

1 Advice for Preclinical and Postclinical Years

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1.1 Setup for Success

1.1.1 Curriculum Vitae/Resume

- A curriculum vitae (CV) should be created in the first months of medical school and be updated prospectively.
- This ensures no important activities or projects are forgotten, as they will be helpful when submitting applications for research opportunities, audition rotations, and the National Residency Matching Program (NRMP) match.^{1,2,3}

1.1.2 Mentorship

- Strong connections with programs through a faculty mentor are important in matching into a dermatology residency. It is never too early to connect with a mentor.⁴
- Students from schools without a home program could consider seeking mentorship from faculty at another institution.⁴
- During preclinical years, students can reach out to alumni who successfully matched into dermatology for guidance on networking with local physicians and identifying potential research opportunities.⁵
- Social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, #DermTalk, and #DestinationDerm dermatology blogs have become valuable resources.
 - Following residency program pages and engaging with dermatologists via social media can lead to meaningful connections.⁵ Creating a separate professional online profile, with a professional headshot, may be beneficial for this purpose.
- Dermatological societies offer networking and mentorship opportunities such as the following: American Academy of Dermatology (AAD) Diversity Mentorship Program, Medical Dermatology Society Mentorship Program, Skin of Color Society Mentorship Program, and Women's Dermatologic Society (WDS) events.⁵

1.2 Grades

1.2.1 Preclinical Medical School Examinations

- High academic performance is important for dermatology applicants.⁶
- Historically, strong preclinical grades are correlated with higher U.S. Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE) Step 1 scores, which are valuable for passing the examination, and, in turn, have also led to elevated clinical grades and USMLE Step 2 performance.⁶

1.2.2 Rotation Grading and Examinations

- Students should strive to get honors (A) grades in as many clerkships as possible. Many students who successfully matriculate to dermatology residencies are in the top 20% of their class.⁶
- See the section **Rotations** for more information.

1.2.3 Standardized Medical Licensing Examinations (USMLE/NBOME)

Preparing for USMLE Step 1 and/or COMLEX Level 1

Impact of USMLE Step 1/COMLEX Level 1 Transition to Pass/Fail

- Research, mentorship, and clinical exposure are becoming increasingly important criteria for determining whether an applicant will be granted an interview.^{6,7}
- Students from lower ranked schools, osteopathic medical schools, and international medical graduates (IMGs) might be disproportionately impacted by USMLE Step 1/Comprehensive osteopathic medical licensing examination (COMLEX) Level 1 transition to pass/fail.⁸ For

these individuals, it is important to take Step 2 early enough for it to be considered in the application process.

USMLE STEP 2/COMLEX Level 2

- USMLE Step 2-CK (Clinical Knowledge)/COMLEX Level 2 is completed prior to the fourth year. Students should implement their study plan at the start of the third year.
- It is recommended to complete the question banks (QBanks), such as UWORLD, COMQUEST, or COMBANK, during each clinical rotation with the goal of 100% completion before the dedicated study period.⁹
- Students can purchase self-assessments through the National Board of Medical Examiners / National Board of Osteopathic Medical Examiners (NBME)/(NBOME) to prepare for both self and board examinations. These questions are similar in format and content to those on the official examination.⁹
- Dedicated board study periods range from 2 to 6 weeks, allowing students to solely focus on studying for USMLE Step 2-CK/COMLEX Level 2.¹⁰
 - During this time, students should review their incorrect answers and difficult questions throughout their third year while continuing to utilize practice examinations offered by the NBME/NBOME and QBanks.
 - Students should take as many of these examinations as possible to gauge improvement and determine weak content areas.⁹
 - Although no studies have been conducted, the UWorld Self-Assessment 2 and the NBME Free 120 are considered the most predictive of official USMLE Step2/COMLEX Level 2 scores. They should be taken within 1 or 2 weeks of the test day for an accurate performance prediction.

