

ACRO Radiation Oncology Residency Interview Tips

Interviews are a nerve-wracking experience for everyone. Here are some tips from current rad onc residents on how to navigate our specialty's interviews and make the most of your interview day.

Starting Points:

- Always be professional and courteous to everyone you interact with on the interview trail. Rad onc is a small field and you might end up crossing paths with residents/interviewees/faculty in the future!
- Be prepared to talk about your professional goals during residency and beyond. Your interviewer will want to see that the institution's goals align with your career goals.
- Be prepared to explain everything you included in your CV, especially your research projects.
- Some programs ask "behavioral questions" to get a sense of how you deal with difficult interprofessional situations. Having some past experiences about experiences of conflict, mistakes, difficulties that helped you grow ready to talk about will be helpful.

More often than not, you'll be asked what questions you have about the program. This is a great opportunity to learn more about the program so you can decide if it's a good fit for you. It may be informative to learn more about:

- Opportunities to participate in rotations off-site and abroad
- Research/degrees/elective rotations past residents have worked on during their PGY4 elective time
- Ways that residents spend time outside of work, unique aspects of the city
- Program culture
- Where are the graduates of the program practicing right now? How frequently do your graduates pursue careers in academia?
- Community demographics in the hospital/clinic
- How are residents given feedback?
- Are there opportunities for mentorship within the program?
- Board pass rates?
- Didactics schedules and residents participation in tumor board

Logistics of the program:

- Conference attendance policies and funding vary between programs. Be sure to ask about this if you are interested in presenting your research during residency
- Frequency and format of didactics, journal club, M&M, visiting lecturers
- Rotation schedule and call schedule
- Formulate a list of your "must haves" in a program, be it research, disease sites, geographic area.
- "Thank You" notes: some programs will specifically tell applicants not to send them. Others will not specify these rules. If a program prohibits it, definitely don't send one. If they leave it open ended, don't feel obligated to send a generic thank you but if an

interviewer or the program in general left an impression, it wouldn't hurt to send them a thank you note.

Sample Questions You May Be Asked in Interview

- Why do you want to pursue Radiation Oncology? What inspired you to pursue this field?
- What motivated you to pursue radiation oncology rather than medical oncology? And what do you think are the similarities and differences between both fields?
- Why do you want to train at [Name of Program]?
 - What unique qualities/skills do you bring to this program?
 - What are you looking for in this program?
- What strengths do you feel you bring to our program?
- Tell me about a research project/volunteer work/leadership initiative you're proud of
 - What would you say is your greatest accomplishment to date, and why?
 - Is there a disease site you would like to focus your research on?
- What are your goals after completing residency?
- Tell me about a time when you had to work in a team
- Tell me about a challenge you faced and how you overcame it
 - How do you cope with setbacks and stress?
- Tell me about a time when you had to work with a challenging teammate/supervisor/patient and how you managed to reach a resolution.
 - What challenges did you identify in this interaction, and how did you overcome them?
- What hard and soft skills do you believe make for an effective radiation oncologist?
 - What role do you believe Emotional Intelligence plays in your work as a radiation oncologist?
- What is a skill/hobby that you are proud of? How did you learn this?
- If you were not a physician, what career path would you have pursued?
- Mention a unique character you have that makes you stand out?

Tips for In-Person Interviews

- Arrive 15-20 minutes prior to your scheduled meeting.
- Study the route you will take to the interview location and how much travel time you will require. Build in additional to account for possible delays, accidents, etc
- Write down the name and titles of the program coordinator, senior administrative assistants, and interviewers
- Bring a notepad and a nice pen, so you can take notes during your interview
- Bring enough copies of your resume to provide to each interviewer, so they can review and annotate it during your conversation
- If participating in a group interview, engage all member of the group and have questions for each participant
- Request a business card from each interviewer so you can send thank-you notes afterwards, within 24 hours of the interview