



Partner/Spouse 2  
Residents/Fellows 2

**Other: Please describe**

**Were you advised to do an away rotation by a specialty advisor?**

Yes 0  
No 9

**Who was your most effective career advisor for your specialty? (number of multiple mentions)**

Dr. Bryan Winn 2  
Dr. Neeti Parikh 4  
Matilda Chan  
Madeline Yung  
Saras Ramanathan  
Specialty-specific confidential career advisor and year-long research mentor

**If you were to do anything differently in the residency application process, what would that be?**

Different strategy for recommendation letters (more from the subspecialty of choice) more networking

I don't think I would have done anything differently. I was glad I applied to more programs than I was initially anticipating given that it was a very competitive year for ophthalmology. I would highly recommend applying to more programs (80+), especially if the interview season remains virtual and the interview cap remains at 20 for ophthalmology.

started research earlier in medical school

Find out more about what aways were available since virtual rotations were not posted centrally anywhere. I would also be more wary of what information to disclose to mentors since it shaped their impression and support of my application. Would also recommend better support for students with earlier matches

Not stress so much about my personal statement I don't think it made as much of a difference as I thought it would.

no

Contact programs before interviews were sent out expressing interest.

**Please provide any other information that might be helpful to UCSF students who will apply to your**

## specialty choice in the future

As Step 1 goes P/F and UCSF does not have grades for clinical rotations your clinical letters of recommendation and research become much more important. Research can encompass a wide range of scholarly work but you need to accomplish something (i.e. papers presentations some form of a finished project) AND to be able to speak about in depth (your involvement impact of your work etc.).

For ophthalmology, I noticed that research was a major talking point and a lot of my colleagues that matched well had strong research backgrounds (multiple ongoing projects with multiple publications). Finding a strong research mentor and being involved in research projects early can provide for a very strong application, especially given that Step 1 will become P/F in the near future. Letters of recommendation are also very important and were frequently brought up during interview season. Although it is recommended to have two letters from ophthalmology faculty and one from medicine/surgery, there are students who matched very well with three ophthalmology letters. Definitely prioritize having strong letters from ophthalmology faculty that know you well. Lastly, I think doing an away rotation can help open other geographic opportunities. It was unexpected to not receive as many interviews from my home state, so I feel like doing an away rotation can help in landing more interviews in other locations.

Complete as much ophtho research as possible! With the changes to step, AOA, and no grades in 3rd year, research becomes one of the best ways to distinguish yourself from other applicants.

Finding mentors with a lot of years in the field is incredibly important. In ophthalmology, name recognition plays a large role in your application. Seek out experienced mentors who have a lot of connections early (2nd/3rd year), build a relationship with them, so that when it comes time to advocate for you for interview slots and residency slots, they are more comfortable advocating for you.

Apply very broadly! Practice answering interview questions with someone close to you (like a friend or family member) to help get into the groove of answering lots of questions back-to-back in a low pressure setting. Reach out to residents and near peers for advice as you get closer to the residency application cycle especially for tips that would be specifically helpful for your specialty. Make sure to get letters from mentors who know you well AND who are well-connected in the field - it really makes a big difference (especially important in smaller fields like ophtho where people seem to all know each other!)

helpful