1.2.4 Honor Societies

- Students with strong academic performance and dedication to service can be accepted to Alpha Omega Alpha (AOA) honor society, which is an indicator of a well-rounded strong applicant.⁶
- The Gold Humanism Honor Society is another national academic honorary society.

1.3 Research

1.3.1 How to Find Research

- Finding research in dermatology is challenging.⁵
- It is recommended to become involved in research projects as early as possible.
- Students with a home dermatology program can reach out to their home dermatology program or dermatology residency advisor to identify a project.⁵
- Students from schools without a home dermatology program can reach out to alumni who matched into dermatology.⁵ Additionally, an opportunity can present itself while shadowing; an interesting clinical case can serve as a case report, whether for a dermatology or primary care journal. Remember, a great clinical image is the single most important component of a case report.
- Candidates who shadow a faculty member might connect with residents and potentially get involved in research projects.⁵
- Applicants can also e-mail experts in the fields asking for potential opportunities to get involved in research.⁵
 - The e-mail template detailing an approach for identifying such opportunities is shown in ► Fig. 1.1.¹¹
- National Dermatology Interest Group Association (DIGA) routinely posts research opportunities on their webpage and instagram.⁵

1.3.2 Types of Research

- The level of difficulty for successfully publishing an article depends on the type of publication and/or research.
 - Basic science and clinical research papers have a higher impact.² These can boost an applicant's research portfolio but take more time and effort.
 - Literature reviews, case reports, and editorials can often be published faster than primary research articles.² These can enhance an applicant's publication volume.

1.3.3 Publishing/Presenting Research

- The number of publications in dermatology applicants have been increasing.¹

Subject: Inquiry About Research Opportunities

Dear [Professor/Doctor Last Name],

I hope this email finds you well. My name is [Your Name], and I am a [Your Current Position, e.g., medical student] with a strong interest in [specific research area]. I came across your work on [mention a specific paper, project, or research area], and I was truly impressed by [briefly highlight what stood out to you].

I am eager to gain research experience in [specific field] and would love the opportunity to contribute to your ongoing projects. I have experience with [list any relevant skills, such as literature reviews, data analysis, or clinical research], and I am a fast learner willing to assist in any capacity.

If you have any available opportunities, I would greatly appreciate the chance to discuss how I could contribute to your team. I am happy to meet at your convenience or provide any additional information.

I am attaching my CV for your consideration. Thank you for your time and I look forward to your response.

Best regards,
 [Your Full Name]
 [Your Contact Information]
 [Your Affiliation (e.g., Medical School, Hospital)]

Fig. 1.1 Research e-mail template.

- Unpublished manuscripts help with successful matching and can be documented on one's Electronic Residency Application Service (ERAS) application.²
- National Residency Matching Program (NRMP) reports that the mean number of dermatology applicant research publications is 14.7.²
 - According to Ngaage et al, the actual median number of publications at the time of residency application is two (including articles accepted and in print). The NRMP data are self-reported and refer to research projects including published papers, abstracts, posters, and oral presentations.²
- With the USMLE Step 1/COMLEX Level 1 transition to pass/fail, programs may place greater emphasis on the number of publications.²

1.3.4 Research Years

Traditional Research Year

- Taking a research year has become a trend among dermatology Doctor of Medicine (MD) applicants.¹²
- This allows a student to spend a year dedicated to completing dermatology-focused research.
 - It can be completed in medical school, between the second and third year or between the third and fourth year, or even after completion of an intern year.
 - There is no evidence to support an optimal year for a medical student to complete a research year.
- According to Costello et al, there was no significant difference between the match rates of applicants with a research year as compared to

non-research-year applicants. However, research-year applicants were more likely to match at top dermatology residency programs.¹²

- Runge et al concluded that applicants from the top 25 medical schools were more likely to complete a research year. Nearly all applicants who completed a research year were MD students.¹³
- The AAD has published an article titled “Mind the gap” by Dr. Heymann on the advisability of recommending a research year to applicants. The article includes the perspectives of several residency program directors.¹⁴
- Taking a year for research poses a financial burden for students, as many research opportunities and fellowships are unpaid.¹⁵
- Students can find research positions through mentors, alumni, or school advisors.
 - DIGA shares a Research Fellowship Spreadsheet via their social media.⁵
 - There are funding opportunities available through the Melanoma Research Foundation, National Psoriasis Foundation, Society for Pediatric Dermatology, and Skin of Color Society.

