

# 2021 AAMC Supplemental ERAS® Application: Final Results of the Advisor Reaction Survey

## Overview and Sample

This report shows results from the 2021 AAMC Supplemental ERAS® Application: Advisor Reaction Survey. The purpose of the survey was to collect feedback from advisors who advised their students on the supplemental ERAS application.

On Oct. 28, 2021, 1,468 people identified as a medical school advisor or student affairs representative were invited by email to complete the survey. The survey closed Nov. 12, 2021, with 149 respondents (10% response rate).

Respondents represented 96 MD- and 14 DO-granting schools (61% and 37% of all U.S. MD- and DO-granting schools, respectively).

**Table 1. Survey Sample by Institution Type and Location**

Characteristic	% (n)
<b>Degree</b>	
MD	87% (130)
DO	13% (19)
<b>Type</b>	
Public	56% (83)
Private	44% (66)
<b>Region</b>	
Central	26% (38)
Northeast	29% (43)
South	34% (50)
West	12% (18)

Key takeaways from the survey results are displayed in Tables 2-16.

## Findings

### Preparation

- More than 84% of respondents used AAMC resources and/or consulted with medical school colleagues. More than 89% who used the resources found them useful, and 74% who consulted with medical school colleagues found them useful.
- About 75% spent up to three hours advising their students about the supplemental ERAS application.
- The top three questions from students about the application were about the strategy for sending preference signals, understanding how the supplemental ERAS application will be used, and the strategy for responding to geographic preference questions.

**Table 2. How useful were the following supplemental ERAS application resources in advising your applicants?**

Resource	N	Did Not Use % (n)	Used % (n)	Not Useful % (n)	Somewhat Useful % (n)	Useful % (n)	Somewhat Useful or Useful % (n)
AAMC Supplemental ERAS Application Guide	147	9% (13)	91% (134)	4% (6)	53% (71)	43% (57)	96% (128)
AAMC Supplemental ERAS Application 101 Webinar for Advisors	147	12% (18)	88% (129)	4% (5)	56% (72)	40% (52)	96% (124)
AAMC supplemental ERAS application website	145	8% (12)	92% (133)	11% (14)	55% (73)	35% (46)	89% (119)
Medical school colleagues	143	16% (23)	84% (120)	26% (31)	42% (50)	33% (39)	74% (89)
Program colleagues	141	32% (45)	68% (96)	31% (30)	47% (45)	22% (21)	69% (66)
Webinar or information session hosted by a specialty organization	137	58% (80)	42% (57)	37% (21)	40% (23)	23% (13)	63% (36)
Social media discussion	137	67% (92)	33% (45)	58% (26)	33% (15)	9% (4)	42% (19)
Others	66	86% (57)	14% (9)	11% (1)	33% (3)	56% (5)	89% (8)

**Table 3. On average, how much additional time did you spend advising each student due to the supplemental ERAS application?**

<b>Time</b>	<b>%* (n)</b>
Less than 1 hour	39% (54)
1-3 hours	36% (50)
3-5 hours	10% (14)
More than 5 hours	16% (22)
<b>Total</b>	<b>100% (140)</b>

\*Seven respondents selected “I did not advise students about the supplemental ERAS application” and were excluded from this analysis.

**Table 4. What 3 topics did you receive the most questions about from students?**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>%* (n)</b>
Strategy for sending preference signals	66% (95)
Understanding how the supplemental ERAS application will be used	64% (93)
Strategy for responding to geographic preference questions	54% (79)
Submission deadlines for supplemental ERAS application and MyERAS	28% (40)
Identifying their 5 most meaningful experiences	28% (40)
Whether the supplemental ERAS application was optional or required	23% (33)
Whether to write an Other Impactful Life Experiences essay	14% (21)
Navigating the online supplemental ERAS application	9% (13)
Registering for the supplemental ERAS application	3% (5)
Other	1% (2)

\*Based on 145 respondents who selected at least one topic for this question.

## Past Experiences

- About 40% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that information about the five most meaningful past experiences will help programs get a better picture of each applicant.
- Nearly 40% of respondents thought the Other Impactful Life Experiences essay will help programs put the main ERAS application in context.

