

SUBJECT: Letter of Instruction (LOI) for the AY2020 Army Post Graduate Year One (PGY-1) Program

The PGY-1 program is the gateway into Army medicine for the majority of Medical Corps officers. It is the next stage in your professional development. Our desire is to further each student's professional development while meeting the needs of the Army and your cooperation with the PGY-1 application process is the best way to achieve these results. The information contained in this LOI is intended to guide you through the PGY-1 process.

1. APPLICATION REQUIREMENT:

- a. **Army Medical Students:** All medical students who have service agreements secondary to participation in the Armed Forces Health Professions Scholarship Program (HPSP), Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) or attendance at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU) **must** apply for Army PGY-1 under the terms of their service agreement. Obligated medical students must accept the position that is offered.

NOTE: Any student scheduled to graduate off-cycle in 2020 should contact the PGY-1 Program Manager, Ms Patricia Norman at (703) 681-4804 or e-mail patricia.g.norman.civ@mail.mil or the Deputy Director of Medical Education/Student Academic Advisor, COL Douglas Maurer at (703) 681- 4809 or e-mail douglas.maurer4.mil@mail.mil for guidance regarding the PGY-1 match.

Failure to participate in the application and match process for Army PGY-1 is a violation of your service agreement and will result in loss of entitlements and possibly other adverse actions. Additionally, failure to comply with all application requirements, to include meeting the application deadline date of 15 October 2019, is a serious breach of your service agreement and will result in placement in an Army PGY-1 program with no regard to personal preferences or specialty goal.

- b. **Civilians are not eligible to apply for 2020 Army PGY1 training positions**

2.TRAINING PROGRAMS: Army PGY-1 includes both categorical and Transitional Year programs. A categorical PGY-1 program is considered the first year of training in the specialty and counts toward board certification. The Transitional Year is a year of preliminary training required for specialties that do not have categorical PGY-1 (e.g.; Dermatology or Radiology). All PGY-1 programs in the Army are depicted on the **Training Locations Grid**. For your reference, there is a **Fact Sheet** that provides a description and pertinent application information for each of these PGY-1 training specialties.

3. APPLICATION PROCESS: The Army PGY-1 year application will be completed in Medical Operational Data System (MODS). Although the vast majority (>95%) of applicants will match to Army GME programs, PGY-1 applicants may also apply to the

National Residency Match Program (NRMP) (civilian match). Dependent upon the needs of the Army, this year's selection board will offer Army-sponsored civilian training opportunities in Emergency Medicine, General Surgery and Orthopedics. Any applicant interested in applying for Emergency Medicine, General Surgery or Orthopedics must also complete an ERAS application for participation in the NRMP. Please see the PGY-1 Fact Sheet for additional information.

Students applying for training in the **Army-Sponsored** civilian training (versus training in MTF or affiliated programs) in Emergency Medicine, General Surgery or Orthopedics should understand that if selected for this program, it will be Army-sponsored, and the training obligation incurred as a result of participation in this program will be served **consecutively** with any existing undergraduate obligation. For example: a 4 year HPSP participant that completes a 6 year Army-sponsored civilian General Surgery training program will have a 10 year obligation, payback would start following completion of residency training. A USU graduate that completes a 6 year Army-sponsored civilian General Surgery training program would have a 13 year obligation upon completion of training. Any other obligation- ROTC, USMA, or other, would also be added consecutively to this obligation.

Students should follow guidance from their medical school regarding activation of their Electronic Residency Application Service (ERAS). If selected for military PGY-1 positions, students must immediately withdraw their application from the NRMP.

a. **Supporting Document Submission:** HPSP students will submit all required supporting documents directly to the OTSG GME office (patricia.g.norman.civ@mail.mil); USU students will submit via the MODS website. If also submitting an application to the NRMP through ERAS, please reference ERAS for further direction on document submission.

b. **Medical Licensure Examination:** Army policy mandates that all students (HPSP, ROTC, USU students) take Steps 1, 2 CK and 2 CS of the USMLE or Levels 1, 2-CE, and 2-PE of the COMLEX. Unless a written exception to policy has been granted, all HPSP, and ROTC students must provide the results of Step 2 CK or Level 2-CE to the Army Student Management office by **15 October 2019**. Scores for USU students will be uploaded in MODS by the school. Exceptions are only granted to those individuals whose curriculum does not allow completion of core subjects prior to the deadline. Step 2 CS or Level 2 PE **must** be taken by **1 November 2019** with results provided by **15 February 2020**.

