

Frequently Asked Questions Vascular Surgery Residency Application & Interview Process

The data in this FAQ was collected from vascular residents enrolled in vascular surgery programs in 2008-2009. It is intended to be used only as a resource to medical students and general surgery residents as they research, apply, and interview at vascular surgery residency programs. The data is not to be regarded as an endorsement or policy statement from the Society for Vascular Surgery.

Application Process

Residents applied to:

- 10 or more programs – 67.8%
- 7 to 9 programs – 11.9%
- 4 to 6 programs – 13.6%
- 1 to 3 programs – 6.8%

Residents recommend applying to:

- 10 or more programs – 56.9%
- 7 to 9 programs – 34.5%
- 4 to 6 programs – 8.6%

Letters of recommendations residents obtained:

- 4 to 6 letters – 67.8%
- 1 to 3 letters – 30.5%
- 7 to 9 letters – 1.7%

Importance of Networking, Research Experience and ABSITE Scores in Obtaining a Position

ABSITE Scores

- 52.6% residents viewed as important
- 47.4% residents view as not important

Networking

- 71.2% residents viewed as important
- 28.8% residents view as not important

Research Experience

- 57.6% residents viewed as important
- 42.4% residents view as not important

Interview Process

Residents interviewed at:

- 10 or more programs – 33.9%
- 7 to 9 programs – 33.9%
- 4 to 6 programs – 23.7%
- 1 to 3 programs – 8.5%

Met with current vascular fellows during the interview:

- Yes – 98.3%
- No – 1.7%

Programs assisted with travel expenses

- No – 88.1%
- Yes – 11.9%

Decision to Accept a Residency Position

Residents based their decision to accept a residency on the following:

Overall Rankings (on a scale of 1-5, with 5 as the highest ranking):

- Faculty – 4.43
- Program’s Academic Status – 3.63
- Geographical Location – 3.20
- Other – 2.94
- Research Opportunities – 2.25

Most Important:

- Faculty – 55.1%
- Other – 27.8%
- Geographical Location – 20%
- Program’s Academic Status – 13.5%
- Research Opportunities – 1.8%

Very Important

- Program’s Academic Status – 44.2%
- Faculty – 34.7%
- Other – 22.2%
- Geographical Location – 22%
- Research Opportunities – 5.3%

Somewhat Important

- Program’s Academic Status – 34.6%
- Research Opportunities – 31.6%
- Geographical Location – 26%
- Faculty – 8.2%
- Other – 5.6%

Not Very Important

- Research Opportunities – 38.6%
- Geographical Location – 22%
- Other – 5.6%
- Program’s Academic Status – 7.7%
- Faculty – 2%

Least Important

- Research Opportunities – 22.8%
- Geographical Location – 10%
- Other – 38.9%
- Faculty – 0%
- Program's Academic Status – 0%

Other factors:

- program structure
- number of complex cases and case variety between open and endovascular
- case volume
- friendly program
- treatment of fellows
- current fellows satisfaction with program
- adherence to work hours
- couples match

Common Traits That Programs Are Looking for in Vascular Fellows (According to Vascular Residents)

- hard working
- dedicated
- reliable
- dependable
- trustworthy
- solid work ethic
- self-motivated
- intellectually curious
- inquisitive
- studious
- flexible
- leadership skills
- good interpersonal skills
- able to work independently
- profound interest in vascular surgery
- interest in research
- interest in pursuing academic career or strong academic interest.
- good academic record – a proven track record of learning/accomplishment
- high ABSITE scores
- some peer-reviewed publications and/or presentations while in residency
- can function and make decisions at junior attending level – a high degree of autonomy
- can take ownership for patients
- can do clinical work
- solid previous surgical background
- good baseline surgical skills
- can operate on day one
- a high volume of vascular experience prior to fellowship
- solid letters of recommendation that reflect work ethic and interest in vascular
- good fit with program
- well-rounded applicant

Additional Advice from Vascular Residents

- research programs early
- start application process early
- apply to a broad range of programs
- network with programs you are interested in and their respective fellows
- network with fellow applicants
- seek mentors and ask for their advice or assistance when applying
- display dedication to the field via research or working with a vascular attending in some additional capacity
- get involved in vascular meetings by presenting or attending
- evaluate what you really want in a program
- develop well-defined goals that you can easily/quickly explain to potential programs
- look for a program that fits both your professional and personal needs
- evaluate each program thoroughly
- don't rank a program without visiting or interviewing first
- talk with current fellows as candidly as possible
- observe the interaction between the faculty members and fellows
- observe if the program has a collegial environment and if it suits your learning abilities
- inquire about the balance of open, endovascular and peripheral experience
- compare the ratio between endovascular cases vs. open cases to see what the program focuses on and if it suits your needs
- inquire about how cases are assigned and the case volume
- inquire about first call assignments
- inquire about night coverage, resident coverage and physician assistant and nurse practitioner coverage
- inquire if the program has a clinical database
- inquire about the support available to fellows for scut work (residents, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, etc.)
- inquire about the what type of system is in order for support of patient admission (history and physical examination), consults and discharges (physician, interns, general surgery residents)
- inquire if the technology and equipment required for your training will be available by the time you start
- inquire if the program supports time for residents to read, publish, etc.
- keep in mind that faculty are mobile and could potentially leave during your residency