



Society of Neurological Surgeons Policy on **External Medical Student Rotations** during the COVID-19 pandemic

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the usual scheduling of Sub-internships, Acting-internships, and away medical school rotations in neurosurgery (Sub-Is) poses a challenge. **Safety, education, and equity** for students, institutions, patients, and communities, are paramount in the following decisions.

External rotations for medical students are integral to the application process for:

1. the student to experience the specialty of neurosurgery in its depth and breadth prior to committing to a specialty.
2. education in preparation for internship.
3. letters of recommendation to assist programs in the evaluation of medical student applicants.

External rotations require travel, which increases potential spread of disease. Additionally, given differing levels of disease impact in different regions, many institutions are not allowing medical students to rotate in or out during the months of May-Sept, when external rotations would usually occur. This disadvantages many students and programs who would not be able to participate in these external rotations. In order to minimize disease spread, to minimize financial burden, and to ensure the most equitable experience for all students and all programs during this pandemic, the following recommendations have been issued by the leadership of the specialty of neurological surgery:

1. **All external medical student rotations in neurological surgery will be deferred in 2020.**
2. **Given the importance of the applicant experience in neurological surgery prior to committing to a career path, each student should have at least 8 weeks (2 rotations) of neurological surgery experience at their home institution.**
 - a. **For students without a home program, they should have 8 weeks (2 rotations) of neurological surgery experience at the closest ACGME accredited program, in order to minimize travel and keep within regional disease demographics.**
3. **Letters of recommendation should come from the student's home institution, including at least two (2) from neurosurgical faculty members and one (1) from a general surgery faculty member (i.e. a program director, clerkship director, or surgical faculty mentor).**

- a. **Letter templates will be provided at the SNS website under the medical student section.**
 - b. **Letters of recommendation from external rotations will be looked upon unfavorably (with the exception of those students without a home program, see 2a).**
4. **In order to maintain and train our workforce, all neurological surgery training programs must honor the contracts of incoming PGY-1 trainees for the 2020-2021 academic year.**
5. **Direction regarding interviews will be forthcoming and determined in close alignment with ERAS and the NRMP (the organizations administering residency applications and the Match).**

The SNS will continue to closely monitor the situation and issue new guidance as necessary.

Approved: April 29th, 2020

SNS Executive Council

SNS Medical Student Committee

Endorsed: April 28th, 2020

One Neurosurgery Summit Leadership