**Table 5. Responses to the Past Experiences Questions**

Statement	N	Strongly Disagree % (n)	Disagree % (n)	Neither Agree nor Disagree % (n)	Agree % (n)	Strongly Agree % (n)	Agree or Strongly Agree % (n)
The five most meaningful past experiences will help programs get a better picture of each applicant.	144	10% (15)	19% (28)	28% (41)	35% (51)	6% (9)	42% (60)
The Other Impactful Life Experiences essay will help programs put the main ERAS application in context.	144	10% (14)	17% (24)	36% (52)	33% (47)	5% (7)	38% (54)

## Geographic Preferences

- More than 70% of respondents advised their students to select geographic divisions that accurately reflected their true preferences, regardless of their competitiveness.
- Less than 30% felt confident they knew how to advise their students on this section.
- About half agreed or strongly agreed the geographic preference information may help applicants be noticed by programs in which they have the most interest.
- About 38% of respondents advised applicants to select “Do Not Wish to Indicate.” More than half of them made that recommendation because the applicant was uncertain about geographic preferences, geography was not important to the applicant, and/or the applicant was concerned that programs would overlook their application if they did not select the program’s region.
- About 64% of respondents advised applicants to select “No Geographic Preference.” The majority made that recommendation because geography was not important to the applicant. About half of respondents made that recommendation because the applicant was uncertain about geographic preferences and/or concerned that programs would overlook their application if they did not select the program’s region.

**Table 6. Responses to the Geographic Preferences Questions**

Statement	N	Strongly Disagree % (n)	Disagree % (n)	Neither Agree nor Disagree % (n)	Agree % (n)	Strongly Agree % (n)	Agree or Strongly Agree % (n)
I advised applicants to select geographic divisions that accurately reflect their true preferences, regardless of their competitiveness.	139	4% (5)	9% (12)	15% (21)	40% (56)	32% (45)	73% (101)
I felt confident knowing how to advise my students.	140	17% (24)	32% (45)	22% (31)	25% (35)	4% (5)	29% (40)
Geographic preference information may help applicants be noticed by programs in which they have the most interest.	139	6% (9)	12% (17)	30% (42)	44% (61)	7% (10)	51% (71)

**Table 7. If you advised applicants to select “Do Not Wish to Indicate” what factors did you consider when making that recommendation? (Select all that apply)**

<b>Factor</b>	<b>%* (n)</b>
Applicant was uncertain about geographic preferences	61% (34)
Geography is not important to the applicant	54% (30)
Concern that programs would overlook their application if they did not select the program’s region	68% (38)
Other	4% (2)

\*Based on 56 respondents who selected at least one factor on this question.

**Table 8. If you advised applicants to select “No Geographic Preference” what factors did you consider when making that recommendation? (Select all that apply)**

<b>Factor</b>	<b>%* (n)</b>
Applicant was uncertain about geographic preferences	53% (50)
Geography is not important to the applicant	79% (75)
Concern that programs would overlook their application if they did not select the program’s region	47% (45)
Other	5% (5)

\*Based on 95 respondents who selected at least one factor on this question.

## Preference Signals

- More than 60% of respondents advised their students to signal programs that accurately reflected their true preferences, regardless of their competitiveness.
- A third of respondents felt confident they knew how to advise their students on this section.
- More than 60% agreed or strongly agreed preference signals may help students be noticed by programs in which they have the most interest.
- The top factors respondents encouraged their students to consider when selecting programs to signal were alignment of the program’s strengths with career interests, location of the program/geographic preference, and strength of the program’s clinical training.
- More than 70% suggested to students they should signal a mix of safety and reach programs. Nearly half suggested students should signal the programs they were truly most interested in, regardless of competitiveness.

**Table 9. Responses to the Preference Signaling Questions**

Statement	N	Strongly Disagree % (n)	Disagree % (n)	Neither Agree nor Disagree % (n)	Agree % (n)	Strongly Agree % (n)	Agree or Strongly Agree % (n)
I advised students to signal programs that accurately reflect their true preferences, regardless of their competitiveness.	134	4% (5)	20% (27)	12% (16)	48% (64)	16% (22)	64% (86)
I felt confident knowing how to advise my students.	134	19% (25)	28% (37)	20% (27)	31% (41)	3% (4)	34% (45)
Preference signals may help students to be noticed by programs in which they have the most interest.	133	2% (3)	10% (13)	26% (35)	53% (71)	8% (11)	62% (82)

**Table 10. What factors did you encourage your students to consider when selecting programs to signal? (Select all that apply.)**

<b>Factor</b>	<b>%* (n)</b>
Alignment of program strengths with their career interests	90% (117)
Location of program/geographic preference	68% (89)
Strength of program’s clinical training	50% (65)
Program culture/resident camaraderie	45% (58)
Advice from faculty or resident mentors	36% (47)
Program reputation/prestige	23% (30)
Strength of program’s research training	17% (22)
Other	13% (17)

\*Based on 130 respondents who selected at least one factor on this question.