Dual MD/PhD, DO/PhD Degrees

- Aspiring physician-scientists in dermatology are encouraged to pursue an MD/Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) or Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO)/PhD degree.
- Opting for a PhD in place of a research year is uncommon due to the longer duration and distinct purpose of a PhD. Most PhDs require 7 years including medical school.
- MD/PhD or DO/PhD candidates can dedicate their PhD to focusing on an area of interest in dermatology-related research.
- Within the 2022 dermatology match, 6% of successful applicants held PhDs.
- Dermatologists with MD/PhD and DO/PhD degrees are more likely to work in academic dermatology after completing their residency training.¹⁶

1.4 Additional Extracurricular Activities

1.4.1 Conferences

- Attending dermatology conferences is a great way to make connections within the dermatology field.

- The largest dermatology conference in the United States is the Annual Meeting of the AAD.
- The American Osteopathic College of Dermatology (AOCD) holds a national conference each year. Most of the osteopathic dermatology program directors and residents attend this conference.
- WDS forum is another large conference where students can present posters and network with other attendees.
- Students should start attending these conferences in their second and third years of medical school to learn about programs and research opportunities and to network with faculty and dermatology residents.
- There are multiple regional dermatology conferences that provide great platforms for presenting research and making connections within a smaller scale.

1.4.2 Volunteering

- Volunteering experience has slightly increased among matched dermatology applicants, but it is overshadowed by a tremendous increase in publications and research experiences.¹⁷
- The difference in volunteering experiences between matched and unmatched applicants is minimal.¹⁷
 - The discrepancy suggests that both applicants and residency programs prioritize research accomplishments.¹⁷
 - Volunteer experience might show important traits of an applicant, such as empathy, leadership, and commitment to service.¹⁷
- Remember, a deep commitment to a volunteer experience can be demonstrated by continued involvement.

1.4.3 Shadowing

- Shadowing a physician is one of the best ways to learn more about a desired specialty.¹⁸
- Shadowing is popular among premedical students. Many preclinical medical students choose to shadow physicians to learn about specialties and better prepare themselves for rotations.¹⁸
- The best time to shadow physicians is over summer vacations, winter breaks, and weekends during preclinical years. However, it may also be possible to arrange a shadowing experience for 1 day.

- Some medical schools have mentorship and shadowing programs for first- and second-year medical students.¹⁸
- While shadowing does not necessarily provide hands-on experience, a student can participate in history taking, physical examination, and procedures.¹⁸
- There is a possibility to develop relationships that lead to letters of recommendation (LORs), patient care experiences, establishing professional relationships, and educating oneself on whether one is a “good fit” for a specialty like dermatology.¹⁸
 - Students can find a mentors through shadowing opportunities.⁵
 - Students without home programs might reach out to nearby dermatology programs and shadow faculty members willing to get involved in education. With time, these interactions can develop into mentor–mentee relationships.⁵
 - Shadowing can also lead to relationships with residents and other students. This can lead to gaining valuable information about the match process, as well as many other benefits.⁵

1.5 Rotations

1.5.1 Core Rotations (Third Year)

- In the third year of medical school, core rotations span from 4 to 8 weeks and cover a combination of the following fields: Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, Psychiatry, Obstetrics and Gynecology, Pediatrics, Ambulatory Medicine, Emergency Medicine, Neurology, and Surgery.
- Grading for core rotations varies by schools and is based on preceptor evaluation and end-of-rotation examination scores.
 - Preceptors evaluate students throughout the rotation, frequently culminating into an exit interview.
 - Shelf examinations may be given at the conclusion of each rotation and are graded on a percent scale (0–100%). Some schools may allow shelf examinations to be taken at a separate time from the rotation.
 - Schools may have rotation-specific examinations, written papers, or other assignments that factor into final grades.

