

A Practical Guide to Career Planning

(Excerpted from ICM II
talk to 2nd year students)

What goes into career decision?

- Before med school
 - Personal experiences with health care system
 - Family and friends in health care profession
 - Undergraduate interests
 - Television, books, media

What goes into career decision?

- Pre-clinical years
 - Basic science and organ system courses
 - Preceptorships
 - RU/OP, IHOP
 - Interest groups
 - Careers in medicine program
 - College mentor
 - Student affairs counseling

What goes into career decision?

- Clinical years
 - Required clerkship experiences
 - Elective clerkship experiences
 - Clerkship faculty and residents
 - Peripheral contact with other specialties
 - College mentor
 - Departmental career counselor
 - Student affairs counselor

Using clinical experiences to help decide

- Keep an open mind (even if you're "sure")
- Reflect
 - On a daily, weekly and/or rotation basis
 - What do you like? What do you dislike?
 - Be analytical and specific with your observations
 - Process of data gathering
 - Try writing things down
 - Observations can be useful across specialties
- Ask attendings and residents what they like and dislike about the specialty

Using clinical experiences to help decide

- How specific or generalizable are likes/dislikes?
 - An individual person
 - A rotation site
 - A population size
 - A practice setting
 - A specialty
- Don't ignore gut reaction, but be analytical as to why you had this reaction
- Don't automatically assign it to the specialty

Using clinical experiences to help decide

- How do likes/dislikes about a rotation apply to:
 - Medical student rotation
 - Residency
 - Practice 5 years out of residency
 - Practice 25 years out of residency

Using clinical experiences to help decide

- How do likes/dislikes apply to:
 - Medical student rotation
 - Residency
 - Practice 5 years out of residency
 - Practice 25 years out of residency
- Do likes/dislikes apply to other fields?
- College mentor may be able to help student brainstorm

Other thoughts

- Application registration opens September of 4th year
- For students having trouble deciding, consider an elective rotation that mimics their preferred practice location/type
- Approach potential letter writers at end of the rotation

SAMPLE FORMAT

Faculty Letter of Recommendation

Date

Inside Address (Non-ERAS Programs)

Re: (Be certain letter includes your
full name with correct spelling)

Dear (Individual's Name if non-ERAS program or Generic Term "Colleague" for ERAS transmissions):

This letter is written in support of (Student's Name), who is applying to your (Name of Specialty) residency program.

(Student's Name) worked with me in (State type of course such as required clerkship, consult elective, subinternship, etc.) in (Specialty). (Remainder of paragraph should comment on the following :)

- A. Amount of time student was observed personally and/or knowledge from residents' observations of student.
- B. Indicate student's level of performance in areas such as knowledge, clinical skills, and interpersonal skills either in relating to patients or in working as a member of the team.
- C. Indicate how student has demonstrated competence for field in which they are applying.

Final Paragraph: (Indicate level of support for the individual as a house officer candidate for the program to which he/she is applying.)

Sincerely yours,

Faculty's Name
Title