**Table 11. What strategies did you suggest students use when advising them how to select programs to signal? (Select all that apply)**

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>%* (n)</b>
Only send to “safety” programs, or those they felt they would have less difficulty getting into	5% (7)
Only send to “reach” programs, or those they felt they would have more difficulty getting into	2% (3)
Send to a mix of safety and reach programs	73% (94)
Send it to the programs they were truly most interested in, regardless of competitiveness	48% (62)

\*Based on 129 respondents who selected at least one factor on this question.

## Overall

- Most advisors want to keep the supplemental ERAS application open for four to six weeks.
- About 40% thought students should spend one to three hours total preparing for and filling out the supplemental ERAS application.
- More than 90% of respondents thought it was more important to have general information about new innovations sooner, even if detailed information is unavailable. Most respondents also thought it was more important to have more information about how programs intended to use the application, even if empirical evidence is unavailable.
- More than 75% thought it was more important to have a rolling list of participating specialties and/or programs sooner than to wait for a complete list later.
- Nearly half of respondents thought March-April and May-June were appropriate time frames during which to announce whether the supplemental ERAS application will continue and to release resources about the supplemental ERAS application, respectively.
- Most respondents agreed that the most effective mechanism for sharing information about pilot projects is through an AAMC webinar for advisors. More than half of respondents selected using the GSA listserv as the next-most-effective mechanism.

**Table 12. What is a reasonable number of weeks to keep the supplemental ERAS application open for students to complete?**

Time	% (n)
2 weeks	5% (6)
3 weeks	8% (11)
4 weeks	38% (50)
5 weeks	6% (8)
6 weeks	42% (55)
Total	100% (130)

**Table 13. What is a reasonable total number of hours required from students to complete the supplemental ERAS application, including preparing and completing the application?**

Time	% (n)
1-3 hours	41% (53)
3-5 hours	29% (37)
5-8 hours	20% (26)
More than 8 hours	9% (12)
Total	100% (128)

**Table 14. Responses to General Information Rollout**

Statement	N	Strongly Disagree % (n)	Disagree % (n)	Neither Agree nor Disagree % (n)	Agree % (n)	Strongly Agree % (n)	Agree or Strongly Agree % (n)
It is important to have general information about new innovations sooner, even if more detailed information is unavailable.	131	0% (0)	2% (3)	5% (6)	24% (32)	69% (90)	93% (122)
It is more important to have a rolling list of participating specialties and/or programs sooner than to wait for a complete list later.	131	7% (9)	8% (11)	8% (11)	17% (22)	60% (78)	76% (100)
It is important to have more information on how programs intended to use the application, even if empirical evidence is unavailable.	130	2% (2)	1% (1)	2% (3)	18% (23)	78% (101)	95% (124)

**Table 15. Month by Which Decisions and Resources About the Supplemental ERAS Application Are Needed by Advisor**

Decision or Resource	N	Month Selected			
		Jan or Feb % (n)	Mar or Apr % (n)	May or Jun % (n)	Jul or Aug % (n)
Decision about whether the supplemental ERAS application will continue	125	21% (26)	44% (55)	30% (38)	5% (6)
Data on how programs used the application	125	13% (16)	38% (47)	41% (51)	9% (11)
Overview of any planned revisions to content	125	17% (21)	25% (31)	50% (62)	9% (11)
Logistics about registration and deadlines	125	12% (15)	26% (32)	49% (61)	14% (17)
AAMC Supplemental ERAS Application Guide (i.e., policies and instructions)	125	10% (13)	25% (31)	52% (65)	13% (16)
Final list of questions	124	5% (7)	27% (40)	44% (65)	8% (12)
Final list of participating specialties	125	6% (8)	27% (34)	50% (63)	16% (20)
Webinar for advisors	125	7% (9)	22% (27)	54% (68)	17% (21)
Final list of participating programs	124	12% (15)	27% (34)	48% (59)	17% (21)
Webinar for applicants	125	4% (5)	15% (19)	46% (58)	34% (43)

**Table 16. Which of the following mechanisms are most effective for sharing information about pilot projects with medical school advisors? (Select up to 3 choices)**

<b>Mechanism</b>	<b>%* (n)</b>
AAMC webinars for advisors	88% (113)
GSA national listserv	55% (70)
Careers in Medicine (CiM) listserv	41% (52)
AAMC Question and Answer Sessions	36% (46)
GSA regional meetings	16% (21)
GSA leadership	13% (16)
GSA regional listserv	12% (15)
GSA national meetings	8% (10)
Other	5% (6)

\*Based on 128 respondents who selected at least one factor on this question.