

UC Davis School of Medicine Career Advising Program

Medical Student Insight Guide: OB-GYN

An OB-GYN (Obstetrician-Gynecologist) is a surgeon who specializes in the health and care of the female anatomy, including both obstetrics and gynecology. Obstetrics focuses on pregnancy, childbirth, and postpartum care, while gynecology covers a wide range of issues related to the female reproductive system, such as menstrual disorders, fertility, STIs, and menopause.

An OBGYN's career typically involves:

- **Prenatal Care:** Monitoring and managing the health of pregnant patients and their developing babies.
- **Labor and Delivery:** Assisting with childbirth, performing deliveries, and managing complications.
- **Gynecological Care:** Diagnosing and treating conditions like endometriosis, fibroids, cervical cancer, and other reproductive health issues.
- **Surgical Procedures:** Performing surgeries such as cesarean deliveries, hysterectomies, and laparoscopies.
- **Patient Education:** Advising on contraception, family planning, sexual health, and menopause management.

OB-GYNs often work in hospitals, private practices, or clinics, and may have the option to specialize further, such as in maternal-fetal medicine (*MFM*), reproductive endocrinology (*REI*), complex family planning (*CFP*), gynecology-oncology (*Gyn-Onc*), minimally invasive surgeries (*MIS*), and pediatric and adolescent GYN. Physicians who choose not to specialize are considered generalists. It's a career that combines both surgical and clinical skills, and it requires empathy, strong communication, and the ability to handle complex, sometimes high-pressure situations.

PRECLERKSHIP- *a time to focus on learning all the medicine but there are ways to explore the specialty*

Curriculum: Dr. Hou is the specialty advisor and also the OBGYN discipline lead. If you think you are interested in OBGYN, coming to the OBGYN TBLs and active learning sessions are the best way for Dr. Hou to get to know you and your skills, which helps her write you letters of recommendation for scholarships and away rotations later on.

Shadowing. *Look out for opportunities to shadow on L&D offered by the OBGYN SIG as well as workshops they host. You can also arrange clinic shadowing opportunities by reaching*

out to Dr. Hou, the specialty advisor, and the department student coordinator Taha Gilani

Student-run clinics. Look out for leadership positions offered by the student-run clinic you ultimately join. They will usually have special clinic dates dedicated to reproductive healthcare and will usually have a medical student in charge of organizing those clinic days with the preceptor. Sometimes clinics may allow you to volunteer for these specialty clinics even if you are not an official student in their clinic.

Research/Academic project. An academic project is strongly encouraged to match into OBGYN, but this project does not have to be classically research. These projects can be in quality improvement or program development. This can be a great way to become more of an expert on topics within the field, develop projects of interest, network with faculty, gain mentors, and enhance your residency application (especially if you are considering a career in academia).

SIGs. Again, OBGYN SIG is a great one to join (or even come on as a leader of the SIG) and further immerse yourself into the specialty and the different opportunities to interact with faculty, residents, and your peers who are also interested in pursuing a career as an OBGYN.

Career specialty advising. These zoom sessions are hosted frequently and faculty from the various specialties will come to talk about their career journey and answer any questions you have about their respective fields. Dr. Hou is the specialty advisor for OBGYN, schedule individual meetings with her during this time (especially if you are certain this is the career path you want). This will allow you to discuss your career goals with her, make sure you are on track with requirements, and allow her to get to know you better (she will be your guide for clerkship rotations and fourth-year planning for acting internships, away rotations, and your residency application).

CLERKSHIP: The OBGYN Rotation

- A time for you to dive deep into the clinical environment of a career in obstetrics & gynecology and see if this path is for you! (as you will with all the different rotations)
- Become very familiar with the OBGYN clerkship page on Elentra. It has a lot of helpful resources to enhance your clerkship experience and performance
- The rotation consists of a combination of clinic and inpatient service over the course of 6 weeks
- You will submit your site and service preferences one rotation prior, however each medical student has the following general schedule:
 - L&D – 3 weeks
 - Family planning or Benign Gyn- 1 week
 - Gyn/Onc- 1 week
 - Clinic – 1 week
- Note: Your site placements will determine how these weeks are organized and what they actually look like day-to-day (e.g, when you rotate at San Joaquin General your

L&D and clinic week are combined, and your shifts will be mixed together as opposed to two separate blocks of clinic shifts and L&D shifts)