- Successful performance can result in honors, high pass, or pass depending on specific cutoffs chosen by the school. Honors in internal medicine and surgery seem to be greatly valued by dermatology programs.⁶
- Show up early, stay late, and help your team. Then, go home and study for the shelf examination!

1.5.2 Elective Rotations (Third Year/Fourth Year)

- Some schools include 1 to 2 months of elective rotations, allowing students to explore their interests during their clinical years.
 - These rotations should be scheduled, if possible, early in the third year to form relationships with programs, allow for research opportunities, and develop relationships that could lead to LORs.
- Many schools schedule a 4-week academic pause.
 - This opportunity can be used to shadow local dermatologists to form professional relationships.

1.5.3 Audition Rotations

- See Chapter 2: Tips for a Successful Match.

1.6 Residency Application

- See Chapter 2: Tips for a Successful Match.

1.7 Special Considerations

1.7.1 No Home Dermatology Program

- Dermatology applicants who do not have home programs lack early direct access to dermatology mentors, internal dermatology audition rotations, and research opportunities.¹⁹ There may be a nearby dermatology residency that has adopted your medical school, allowing medical students to rotate. This can also frequently result in acceptance into that dermatology residency program.
- Shifting the focus to a holistic review of dermatology applications may balance academic performance with life experiences. Disadvantaged groups of students, such as those without home programs, might benefit from this approach.¹⁹

- For students without a home program, it is essential to find a mentor in the dermatology field.⁵

For advice on how to find a dermatology mentor, please see the section **Mentorship**.

1.7.2 DO Applications (Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine)

- DOs remain highly underrepresented in competitive medical specialties, despite an increase in the number of DO students.²⁰
- Unification of residency programs allowed MD applicants to apply to DO dermatology programs, previously available only to DO applicants. It also caused the closure of some of the formerly DO residency programs.²⁰
- DO's comprehensive approach, coupled with refined anatomical knowledge and palpation skills, is especially important in dermatology.²⁰
- Establishing connections and finding a dermatology mentor is essential for DO applicants.

For advice on how to find a mentor and get involved in research, please refer to the **Mentorship** and **Research** sections.

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2 Tips for a Successful Match

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2.1 Dermatology Applicant

2.1.1 Characteristics of a Successful Applicant

- According to a program directors (PDs) survey by Choi et al, half of dermatology residency PDs considered **letters of recommendation (LORs)** as *the most important criterion* for successful candidates.¹
 - Audition rotation at the program and U.S. Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE) Step 2 scores ranked second and third, respectively, among top three evaluation criteria.¹
- According to Careers in Medicine, both MD and DO dermatology applicants pass USMLE Step 1 and Comprehensive Osteopathic Medical Licensing Examination (COMLEX) Level 1 on a first attempt.² Step 1 is now pass/fail and many programs require a Step 2 score as an objective way to compare applicants from across the country.
 - The average Step 1 score for MD applicants is 257.²
 - The average COMLEX Level 2 score for DO applicants is 655.²
- For a number of research, work, and volunteer experiences, please refer to ► Table 2.1.

2.2 Mentorship

- Strong connections with a program through a faculty mentor is important in matching in dermatology.³
 - A study by Yeh et al found that 25% of applicants matched at their mentor's institution, with an equal percentage matching at their home program.³
 - Ten percent of matched applicants had mentors from their home program.³

2.3 Medical Licensing Examinations

2.3.1 United States Medical Licensing Examination

- The USMLE is a three-step examination for medical licensure in the United States.⁴

Table 2.1 Characteristics of a successful applicant

Characteristics of a successful applicant	
Mean Step 2 score	257
Mean number of research experiences	7.2
Mean number of abstracts, presentations, and publications	20.9
Mean number of work experiences	4.0
Mean number of volunteer experiences	11.0
Percentage of applicants who are American Osteopathic Association (AOA) members	39.7%

