

## **A reply to common questions from M3s with interest in Radiology regarding planning M4 year**

### **1. Q: Should I schedule a "Radiology, Clinical" or "Radiology, Diagnostic" course in order to obtain the appropriate letters of recommendation?**

**A:** The "Radiology Clinical" elective is a broad overview of Radiology, a sort of "survey course."

The "Radiology Clinical" elective is best for those who haven't decided on Radiology as a career and want an overview (early in M4 year) or for an M4 who is not going into Radiology but who would like some exposure to it.

It is more difficult (but still possible) to obtain a meaningful letter of recommendation with the "Radiology Clinical" elective because your experience is so spread out that a faculty cannot get to know you.

"Radiology Diagnostic" is a one month elective in a specific subspecialty of Radiology which you would choose.

This elective does afford a faculty member(s) the opportunity to work with you and to observe you over the month which makes it more appropriate for obtaining a letter of recommendation.

### **2. Q: Should I complete all of my radiology electives at U of M or elsewhere?**

**A:** Totally your choice.

You might take an away elective to have a good look at a program which might interest you.

You might do it to "introduce" yourself to the program. However, if you don't make a good effort and impression, this "strategy" could backfire.

You should base your decision on your goals for overall medical experience and education (and even enjoyment to some degree) rather than as a "strategy" per se.

### **3. Q: When should I schedule my radiology research month?**

**A:** Earlier the better so that you have time to continue working on the project and getting it published during the M4 year.

It is good to have it submitted, even better accepted, even better published when you are submitting residency applications.

If you take an actual research radiology month, it must be pre-approved by Dr. Leslie Quint as noted in the handbook.

### **4. Q: I plan on using the first month of my M4 year to study for USMLE step 2 (since my USMLE step 1 score is slightly below the U of M average) is this a wise use of time?**

**A:** This I do not know.

I know that in some competitive programs with a large number of highly qualified applicants, standard test scores do serve as an initial threshold for further consideration.

Therefore, a higher score makes it more likely that you'll be invited for an interview than a lower score.

I don't know the effect of studying on scores.

### **5. Q: Are there any preferences on what Sub-Internships or ICU experiences to take if one is interested in radiology?**

**A:** Be sure there is significant patient care responsibility. It is generally best in one of the big 4 areas (Internal Medicine, Surgery, OB, or Pediatrics).

Regarding specific sub-internships and ICU rotations, I don't know which are better than others.

Base your decision more on the actual experience per se, what you will learn, responsibility you will take on, and how it will help you grow from a medical student to a house officer (i.e. taking on more responsibility).

In my opinion, the better Radiology residents are those who are active, who interact with clinicians, and who have a notion of responsibility that their studies are important for the patients' clinical care.

Of course, any clinical medicine, applied physiology, etc which you learn along the way will only help you as a radiologist.

Ask current Radiology residents who are U of M Medical school alumni.

Ask current M4s.

Best wishes and good luck.

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