



## Selecting Residents in Podiatric Medicine and Surgery

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### ABSTRACT

Limited information exists to guide students of podiatric medicine and residency directors through the resident selection process. The present study aimed to evaluate the podiatric medicine and surgery resident selection process using an online survey. Residency directors of podiatric medicine and surgery programs across the United States and fourth-year students across all 9 colleges of podiatric medicine were contacted for participation. Two separate surveys were created, one for the directors and one for the students. The directors and students were asked the relative importance of 21 items considered in resident selection on a 7-point importance scale. Subsequent questions covered an array of related topics. The directors, compared with the students, identified the following items as more important ( $p < .05$ ): previous disciplinary actions against the student, number of classes failed during school, undergraduate experiences and activities, number of Part I board attempts, class rank, involvement in research, and grade point average during podiatric medical school. The manual dexterity portion of the residency interview was considered significantly more important by the students than the directors. The directors more satisfied with their residents placed greater importance on the following items ( $p < .05$ ): opinions of current residents, opinions of other attending physicians, and letters of recommendation. Additional trends and differences were also discovered. The results of the present study provide baseline data on the selection of podiatric medicine and surgery residents.

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The resident selection process for medical students has been closely studied in published studies. However, the resident selection process for podiatric medical students has not yet been formally investigated. Fourth-year podiatric students have limited information on how they might be evaluated. The information they do have has often been acquired anecdotally or through hearsay. Similarly, the directors of podiatric medicine and surgery residencies are often unsure of how to most appropriately evaluate the fourth-year podiatric medical students applying to their programs (1).

In the late 1970s, an increase in the number of qualified applicants led to a closer examination of the resident selection process (2). A survey-based study by Wagoner and Gray (3) in 1979 began a trend of surveying residency directors for their opinions on the resident selection process. A steady volume of survey-based resident selection studies followed. Recent comprehensive specialty surveys have been conducted in general surgery, plastic surgery, and orthopedic surgery (4–8).

Selecting residents of podiatric medicine and surgery is a unique process. Part I of the American Podiatric Medical Licensing

Examination (APMLE) is graded pass/fail, but Step I of the US Medical Licensing Examination reports a numerical score. The residency interview is conducted by the Central Application Service for Podiatric Residencies/Centralized Residency Interview Program (CASPR/CRIP) at 1 central location in Texas, although a small number of residency programs choose not to participate in the national interview. The interview was formerly conducted at 3 regional locations; the change to a central location was made in 2010. The interview process consists of a program designation period in the fall, with application materials forwarded to the designated programs. Centralized interviews are conducted in January, and Match Day occurs in March. Although there are only 9 colleges of podiatric medicine, substantial academic diversity exists among the schools. Thus, the podiatric medicine and surgery residency interview is known to be intensely academic and to frequently include a “skills” section evaluating manual dexterity.

The purpose of the present study was to construct and implement an online survey of both residency directors and students on the resident selection process. The existing medical data were used as the basis for several of the questions. The remaining questions were directed toward issues affecting residencies of podiatric medicine and surgery and colleges of podiatric medicine.

### Materials and Methods

Two online surveys were constructed, one for students and one for directors. The surveys were designed using Qualtrics® (Qualtrics LLC, Orem, UT) a Web-based

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Question 1 Please assess the importance of the following when selecting incoming residents:

	Not at all Important (1)	Very Unimportant (2)	Somewhat Unimportant (3)	Neither Important nor Unimportant (4)	Somewhat Important (5)	Very Important (6)	Extremely Important (7)
Podiatric medical school Grade Point Average (GPA)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Letters of recommendation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Clinical evaluations from rotations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Prior disciplinary actions against the student	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Involvement in Research/publications	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Extracurricular academic activities (e.g. clubs, workshops, seminars)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Extracurricular nonacademic activities (e.g. volunteering, community service)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Performance during a clerkship month/visiting the program	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Number of visits to the program/completion of a clerkship at the program	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Fig. 1. Residency director survey.

survey tool. Both surveys were primarily composed of closed-ended questions, with an open-ended question at the end of each survey. The closed-ended question types included category questions and scaled questions. The scaled questions were designed using frequency, quality, and importance scales. To reduce basement and

ceiling effects, the responses available to the responders were written to capture extreme opinions throughout the surveys. For example, the options to the first question ranged from the extreme, “Not at all important” to the opposite extreme, “Extremely important.”

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