



CHAPTER 6

Formally Applying and Getting Ready for a Pharmacy Residency Interview

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After arriving home from the ASHP Midyear Clinical Meeting (MCM) or when evaluating all the programs you are interested in applying to, an important question you may struggle with is, “How many programs should I formally submit applications to?” The answer is complicated and most professors may offer you general and nonspecific answers, such as, “As many as you feel necessary,” “As many programs as you found that met your criteria,” etc. Ideally, you want to formally apply to as many programs as possible that match your interests to increase your chances of securing interviews; however, there are also practical concerns to keep in mind. For example, consider the amount of time and money you will have to commit to traveling if you plan on applying to programs in different cities and states. The willingness to move will likely increase your options for matching in a residency tremendously, but this should be balanced with your available resources to travel for the interviews and willingness to relocate if a match were to occur with one of

those programs. Here is an idea on how quickly costs can add up. Published data suggest that students who, on average, participated in 3 interviews (2 in state, 1 out of state) spent \$840 on travelling for onsite interviews.¹ Therefore, unless you have a money tree, start saving!



Saving money throughout pharmacy school—and having February off—will assist you in simplifying your interview schedule, thus allowing you to interview at many more places.

FORMALLY APPLYING TO PROGRAMS

From our unpublished data, approximately 66% of the residency programs you submit applications to may offer you an interview. However, the range of securing such interviews can vary widely (0% to 100%). We have had students submit 15 applications and get no interviews and students submit 12 applications and receive 11 interviews despite similar grades and level of extracurricular activity (e.g., similar work experience, professional society involvement). Given this, a good number to consider applying to is 10 to 15 programs. Although the number may seem high, this means you may receive seven to nine interviews. If you secure more interviews than you can travel to or afford, you can always send a polite e-mail declining the invitation to interview. Lastly, provided they have the essential components and qualities you are looking for, consider applying to a wide variety of programs such as those affiliated with an academic medical center, community hospital, specialty hospital (e.g., pediatric hospital), ambulatory care, and government-affiliated institution. Having a target pool with a wide variety of programs would allow you more flexibility in selecting those you want to interview at and ultimately provide you a longer list for your match (see Chapter 10: Matching).



If you do not consider yourself a “top” applicant, you may consider applying to more programs. However, even if you feel you are the ideal applicant for a program, do not limit yourself to only one to three programs.

Submit Application Materials

When preparing your application materials, make sure you pay careful attention to detail. Every year, there are some incomplete applications that are excluded from further consideration. Common reasons include missing information on Pharmacy Online Residency Centralized Application Service (PhORCAS), missing transcripts, and missing one or more letters of recom-