- Be proactive and engaged during your shifts! Ask nurses/residents/attendings to let you know about deliveries or any other opportunities that can enhance your learning and overall experience
- If there is downtime on your shift, complete additional clerkship assignments and UWORLD practice questions (especially during your L&D shifts as you wait for deliveries) . Don't sacrifice the opportunity to see patients for these activities! The more patients you see, the better OBGYN you will be.
- While on your rotation, document impactful clinical encounters to help you prepare for personal statement writing and/or residency interviews
- If you develop a good relationship with an attending and you feel they could comment on your clinical ability, ask for a letter of recommendation (this can be a requirement for some VSLO applications so good to have it ready or you can use for residency application if you work with them again during 4th year)
- Prepare for away rotations with VSLO! – *away rotations NOT required but may be beneficial depending on your goals (discuss this with career advisors and academic coach)* . Some programs do not use VSLO so you will need to investigate the individual institution if there is a program you're interested in but but they are not offering rotations through VSLO
 - This process can be very stressful so start prepping early January during clerkship year so that you are not crunched for time
 - Things you need to get prepared:
 1. **Immunization form** – cannot stress this enough!! The form does not require a physical so oftentimes you can just make a nursing appointment to get any vaccines you need or blood draws for titers. If you need to see a doctor, we all know how far out appointments can be so make an appointment the year prior if you can
 2. **CPR certification** – should still be active from 3rd year but if you are starting 4th year from a leave of absence be sure to check when the certification expires and get it renewed before
 3. **Mask fitting** – some programs may require it to be renewed within a certain period, check their visiting student website for requirements
 4. **CV** – *make sure it is up to date for VSLO and Residency CAS*
 5. **Personal statement** – required for some applications and often required for visiting student stipend applications should you want to apply for those
 6. **Program List** – decide where you are going to apply and make a spreadsheet of when their applications open for viewing, when submissions are allowed, what cycles you want to apply for and what service (i.e. gyn/onc, FP, L&D, etc), how much is the application fee, any special requirements for their application
 7. **4th year schedule** – work with Dina to create tentative schedules (*yes, plural because you may need a backup in case you do not get your first*

choice for courses); this will help you plan what away rotation cycles you want to apply to and where you can place them in your schedule and when you will study for Step 2

POST-CLERKSHIP:

- Take Step 2 – recommended to take by August so that score is available for Residency CAS deadline but if you find yourself outside of this timeline discuss with career advisor and Dr. Jain
- Complete your UCD OBGYN Acting Internship – *1 required, to complete your Standardized Letter of Evaluation (SLOE)*
- Prepare your residency application, usually opens June 5th
- OBGYN uses Residency CAS for application submission and interviews
- \$99 application fee for 18 schools with each additional school costing \$19 (*cheaper than ERAS*)
- Application deadline end of September. Interview offers released on the same day through the Residency CAS portal on Oct. 29th, and you must accept within 48hrs
- **LORs:** 4 letters per program
 - o 1 Standard letter of evaluation (SLOE) – usually someone from your AI who has worked with you clinically
 - o 1 Chair letter from Dr. Leiserowitz
 - o 2 additional narrative letters – can be from OBGYN home rotation, OBGYN away rotation, ICU, surgery, IM, (*how you decide this is dependent on your personal application profile and where you are applying. Non-OBGYN letters are usually more favored if from an inpatient service rather than outpatient.*)
- **Signaling** – how you show programs that you are really interested
 - o Silver – 15 total “*I’m really interested in your program*”
 - o Gold – 3 total “*I’m really really interested in your program and ranking you in my top*”
 - o *Note: there is strategy to this that is student dependent so be sure to discuss with mentors and advisors*
 - o *Note: programs cannot see who you sent your other signals to*
- **Activities/Experiences** – 12 max plus 3 additional non-clinical experiences (*similar to medical school, you can select your 3 most meaningful*)
- Interviews are virtual and conducted through Residency CAS
- Still must register for match through NRMP deadline January 31st
- If participating in OBGYN SOAP you will use Residency CAS, and ERAS for other specialties

CONFERENCES FOR ABSTRACT SUBMISSIONS/POSTER PRESENTATION/NETWORKING:

- ACOG Annual Clinical & Scientific Meeting (general OBGYN) - May
- ACOG Districts VIII & IX Annual District Meeting (general OBGYN, we are district IX) - September
 - o for Academic Specialists in General Obstetrics and Gynecology Annual Meeting (SASGOG) - Sept

- Armed Forces District Annual District Meeting - Sept
- CREOG & APGO Annual Meeting (OBGYN education) - Mar
- Society of Family Planning (CFP) - Nov
- National Abortion Federation (CFP) - May
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- Society of Maternal-Fetal Medicine Pregnancy Meeting (MFM) - Feb
- American Society for Reproductive Medicine (REI/CFP) - April
- Society of Gynecologic Oncology Annual Meeting (GynOnc) - Mar

HELPFUL CONTENT RESOURCES:

- <https://obgynstudent.com>
- Podcast: CREOGs Over Coffee

HELPFUL APPLICATION PREP RESOURCES:

- <https://apgo.org/page/rrrwebinars>
- FRIEDA
- APGO Residency directory
- AAMC residency explorer
- Texas STAR program

Author: Masani Coley, MS4

Editors: Specialty Advisor, Melody Hou, MD

Program: UC Davis School of Medicine Career Advising Program (Dr. Jain, Dr. Duong, Nichola Retzius)

Questions? Email Dr. Duong at tnduong@health.ucdavis.edu.