

Holistic Application Review

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- Increasing numbers of applications are submitted annually for EM residency positions
- Standardized testing is often used as an initial screening method, however, this has only been shown to correlate with success on future standardized tests rather than overall success in residency
- Many benefits of a diverse physician workforce have been demonstrated and achieving such diversity within a residency class requires innovative screening and recruiting methods
- We will discuss methods for holistic review of applications in order to include an assessment of non-cognitive qualities and skills in application screening

Small Group Discussion:

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What are the benefits of a diverse physician workforce?

Who is responsible for screening and reviewing applications to your program?

Are reviewers offered training? How are recruiting goals communicated to reviewers?

How does your program define goals for application screening?

Do you screen for specific non-cognitive qualities when reviewing applications?

What resources does your medical center or hospital offer to assist with recruitment of [underrepresented in medicine \(URM\)](#) candidates?

Action Items:

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Consider ~~s~~Setting a minimum criterion for success in your residency (minimum USMLE scores, minimum grades, assessment of certain “red flags”) and create a strategy for complete review of all applications that fall above that standard

Consider involving others outside of your program leadership in application screening (ex. non-PD faculty, residents, coordinators) to allow a closer look at ~~each~~ applicant and ~~varying~~ perspectives

Train reviewers to ensure that they understand nuances of application review (ex. ~~g~~Grade inflation, limitations of SLOEs, etc)

Train reviewers to ensure that they understand your goals for recruiting

Identify and screen for specific non-cognitive qualities that would most enhance your program (ex. ~~a~~Academic interest, leadership, service to community, resilience, work ethic, empathy, compassion, diverse background, other specific skills related to past experiences or employment, ~~etc~~)

Use ERAS filters to search for specific applicant qualities other than traditional metrics

Research and utilize resources outside of your department to assist with recruiting diverse residency candidates

~~Bandiera article summary-~~

~~List 1~~

~~Recommended Principles to Guide Process Design for Resident Application and Selection, BPAS Working Group, University of Toronto~~

~~1.~~

~~Selection criteria and processes should reflect the residency program’s clearly articulated goals.~~

~~2.~~

~~Selection criteria and processes should reflect a balance of emphasis on all CanMEDS competencies.~~

~~3.~~

~~Selection criteria used for initial filtering, file review, interviews, and ranking should be as objective as possible.~~

~~4.~~

~~Selection criteria and processes should be fair and transparent for all applicant streams.~~

~~5.~~

~~Selection criteria and processes should promote diversity of the resident body (e.g., race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, family status), be free of inappropriate bias, and respect the obligation to provide for reasonable accommodation needs where appropriate.~~

~~6.~~

~~Programs should choose candidates who best meet the above criteria and are most able to complete the specific residency curriculum and enter independent practice.~~

~~7.~~

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Multiple independent objective assessments result in the most reliable and consistent applicant rankings.

8.

Undergraduate and postgraduate leaders and communities must engage in collaborative planning and innovation to optimize the transition between undergraduate and postgraduate as well as between specialty and subspecialty postgraduate programs for all learners.

9.

Postgraduate programs must be well informed of educational needs of individual candidates to allow effective and efficient educational programming.

10.

Recognizing that past behavior and achievements are the best predictors of future performance, efforts should be made to include all relevant information (full disclosure) about applicants' past performance in application files.

11.

Applicants should be well informed about specialties of interest to them, including health human resources considerations.

12.

Programs must consider and value applicants with broad clinical experiences and not expect or overemphasize numerous electives in one discipline or at a local site.

13.

Diversity of residents across postgraduate medical education programs must be pursued and measured.

Abbreviations: BPAS indicates Best Practices in Application and Selection; CanMEDS, Canadian Medical Education Directives for Specialists.

19

Appendix 1

Recommended Best Practices in Application and Selection for Residencies, BPAS Working Group, University of Toronto
Transparency

1.

Programs must define the goals of their selection processes and explicitly relate these to overall program goals.

2.

Programs should define explicitly in which parts of the application/interview process relevant attributes will be assessed.

3.

Programs should explicitly and publicly state the processes and metrics they use to filter and rank candidates, including on program and Canadian Resident Matching Service Web sites.

4.

Programs should maintain records that will clearly demonstrate adherence to relevant processes (for example, for audit purposes).

5.

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If programs systematically use information other than that contained in application files and interviews, this must be consistent, fair, and transparent for all applicants.

6.

Programs using such additional information must have a process to investigate and validate such information prior to considering it for selection processes.

7.

Programs should have a specific practice regarding retention and protection of records that is consistent with locally applicable policies, regulations, and laws.

Fairness

8.

Each component (e.g., application file documents, interview performance, etc.) of the candidate's application should be assessed independently on its own merits, using information contained only in that component.

9.

Programs must abide by the Guidelines for Management of Conflict of Interest in Admissions Decisions.

a

Selection criteria

10.

Programs must establish a comprehensive set of program-specific criteria that will allow thorough assessment of all candidates.

11.

Each program's selection criteria must include elements specific to the specialty that are validated to predict success in that field (for example, hand-eye coordination for procedural disciplines).

Process

12.

Criteria, instruments, interviews, and assessment/ranking systems must be standardized across applicants and assessors within each program.

13.

Assessments should be based on demonstrable skills or previous behaviors, both of which are known to be predictive of future behaviors.

14.

Applicant assessment should be based on multiple independent samples and not on the opinion of a single assessor.

15.

Programs should regularly assess the outcomes of their process to determine if program goals and Best Practices in Application and Selection principles (e.g., diversity) are being met.

b

Assessors

16.

Selection committees must be comprised of individuals with a breadth of perspectives that reflect program goals.

17.

Assessors must be trained in all aspects of the process relevant to their contribution, including the program goals, selection process, assessment criteria, and assessment/ranking systems.

Assessment instruments

18.

Programs must strive to incorporate objective assessment strategies proven to assess relevant criteria.

Knowledge translation

19.

Best practices should be shared among different specialties and programs.

20.

Innovations in application and selection should be done in a scholarly manner that will allow eventual dissemination in peer-reviewed forums (e.g., meeting presentations, articles).

Ranking

21.

Programs must have a process to receive (and, when appropriate, investigate, validate and then produce for consideration to the selection committee) information from any source that alleges improper behavior of candidates.

22.

Programs should establish clear criteria for determining “do not rank” status.

23.

Programs should rank candidates in the appropriate order based on assessment and not based on whom selection committee members think will rank the program highly.

24.

Ranking must be done using pre-defined and transparent processes.

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