- It is taken by medical students at MD medical schools in the United States.⁴
- The USMLE is often taken by medical students at DO medical schools, in addition to their medical licensing examination, especially DO medical students applying to competitive specialties.
 - The **USMLE Step 1** is taken after didactic years of medical school and before clinical rotations, typically between the second and third years.⁴
 - The **USMLE Step 2** is taken after clinical core rotations between the third and fourth years.⁴
 - Previously this examination included clinical knowledge (CK) and clinical skills components. The CS portion of the USMLE Step 2 was permanently canceled in January 2021.⁴
 - The **USMLE Step 3** is taken after graduation from medical school during the intern year or residency.⁴

2.3.2 The Comprehensive Osteopathic Medical Licensing Examination

- The COMLEX is a three-level, national standardized licensure examination designed for licensure for the practice of osteopathic medicine.⁵
 - This examination is similar in content to the USMLE, with the addition of osteopathic manipulative medicine questions.

- The COMLEX is taken by medical students at DO medical schools in the United States.⁵
 - The **COMLEX Level 1** is taken before clinical rotations between the second and third years.⁵
 - The **COMLEX Level 2** is typically taken after clinical core rotations between the third and fourth years.⁵
 - The **COMLEX Level 3** is taken after graduation from medical school during the intern year or residency.⁵

2.3.3 Examination Scores

- USMLE Step 1/COMLEX Level 1:
 - With the transition to pass/fail, students should prioritize passing them on the first attempt.
 - The information on these examinations is the foundation for the USMLE Step 2/COMLEX Level 2.
- USMLE Step 2/COMLEX Level 2:
 - According to the 2022 National Resident Matching Program statistics, matched U.S. dermatology students had an average score of **257 on Step 2** and **681 on the COMLEX Level 2**, with a national average of 246 and 556, respectively.⁶

2.4 Audition Rotations

2.4.1 Planning/Scheduling Audition Rotations

- Audition rotations are the time for students to get noticed by residency programs, learn if they are a good fit for a specific program, and get involved with research projects and obtain LORs. For medical students without a home dermatology program, these auditions are even more important.
- Students should reach out to selected programs starting in November of their third year to learn about the time when applications will be accepted and any special requirements of specific programs.
 - Audition rotations are scheduled and obtained through the Visiting Student Learning Opportunities (VSLO) portal.
 - Some programs use ClinicianNexus or may schedule via e-mail, making early outreach imperative.

- Many audition rotations fill on a rolling basis. Applying early is key.
- As of the 2023–2024 residency application cycle, students are limited to two away rotations, or three for those without a home dermatology program.
 - This statement was released by Association of Professors of Dermatology (APD) in December 2022.^{7,8}
- Audition rotations should be scheduled between August and November for the best chance of being invited for an interview.
- Medical students may want to consider applying for both a clinical and a research elective rather than two clinical electives.

2.4.2 What to Expect on Audition Rotations

- Programs do not expect students to have dermatology knowledge. However, having basic knowledge of common skin conditions and the ability to present a patient can help a student to stand out among other applicants.
 - The American Academy of Dermatology basic dermatology curriculum is a great source to learn basics of dermatology before starting audition rotations. These modules are free and available online.
 - Additional resources include *Lookingbill and Marks' Principles of Dermatology*, *Fitzpatrick's Color Atlas*, and *Dermatology Essentials*.
- During audition rotations, students might have the opportunity to get involved in research or author case reports. It is helpful to ask about these opportunities.
- Most dermatology rotations are observational, but you can help the clinical team.
 - Students should consider learning about consent forms, dermatology electronic medical record (EMR) programs, basic office procedures, and offer to efficiently set up surgical trays. If the dermatology clinic allows medical students to write an initial patient note, take advantage of this opportunity.
 - Assisting residents and attendings with clinical tasks can help a student make a good impression.
- Every residency program values team players who are friendly with other rotators.

