



Post-CaRMS Match Panel 2024

Sep 18th, 2024, Panel and Discussion with PGY1s: Dr. Nick Lee (UDEM), Dr. Wendy Qiu (UBC), Dr. Kiera Liblik (Queens).

Total number of participants: 38

Electives and Urology Rotation Tips

General advice:

- **Attitude matters more than knowledge.** Be kind, humble, and professional with everyone – residents, nurses, and staff all talk to each other.
- **Be proactive and helpful.** E.g., ask “*How can I be useful?*” rather than waiting for instructions.
- **Stay open-minded.** Even if you’re unsure about urology, use your electives to explore.
- **Know when to talk vs. when to work.** Save big questions for downtime – focus during clinic or OR.
- **Preparation shows.** Know your patients and cases well, staff and residents notice.
- **Get to know the program.** Look to see what makes each program unique.

In the OR:

- Mirror junior residents to learn expectations and workflow.
- Read up on cases beforehand so you can follow along and anticipate next steps.
- Be aware of your surroundings – avoid crowding and choose your moments to ask questions.
- Focus during active surgery; save discussion for after the case.

In Clinic:

- Clinic time is underrated – often your best 1:1 exposure with attendings.
- Use the opportunity to show initiative: volunteer to see patients, summarize findings, and offer plans.
- Ask thoughtful, well-timed questions that show preparation without slowing workflow.

Building Relationships:

- Urology is small and collegial – your reputation will follow you.
- Residents can be your best resource: ask them how to help, who to approach for feedback or letters, etc.
- Positive feedback from residents or staff can be mentioned in packages to send to staff for letters (CV, info about yourself, etc.).
- Always thank people for their time and teaching.

Applications

CV:

- **Update regularly.** Add small details throughout medical school so nothing gets forgotten later.
- **Know your CV inside and out.** You must be able to discuss every item confidently.
- **Start early.** Review and revise often – you'll notice small errors each time.
- **Tailor for each program.** Create versions that highlight different strengths or experiences depending on the school.
- **Concise but comprehensive.** Keep it readable while showing the full scope of what you've done.
- **Include hobbies and interests.** They often come up in interviews and can make you memorable.
- **Research counts, but so does engagement.** If you have fewer publications, showing up at CaRMS socials, being involved, and having strong MSPRs on other rotations still make a strong impression.

Personal Letter:

- **Start early.** Expect multiple rounds of revision.
- **Be honest and authentic.** Programs want to know who you are – you'll be spending the next five years together.
- **Tell a story, don't just list traits.** Show your motivation through experiences rather than statements.
- **Highlight CanMEDS roles** through your examples.
- **Explain why urology and why that specific program.** Mention any connection or experience you've had with their residents, staff, or city.
- **If parallel planning,** ensure your narrative still feels genuine and consistent – clearly explain your interest in each field.
- **Include a “why this specialty” moment.** Most applicants have a defining story or realization that helps programs connect with your journey.

Reference Letters:

- **Plan well in advance.** It's difficult to ask last minute.
- **Ask for more than you need.** Most programs require three letters but having six or seven gives you flexibility to choose the strongest ones.
- **Prioritize letter writers strategically.** Reputation and alumni ties can influence how your letter is received.
- **Ask for a strong letter.** Gauge their response – you want someone enthusiastic about supporting you.
- **Provide context.** Remind them of what you worked on together, what you learned, and any key moments they can highlight.

Parallel Planning:

- **Be realistic.** Ask yourself: *“How would I feel if I didn't match to my first choice?”*
 - o If you can't see yourself happy in your parallel plan long-term, reconsider applying there.
- **Follow your genuine interests.** If you constantly talk about a speciality, that's often a sign it's the right one for you.

Interview Tips

Preparation:

- **Practice, practice, practice.** Go through common questions you can find online — you *shouldn't be surprised* by most of them.
- **Rehearse in different ways.** Practice alone, with friends or mentors, and record yourself to review tone, body language, and clarity.
- **Simulate the real thing.** Set up your camera at eye level, use good lighting, and maintain natural eye contact.
- **Know your CV inside and out.** Be ready to discuss every entry because interviewers often pick details directly from it.
- **Know the program.** Read about it online, talk to residents, and check their social media to understand their culture and focus areas.

During the Interview:

- **Be genuine and specific.** When talking about yourself, avoid generic statements. Niche or personal details are what make you memorable!
 - *Example:* instead of saying “I’m a foodie,” say “I love pairing different wines with food.”
- **Ask meaningful questions at the end.** Don’t ask something easily found on their website; instead, prepare questions that show genuine curiosity about their program, training structure, or resident experience.

Ranking Programs

Building Your Rank Order List:

- **Think long-term.** Consider where you want to live and train for the next five years.
- **Talk to residents.** They can give you the clearest sense of each program’s culture, mentorship, and day-to-day environment.
- **Focus on fit, not prestige.** Every Canadian urology program offers strong, well-rounded training; your experience will depend more on the people and atmosphere than on reputation.
- **Reach out early.** Chatting with residents or recent graduates can help you identify which programs align best with your personality and goals.
- **Trust your impressions.** Many applicants adjust their rankings after interviews based on how comfortable and supported they felt with the team.

Panel Contacts & Expertise

Nick Lee- R1 UDEM nick.lee@umontreal.ca Late applicant. Set on anesthesiology until 3rd year. Research was anesthesiology oriented. Explain clearly about pivoting, and demonstrating changed interest, programs will understand. <i>*UdeM is known for strong resident-staff relationships and well-guided, collaborative training.</i>	Kiera Liblik- R1 Queens 14kl3@queensu.ca Found uro late. Did master's in interventional cardiology. Loved research.	Wendy Qiu - R1 UBC wendyqiu3@gmail.com Realized late at end of 3rd year. Not much research in urology. Previous research was not very related to uro. <i>*UBC PGY-1s spend most of their time on inpatient service with some OR exposure, while PGY-2 to PGY-5 years are predominantly OR-based with strong surgical training and residents who are eager to teach.</i>
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