

**American Academy of Neurology
Neurology Residency Program Director and Clerkship Director
Consensus Statement on 2020-2021 Application Cycle
July 2020**

These recommendations are meant for use as suggestions and guidance for neurology and child neurology residency programs to be considered during their recruitment processes for the 2020-2021 residency application cycle.

BACKGROUND:

The [Coalition for Physician Accountability \(CoPA\)](#) workgroup released recommendations in May 2020 for medical schools and residency programs with regards to away rotations, virtual recruitment, and application review for the upcoming residency application season in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This cross-organizational group was composed of representatives from AACOM, AAMC, ACCME, ACGME, AMA, AOA, CMSS (OPDA), ECFMG, FSMB, LCME, NBME, and NBOME, and these recommendations have the goals of maximizing safety and equity for the applicants and programs. Some areas are disproportionately affected by COVID-19 and applicants have been disproportionately impacted by the health and financial ramifications of the pandemic.

AAN RECOMMENDATION

The AAN advises that neurology and child neurology residency programs support these recommendations, specifically in regards to:

1. Away rotations (CoPA recommendation 1)
 - a. Away rotations should not be mandatory.
 - b. Away rotations should be limited to students who cannot get a similar/comparable experience at their home institution.
 - c. Consider engagement in virtual experiences such as virtual visiting clerkships and other online educational programming.
2. Virtual Recruitment/Interviews (CoPA recommendation 2)
 - a. Commit to online interviews and virtual visits for all the applicants, including local students, in place of in-person interviews for the entire cycle. This is both to minimize health risks from traveling and to provide an equitable platform for applicants and programs.
 - b. Create a robust virtual environment and share virtual interview best practices with applicants, faculty, and residents to streamline and optimize the interview experience.
 - c. Actively work to attract and recruit applicants from diverse backgrounds, including traditionally [underrepresented](#) groups, to enhance the diversity among neurology trainees to better represent and meet the needs of the populations we serve.
 - d. Utilize alternative platforms to ensure that all applicants have equal access to participate in virtual recruitment and interviews.
3. Application Review
 - a. Complete/maintain a holistic review of applications, recognizing that access to different clinical, research, extracurricular, work, and other experiences vary significantly in normal circumstances and are further impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - b. Recognize that a significant proportion of medical students will have completed their clerkship training in a non-traditional environment during the pandemic with exclusively virtual learning experiences and on-line educational programming. Some clerkships may have transitioned to pass/fail grading in this setting.

- c. Have flexibility with requirement of neurology-specific letters of recommendation for screening, acknowledging that applicants may not have had access to neurology rotations prior to applying.
- d. Do not require that a sub-I be completed by the time of the initial application review.
- e. Due to limited testing site availability as a result of COVID -19, be aware that Step 2CK and/or Step 2CS may not be completed.

AUTHORS

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