

JRIG Pediatrics Residency Program Director Q&A

Dr. Nakamura = Chairman of Pediatrics

Dr. French = Associate Director of Pediatrics at Kapiolani

Dr. Woo = RIG Faculty Director and Pediatric Surgeon at Kapiolani

1. How important is research to the application? How much research is “enough” to get into residency? (papers, presentations, posters, etc.)

It is only important as a portion of a well rounded/holistic application. It is more important to have evidence of solid and rigorous clinical experience, clear interest in the well-being of patients, strong interpersonal skills, and how much you do for your personal wellness. We accept residents who have done no research. It doesn't happen very often because most of you are at least stating some research experience. They've had a spectrum from one project at a local event to lots of publications (i.e. gap year research jobs, etc). Research is not a make or break factor on an application. Program directors realize that some students may not have as many contacts depending on family contacts, opportunities, etc. If someone has demonstrated a strong dedication to some portion of the community and has done very dedicated volunteering, or was working their way through school while doing well in classes and testing, we are not going to hold it against them that their parents didn't know a doctor for them to do research with”

2. How much do you value full manuscripts vs presentations/posters/abstracts? What about unpublished work? Do you factor these in differently when determining publication productivity? Is there a difference in value for types of publications (case reports, retrospective chart reviews, clinical trials, meta-analysis)?

Full manuscripts are a sign of the ability to complete things if it is clear that the student played a significant role in the project. Be prepared to talk about your project and your specific role in it (be very honest here, we know you don't have your own lab) if you put it in your CV. If we get as far as a poster presentation, the leap from there to a manuscript is not large and probably should be done. You are a medical student, a fine case report where you actually took care of the patient is much more impressive to us than if you were given a few charts to review as part of someone else's larger but more important project, or worse, if you were a paid as a data entry person and they stuck your name somewhere in the middle of the 12 authors. All of the research experiences are looked at, even things that haven't been published in a journal. They recognize that even research that isn't published has value.

3. Do I have to do research specifically in this field? What kind of research do you recommend? What if I decide to change to this field in my third and fourth year of medical school?

Research doesn't have to be specifically in this field if you were strongly involved and somewhat passionate about the project. You learned some research skills there. We aren't hiring you for your research portfolio. We are hiring you because you were specifically interested in learning medicine and actively and curiously did so. Research skills are just part of that at this stage. It is more important to be prepared during the interview to teach about your research and read up on where the field of your research is headed. A nice case report on a patient that you actually saw is valuable and shows you cared and went the extra distance to follow up.

**4. How do I find research mentors? How do I get involved in a research project?
Virtually anyone in peds department will be approachable for research interest**

Send an email to Dr. Nakamura (kennethn@hphmg.org) and he will forward it to the appropriate faculty. They announce at every faculty meeting what kinds of projects are being done and progress made by students being mentored.

5. Do you recommend I take dedicated time off? (year, summer, etc.)

No I don't recommend you take a year off unless you are applying for a MD PhD and specifically need a project to compete. Otherwise it can be seen as an inability to multitask. And if you do decide to take time off for research, make sure you finish the project and have some kind of end product. Research is more heavily weighted towards fellowship training in pediatrics.

Dr. Woo - Most pediatric fellowships are three years (longer than fellowships for other specialties) with research built into the fellowship. Surgery residents do research in the middle of residency, but we may be switching to a pediatrics model where research is done in the fellowship vs. during residency.

6. In addition to research, what are some other must-haves to make a competitive application, especially now that Step 1 is pass/fail?

Even before step 1 was pass/fail, they have done a holistic evaluation. They still look at test scores for sure and are also aware of the fact that a lot of people got honors in a particular rotation. They also pay attention to things you did before med school (i.e. jobs) or meaningful volunteer experiences. A competitive applicant has strong curiosity and interest in learning to be a doctor, not just in making it through the next hoop. Meaningful volunteerism can be very impressive. Writing down every half day at the aloha run, or community blood pressure taking once, less so. Strong clinical rotations where you clearly were trying to get ready to take care of our patients, rather than checking off the boxes and then taking light rotations. Did you do a

rigorous rotation because you wanted to learn things? Or did you just plan to take easy rotations in senior year because it wouldn't show up on your residency app?

7. What does Hawaii's residency program emphasize compared to other residency programs in the country?

We pay a little more attention to the possibility that you will serve our community. Is it likely that this person will come back and work in Hawaii upon finishing their training?

8. How many away-rotations should I do and why?

You should do an away rotation at the residency you want to get into if you can. It serves as an in-person audition, allowing you to get to know the program better, especially since some programs require everyone (even local residents) to do virtual interviews. Some students will choose to do an away rotation because they want to make sure that their choice of residency location is the right one (seeing what else is out there), or provide validation of staying home.

It is a double edged sword. If you know you don't make great first impressions, think about it. There is also a financial aspect. You should also do an away rotation if they have something important to teach you for your future patients that isn't available here (i.e. cystic fibrosis, sickle cell disease, etc). Every location that you are considering to train will have its unique populations and medical conditions, providing a greater variety of clinical and community exposures. Remember, this is about learning to be a doctor.

ADDITIONAL (NON-PRESUBMITTED QUESTIONS):

9. What is unique about UH's residency program compared to other mainland programs?

- Location in Hawaii
- Faculty is good at assessing and assisting residents
- Size - program will be aware of how you're doing at all times
- Don't have massive grants with large number of research projects
- You will definitely know the majority of the faculty
- IEU - these the program won't track you through specialty

10. If interested in working as an attending in Hawaii one day, do you recommend doing residency here or on the mainland?

- Can be an attending in Hawaii regardless of where you do residency (looking more for quality of work rather than where you were trained)
- Does not believe that residents who trained here have an inside track
- Residents from UH are often hired here because it is difficult to attract doctors to Hawaii
- Tours are virtual now too along with interviews

- Routinely do post-hire check-ins: prior residents report feeling prepared by UH's program
- Hiring committees are looking for true embracement of Hawaii community
- Dr. French - "I have never had to fire a JABSOM grad"

Additional resources from Dr. Nakamura:

A recent publication on national data:

https://journals.lww.com/academicmedicine/fulltext/2023/10000/residency_program_directors_views_on_research.25.aspx

A publication done in our peds residency program by Dr Kurahara, our former residency PD, along with colleagues, that gives a historical glimpse, although now somewhat dated:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3419823/>