

## BOOK REVIEWS

**Caballero J, Clauson K, Benavides S.** *Get the Residency. ASHP's Guide to Residency: Interviews and Preparation.* Bethesda, MD: American Society of Health-System Pharmacists, Inc; 2012, 128pp, \$22.00 (softcover), ISBN 9781585283651.

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Considering the increasingly competitive and highly selective residency and fellowship programs across the nation, seeking a residency or fellowship position has become a challenge among many doctor of pharmacy (PharmD) graduates. *Get the Residency* provides the insights that pharmacist applicants, especially fresh graduates, need in order to stand out from other candidates. Because of the constantly increasing number of PharmD graduates vying for a relatively steady number of residency and fellowship positions, securing such positions has become a more difficult step that requires more effort from the applicant through intense preparation and careful planning. Thus, this text is a great asset for those seeking postgraduate training positions by acquainting them with details related to the application refining process, helping them finish the application process more efficiently, and ultimately boosting their chances of securing a position. This book provides a guide to applicants, enriching them with information that maximizes their chances for obtaining the sought positions. It teaches them the techniques that help them become more competent in order to navigate the matching process successfully.

This book is the first of its kind. It solves the problem of widespread perceived ambiguity about how the residency matching process works. It guides residency and fellowship applicants along the matching process journey starting with the tactics needed before applying (preparing the résumé and the statement of purpose), during the process (interviewing and self-presenting), and after the process (following up with directors and starting the new program). It is noteworthy throughout this text how detailed different topics are presented. This book guides the applicant not only general advice on how to be more organized and competitive, but also how to be detail-oriented at every checkpoint throughout the entire process: preparing, improving ones' qualification, contacting

programs directors, applying, interviewing, and following up after receiving the matching/non-matching results.

*Get the Residency* is directed to pharmacists and especially to pharmacy students who look to increase their chances of obtaining residency or fellowship positions. However, it provides little information about specific postgraduate training programs. Applicants interested in knowing more about specific PGY1 and PGY2 programs may refer to *Securing and Excelling in a Pharmacy Residency*.<sup>1</sup>

*Get the Residency* combines the expertise of faculty members, clinicians, and other academic and professional personnel acquainted with the matching process. Reflecting upon recommendations and adopting suggestions presented in this text would make the applicant more confident and more competitive as programs directors would perceive them as a better fit for the position sought. This text comes in 11 chapters that take the applicant through all steps across the matching process by presenting the main subject and the details associated with every step.

The book starts by instructing prospective applicants about preparing themselves to pursue residency or fellowship positions. Chapter 1 enlightens applicants about different paths they can pursue by considering whether looking for a residency or fellowship is the right decision for them. The chapter presents a scheme for students (starting from the first year of their PharmD program) on how to prepare ahead and be an excellent planner and successful applicant. The chapter provides suggestions on how to excel by focusing the effort towards being a successful student before being a successful residency or fellowship applicant. The chapter provides suggestions on how to best manage one's time during the PharmD program. It explains to applicants how to maximize their chances of securing a residency or fellowship position through getting involved in research, keeping a high GPA, continuously updating their résumé, and joining professional organizations. Additionally, the chapter explains different definitions and acronyms in residency, defines what fellowships are and how they contrast to residency programs, and explains the impact that personal information in social network Web sites may have on the applicant's chances of securing the sought positions.

Chapter 2 is devoted to the techniques of preparing successful résumés. The chapter provides suggestions on how to improve the résumé through focusing on both the content and style. The chapter explains that preparing a creative and distinctive résumé depends not only on what to include, but also how to include it, how to phrase it, and how to organize it. The chapter provides tips on how to prepare an excellent résumé that best represents the applicant and shows both his/her best organizational skills and outstanding qualifications. Further, the chapter

provides many suggestions on how to compose a successful personal statement. It specifies what themes to write about, what information to include and what to exclude, and how to create a balanced personal statement that neither underestimates the applicant, nor exaggerate his/her qualifications.

Chapter 3 discusses the ways potential applicants should display themselves to residency or fellowship directors, which is most commonly via e-mail communication. The chapter provides suggestions on when and how to contact program directors and what to expect when communicating with them. The chapter provides examples of what to include in e-mails sent to them, how to respond to their replies, and what to do when there is no response back from them. The chapter narrates several scenarios to directors' responses to e-mails, and provides suggestions to potential applicants on how they should respond back and follow-up with them.