- Students should remember that, during audition rotation, they are being watched by PDs, attendings, residents, and other staff.
 - Both the program and students are assessing whether a student will be a good fit for their program.
- Some dermatology residency programs conduct a residency interview at the end of the audition rotation.
- Do not assume an audition rotation will lead to an interview. Some programs interview only select audition rotators based on student performance.
- Audition rotations can lead to offers to participate in a research project, often leading to a publication. Be open to this possibility.

2.5 Electronic Residency Application Service Residency Application

2.5.1 ERAS: What Is It?

- The Electronic Residency Application Service (ERAS) is a tool through which applicants apply to residency.
 - ERAS stands for: Electronic Residency Application Service.
- The majority, but not all the residency programs, participate in the ERAS.

2.5.2 ERAS Components

- The ERAS includes applicants submitting professional information and experiences, LORs, and personal statements (PS).
- The ERAS has an experiences section for activities such as research, volunteer, education/training, military, club/hobby, professional organization, and teaching/mentoring, which students file based on their curriculum vitae (CV).
- Students should be aware that *research experience* and *publications* are two separate sections in the ERAS application.
 - If an applicant has many projects under one mentor, they can be grouped together.
 - If an applicant has fewer research experiences, they can be separated into different activities.
 - Students may also submit unpublished manuscripts to the ERAS.
- Starting in 2023, applicants are limited to 10 experiences in the ERAS submissions.

- Applicants can designate 3 of 10 experiences as the most meaningful, with additional room to detail the knowledge and positive impact of this work.
- Personal statement—refer to the section **Personal Statement**.
- LORs—refer to the section **Letters of Recommendation**.

2.5.3 ERAS Timeline

- The 2024 application cycle example:
 - The ERAS applications open at the beginning of June during a student's third year of medical school.
 - The 2024 application cycle opened on June 7, 2023.⁹
 - On September 6, 2023, applicants began submitting applications to MyERAS.⁹
 - The first date programs could download applications was September 27, 2023, for the class of 2024.⁹
 - It is recommended that the entire application be submitted before this date.

2.6 Personal Statement

- The PS is limited to 28,000 characters, which accounts for 5 pages.
 - It is advised to keep the PS limited to 1 page.¹⁰
- In a survey of PDs, it is emphasized that applicants should focus on highlighting their unique characteristics that would distinguish them from others.¹⁰
- Before writing a PS, students should understand what is the purpose of this statement.¹¹
 - The purpose of a PS is for residency programs to understand who you are as a person, to learn about your motivations and skills, and to see what your goals are for the future.¹¹
- Students should brainstorm for the stories they are going to talk about and make an outline of the PS.¹¹
 - The PS should start with an engaging introduction, followed by a cohesive story that highlights applicants' strengths and unique skills, and it should end with a memorable conclusion.¹¹
 - Applicants should not recite their CV in PS.
- After completion, the PS should be revised and reviewed by a student first.¹¹
 - It should not contain any grammatical errors.¹¹

- PS should be also given for proofreading to as many people as possible.¹¹
 - Have your mentor read and comment on it.
 - Ask friends and family members for their opinion.
 - Ask for adequate judgment and advice on how to make it sound authentic and polished.
 - Consider former English professors or friends who can proofread for grammar.
 - Utilizing artificial intelligence is risky and requires careful proofreading.
- There are resources available online, such as MedMentors, that can help applicants to understand the purpose of PS and the best practices to write one.¹¹
 - A neutral plain background is preferred over the virtual.¹⁴
 - Sit in front of the window for better lighting. Ring light might help with optimum lighting.¹⁴
 - Ensure reliable internet connection. Internet speed can be checked through a website such as www.fast.com. Be prepared to switch to another device with internet connection in case something goes wrong.¹⁴
 - Ensure loud and clear audio.¹⁴
 - Conduct a mock interview and record yourself to analyze your on-camera appearance.¹⁴
 - Eliminate barking of dogs and other distractions.

