. Grads.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Categorical positions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77</td>
<td>Interviewed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Ranked</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Matched categorical</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Eastern Virginia Medical School

**SURGERY - GENERAL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>558</td>
<td>Applicants (American &amp; International)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Categorical positions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77</td>
<td>Interviewed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Ranked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Matched categorical</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How To Begin?

Get information
Set priorities
Getting Information

Department Chairman
Selected department faculty
Senior medical students already matched
Residents in your chosen specialty
Apply to several programs
Interview at 10-12
Setting Priorities

CONSIDER WHAT SUITS YOU

Type of environment
Size of program
Surrounding community
May be compatible with goals after residency
May support research interests
May have subspecialty strengths applicable for you
Other Types of Programs

Hospital—usually smaller, more individualized

Community based—can offer broad-based training
Size of the Programs

Bigger may not be better

Compare # of residents with # of inpatient admissions

Look at varying sizes—where do you fit
Surrounding Community

Size
Crime rate
Employment opportunities for spouse
Cultural opportunities
Distance from families
Importance of Community

Depends on family situation

Little time for outside activities at first
Application Process
Personal Statement

Why surgery
What you want in a residency program
Long range career goals
Research, if any
Personal Statement

(Continued)

Unusual hobbies or accomplishments

Brief autobiographical sketch

Simple, brief, one page—conservative style
Letters of Recommendation

Most programs want 3
More are not necessary
Department Chairman important
Others who know you well
How to Get Letters

Set appointment in late summer
Bring CV and personal statement
Does faculty know you well enough to write positive letter?
Getting Letters

(Continued)

Provide disk with addresses or whatever is required by your school

Dean's office will require the same

Thanks to those who wrote letters and those who mailed them
Other Items to Include

USMLE Scores
- Date when passed
- Scores important; include if requested

AOA—follow up later if necessary

Photo—helpful for post-interview identification
"The Interview Trail"

BREAK OUT THE VISA
Planning and Scheduling Tips

Block about 6 weeks if possible

December / January / February potential for Surgery
Application Follow-Up

Application not screened until complete

Follow up on letters of recommendation — received or not??
Scheduling Interviews

Specific interview dates set by programs

Avoid making "special requests" (i.e. alternate date, leave early, arrive late)

Schedule "less desirable" interviews first—you can practice
Travel Tips—Saving $$

Financial assistance available at your school?

Alumni Directory—maybe grads will offer accommodations

Ask secretaries at programs for suggestions

Drive when possible

Frequent flyer??

Consider Amtrak or Trailways
Other Travel Tips

Arrive night before for morning appointment

Punctuality is critical—allow time

Plan to spend most of the day
Preparation Tips

Practice with faculty, family, friend
Take along printed material sent by program
Review all printed material prior to interview
Arrive with some knowledge of program
Confirm or cancel—be considerate
Never be a "no show"
Dress appropriately and conservatively
Importance Of Interview

DO NOT UNDERESTIMATE

After selection for interview, this is your **only time** to make impression.

Some nervousness expected.
What Interviewers Are Looking For In A Resident

*SUBJECTIVELY*. . . . . .

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maturity</th>
<th>Enthusiasm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Articulateness</td>
<td>Interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionalism</td>
<td>Responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How you fit in</td>
<td>Sense of teamwork</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What Interviewers Want To Know

OBJECTIVELY . . . . . .

Career goals
Interests
Research
Why they should choose you
What To Ask Your Interviewer

- Program's accreditation status—citations??
- Pass rate on ABS Exams
- Graduates—fellowships??
- Anticipated changes in program
- Inservice performance/requirements
- Education/didactic curriculum
What Your Interviewer May Ask You

Interests outside of medicine

Long-term goals

What are you looking for in a program

Why this program interests you
What Your Interviewer May Ask You

(Continued)

Who recommended this program
How did you learn of this program
What can you offer
"Tell me about yourself"
Turnoffs

Sloppy appearance
Tardiness
Argumentative nature
Rudeness to staff
Strong prejudices
Over aggressiveness
More Turnoffs

Condemnation of other specialties

Mention of "connections"

Noting influential individuals

Looking at watch during interview
Post Interview Suggestions

Get a contact—resident's phone number

Might arrange follow-up visit

Record impressions immediately—you'll forget

Consistent way to record info

Write thank you notes

Talk more with residents
Best Source of RESIDENTS' Accurate Information
When Ready To Rank

Get advice again—Department Chairman, faculty

Review recorded program information

Don't ignore your "gut" feeling

Talk with alumni from your school in programs that interest you

Call or write programs which most interest you and let them know