Chapter 4 investigates the opportunities that residency and fellowship potential applicants can get through attending the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists Midyear Clinical Meeting. The chapter explains how such occasions can make a suitable venue for applicants to meet with programs directors, exchange information with them, and get insight and answers on different residency and fellowship programs. The chapter provides several tips and many details on how to successfully present oneself during and after the Residency Showcase and the Personal Placement Services. Finally, the chapter helps the reader recognize further steps to be done after finishing the Midyear Clinical Meeting such as following-up with directors and identifying which programs, locations, and curriculums are best for every applicant based on personal preferences.

Chapter 5 takes the reader one step ahead towards the procedures of applying. It provides suggestions to applicants, especially students in their last year of school, on how to divide their time between studying and looking for residency or fellowship programs, how many programs to apply for, how to approach faculty members for recommendation letters, and how to plan ahead for prospective interviews. Advice is included on continuously updating the curriculum vitae and personal statement based on experienced gained from fourth-year practice experiences, communicating with preceptors and programs directors on postgraduate training programs, and gathering information about possible questions and best answers during interviews.

Chapter 6 investigates matters related to the interview day. The chapter differentiates between group interviews and one-to-one interviews, between phone interviews and on-site interviews, and teaches the reader on what

to expect during the interviews and how to best behave in each type of them. The chapter gives advice and suggestions on how to excel during interviews in order to make an outstanding impression on the programs directors.

Chapter 7 addresses the period after interviewing and before matching. The chapter addresses how to follow up with directors and interviewers on issues addressed during the interview. Additionally, the chapter addresses the etiquettes of sending directors and interviewers a thank you note for their time, addressing questions to them afterward (eg, inquiring about the application status), and responding to and accommodating any new requests from them (eg, a second interview).

Chapter 8 talks about the matching process where applicants navigate the matching program Web site and make selections according to their preferences. The chapter explains the Web site matching procedure to the readers and acquaints them with steps they need to take for completing applications. The chapter provides suggestions on how to rank programs, how to submit the rank order, and what to expect when the match results are released. Finally, the chapter provides a quick description of how the matching process works, and consequently, advises applicants on what basis they should rank their preferences in order to maximize their chances of securing the programs they desire.

Chapter 9 discusses cases where applicants do not match in any of the selected programs. The chapter instructs applicant on steps they need to take in order to have another chance of acceptance in other programs through the "scramble" process. The chapter provides suggestions on what to do, when to do what, and who to contact if the first selection does not result in matching. The chapter even goes beyond that and instructs the applicant on options applicants may have if the scramble did not secure a position for them. It also provides suggestions for self-development and how to be more competitive in the future.

Chapter 10 investigates the other possibility of application results where the applicant succeeds in matching. The chapter explains what is necessary to be done during the period between matching and actually starting the new program. Additionally, the chapter teaches applicants, especially fresh graduates, on how to make the transition from the old program (PharmD) to the new one (residency or fellowship) and what responsibilities the applicants have to finish before starting the new program. Further, the chapter instructs the applicants to keep self-evaluating themselves, plan for the future, and set short- and long-term goals in order to have a clear view of their expectations and duties when starting the new program.

Chapter 11 briefly provides encouragement to those who do not match. It narrates examples of success stories

and explain to those applicants why giving up is not the right decision. The chapter explains to applicants that success is not always easy and that achieving sought goals requires continuous endeavor and persistence.

The book ends with 6 appendices aiming to help applicants in preparing the residency or fellowship application. These appendices provide a few instructions that help the reader become an excellent residency or fellowship applicant. Examples of helpful topics discussed in the appendices are how to design an outstanding résumé, tips on selecting programs, frequently discussed topics during interviews, and questions that applicants may ask or need to avoid during the interviews. In sum, this text provides an excellent roadmap that is essential to residency and fellowship applicants. Taking into account the increased competitive positions, differences in qualifications among different applicants may decrease over

the years, which makes any small impetus essential in deciding to whom those limited available positions are to be offered. This book provides the boost that successful applicants need in their pursuit of residency and fellowship positions.

## REFERENCES

1. Deliere R, Alkhateeb FM, reviewers. *Am J Pharm Educ.* 2012;76(4):Article 74. Review of: Crouch MA. *Securing and Excelling in a Pharmacy Residency.*

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