2.7 Letters of Recommendation

- Dermatology applicants will need three to four LORs, with at least one of them from the dermatology faculty.
- Medical students from previous years may provide insight into which professors take the time to write good letters.
- In a recent survey from the APD, 90.8% of mentors reported that the most important factor for LOR writer selection was how well the writer knows the applicant.¹²

2.8 Interviews

2.8.1 The Interview

- Interview season is a time for programs to learn more about applicants and for applicants to learn more about the programs.
- Candidates are evaluated using scores based on the ERAS application and on interview.¹³
 - The interview score is based on the evaluator's impression of a candidate's interaction during a 20-minute conversation.¹³
 - Different evaluators value different aspects of a candidate's personality and interview performance.¹³
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, many residency programs conducted their interviews virtually. Some programs still implement these practices. If students participate in virtual interview, the following tips might be useful:
 - Choose a well-lit location, free of noise and distraction.¹⁴

2.8.2 Responding to the Interview Invite

- Most interview invites take place between November and January, with most programs offering 2 to 3 days for interviews, usually Wednesday to Friday.¹⁵
- The APD has advised coordinated interview release dates. Participating programs have been advised to not release more interview invites than interview slots available. Programs not participating in the coordinated release have been asked to follow this guideline and to post the date of interview invite releases on their websites.⁸ The dates for the 2024 application cycle were November 6, November 20, and December 4, 2023.
- Upon receiving an interview offer, it is important to promptly reply with an acceptance or rejection of the invite. Coordinated release interviews have a deadline to respond within 2 days of receiving the invite. The reply should be professional, timely, and succinct.
- Invites can come through e-mail or the ERAS. Applicants should have notifications enabled to promptly reply to the interview invitations.

2.8.3 Preparing for the Interview

- When preparing for the interview, an understanding of interview styles, common questions, and proper etiquette is critical (see ► Table 2.2).
 - You may be asked, "Why did you select this program?"

Table 2.2 Common dermatology interview questions listed by the Dermatology Interest Group Association (DIGA)

Common dermatology interview questions listed by the DIGA	
Personal	Tell me about yourself
	Tell me about a challenging time you had in medical school
General	Why did you choose Dermatology?
	Tell me about your research
	Tell me about a particularly memorable patient
Behavioral	Who is your role model and why?
	How would you handle working with someone you disliked?
	What causes you stress and how do you deal with it?
	How would you spend 1 million dollars?

- Have program-specific questions prepared for the interview.
- Do not ask simplistic questions that were addressed or can be searched easily on the internet.
- Prepare for behavioral interview questions:
 - Numerous websites list 100 common behavioral interview questions.
 - Prepare several vignettes that can be used to answer a number of potential questions.¹⁶
- Interviews are mostly about the applicants, who they are, their personality, and how they fit for a certain program.
- Connecting with a mentor will help an applicant prepare through mock interviews and discussing appropriate responses.
- The Dermatology Interest Group Association (DIGA) offers a mentorship program directed toward students underrepresented in dermatology. It is meant to connect such applicants with dermatology mentors who can share their experience and tips with the applicants throughout the application cycle. The DIGA website also has information on preparing for interviews.

2.8.4 Interview Day

- On interview day, the most important tip for an applicant is to be yourself.

- Applicants should demonstrate professionalism, such as arriving early, attending meet-and-greet if offered, being approachable, dressing professionally, and avoiding speaking negatively about other programs and applicants.
- Applicants should bring an extra copy of their CV, ERAS application, PS, published work, and any other important documents for in-person interviews.
- It is important for an applicant to know their own application, review their research publications, and take the time to learn important information about the program.

2.8.5 After the Interview

- Some candidates choose to send a Thank You Note.
- It is unlikely that a thank you note will impact a candidate's ranking or program decision, but it is a nice gesture.
- Tips for writing a Thank You Note:
 - Do not copy and paste the same note.
 - Individualize the notes: mention specifics from your interview.
 - Write one for each person who took the time to interview you.
 - PROOFREAD! Verify it is addressed to the right person and do a spell check.
 - Send them in a timely manner 24 to 48 hours after the interview.

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