

## DERMATOLOGY

Specialty: Dermatology

Did you use: ERAS or SFMatch or Other: ERAS

Number of programs applied to: 55 Was this number sufficient? Yes

Number of interviews attended for specialty: 18 of 22 invitations Was this number sufficient? Yes

Interview season (month/year): 11/05 to 2/06

Typical structure of interview day: Residents welcome you to the day. Basic breakfast provided (muffins/bagels/juice). Presentation by program director and possibly chairman. Afterwards, half the interviewees go on a tour of the facilities (outpatient clinics, specialty clinics areas if any [ie surgical suites, phototherapy, etc], inpatient floors). The other half go through the interviews. Usually interviews were about four 10-15 minutes and were 1 faculty to 1 student, or 2 faculty to 1 student. However, this was very variable, going as low as 8 minute interviews to 30 minute interviews. Afterwards, there is lunch, followed by tours and interviews for the other groups.

Popular topics covered in the interviews: "Why dermatology", "I see you worked on a research project with... or on..., tell me about that", "What would you like to know about our program" (have many questions ready, but they don't have to be program specific), "Where else are you interviewing?" (This last one was a bit uncomfortable and I don't know the correct answer. I often listed a few programs but didn't want them to feel they were just one of many programs and that I wasn't too interested. At the same time you want to appear in demand by other programs. It's just a question you need to feel out.)

Some difficult questions/unusual tasks (tying knots, etc.): "Who is your hero?", "If you could have dinner with any 4 living people, who and why?", "Tell me about a failure you experienced"

How did you prepare for your interviews? I couldn't. They were so frequent and so much travel was involved, I didn't stress out about investigating the programs before getting there. The good programs give you a proper overview anyway on arrival that you have a sense of them in the first 20 minutes. I'd say, just be on time, very presentable and well spoken, and be ready with the answers to the above "popular topics covered in the interviews." Do have a set of questions ready to ask every interviewer about the program, even if it is the same questions over and over again with each faculty member and each institution. Sometimes it felt like my questions carried us through the interview, making me look interested and shielding myself from awkward questions they could throw my way.

Did you do an away rotation in your specialty field? I did do an away rotation. I found it extremely helpful, getting me an interview at the institution as well as a strong letter of recommendation from a renowned dermatologist/program director. Additionally, it showed continued interest in the field to other programs.

Additional comments/advice: The best thing you could do is be calm and comfortable with your answers. Have your story down cold as to why you want to do dermatology. By the end, it will be like you are on autopilot giving your answer. Only rarely was I challenged with very difficult questions, and those were just curve balls like the ones listed above. I was never 'pimped' about dermatology. Additionally, some programs rely significantly on input from the current residents based on social interactions with you and some disregard their input. That said, be on your best behavior and be enthusiastic all the time! Additionally, if there is an event the evening before (dinner/drinks), go. However, if you cannot make it, do not stress. It is certainly not critical by any means.

May future applicants in your specialty contact you for advice? Email: rtanolik@yahoo.com

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