Failure to submit supporting documents by 15 October 2019 will result in a suspension of entitlements as well as a modification to the match that you receive. After the PGY-1 Match results are released, if you still have not taken or provided passing scores to the HPSP Student Management Office, your orders to the selected location will be placed in HOLD status until passing results are received. **One year training contracts will be given to any individuals that have not provided documentation of passing Step II (CK and CS or CE and PE) scores by 15 February 2020.** If you attend a school that allows graduation without passing the

exams you will be given up to 90 days after graduation to provide documentation substantiating passage.

c. Letters of Recommendation/Active Duty for Training (ADT) Evaluations:

These documents must be submitted to the OTSG GME office for uploading to your MODS application. A maximum of four letters may be submitted on your behalf. You must ensure that they are received by the GME office in time to be submitted to your application by **15 October 2019**. This will ensure that they are considered by the programs ranking your application. Letters of recommendation will be forwarded to Ms. Patricia Norman: patricia.g.norman.civ@mail.mil.

Letters of recommendation from Army physicians can increase your competitiveness for Army programs. Additionally, for HPSP students, performance of an ADT at your preferred residency training site may improve your chances of matching with that program. Students are encouraged to arrange the ADT rotations to be completed prior to 1 November 2019. Evaluations from your ADT performance may be treated as a single supporting document and scanned and forwarded to Ms. Patricia Norman (patricia.g.norman.civ@mail.mil).

d. Personal Statement: Statements submitted must be your own composition; plagiarism will not be tolerated. Students who submit plagiarized personal statements (such as from internet websites) will face serious repercussions and must expect this to be taken into consideration when the match is conducted. This document is a requirement; HPSP students will submit directly to the OTSG GME office (patricia.g.norman.civ@mail.mil); USU students will submit via the MODS website.

4. DEADLINE: The deadline for completion and uploading all documents will be **15 October 2019**. Please work with your medical school's student affairs office to ensure they have sufficient time to meet this deadline.

5. REIMBURSABLE EXPENSES:

a. HPSP students may claim reimbursement for the basic ERAS fee as well as the fee for reporting USMLE/COMLEX scores by submitting a cost data worksheet that is provided on the HPSP section of this website. This system will allow you to submit your application to a maximum of 10 programs for the basic fee. Additional application fees will be at the expense of the applicant. The National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME) fee for transmitting USMLE/NBME transcripts for applicants to programs, regardless of the number of transcripts requested, is reimbursable. Osteopathic applicants may request reimbursement for an unlimited number of COMLEX transcripts to be sent via ERAS.

b. Army ROTC Educational Delay students are not entitled to ERAS or licensure score reimbursement.

6. ARMY PGY-1 WEBSITE REQUIREMENTS:

a. **Access**: USU students: Army PGY-1 application documents are submitted via the MODS website (<https://www.mods.army.mil/medicaleducation>); HPSP students: direct submission to the OTSG GME office.

b. **Required Documents**:

(1) **Rank Order List**: The **Army PGY-1 Preference Priority List** is utilized to designate your specialty goal and rank your programs for the Army match process. Your specialty goal must be consistent with the programs that you rank. You are required to rank all advertised Army training locations associated with your specialty goal for the PGY-1 match. Any application not listing all programs in the specialty area will be considered incomplete and will be returned to the applicant for completion.

- For specialty goals with **fewer** than five Army locations, you must rank a minimum of five Army programs. You may list more than five programs. These may be in a secondary specialty or a transitional program.

- For specialty goals with **more** than five Army locations (Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, General Surgery, Orthopaedics, etc.), you must rank all available locations offered for your specialty goal.

If unsure of your specialty goal, you may rank transitional programs as your desired specialty goal. The remainder of your chosen rankings may be in a secondary specialty. If you do not match into your primary or secondary specialty goal, or do not rank a secondary specialty, you will be placed into a transitional year program.

Consider your rankings carefully, if you have any questions please get in touch with the Army GME office (PGY-1 Program Manager) for assistance (see paragraph 16). We will attempt to review all rankings to ensure that they are consistent with your specialty goal. We will contact you to resolve any inconsistencies. Our goal is to match each student in the program of their choice and we assume your rankings accurately reflect your true desires.

Your rankings are confidential. The Army GME office does not tell program directors how a student ranked their program. The only information a program director has is that the student ranked the program as one of their choices for the Match. If program directors ask students as part of the interview process about their rankings, students are not to divulge this information. Nor should students volunteer their program rankings. Furthermore, there should be no provision of any documents other than a curriculum vitae and the MODS personal statement by applicants to program directors (board scores, grades, transcripts, etc. should be neither asked for nor volunteered).

Any requests for such should be reported to the GME office. This directive is to ensure a fair and unbiased process consistent with board proceedings.

(2) **Civilian Deferment Requests – (PGY-1 Deferment Information Form)**: All Army obligated students are required to apply to the Army for PGY-1 training.

Students **may not** request a civilian deferment in lieu of applying to Army programs nor list civilian deferred as one of their choices. There are 334 projected students in the graduating class of 2020 with 364 projected PGY-1 positions: therefore nearly 100% of students will be matched to Army training programs. Deferment authorizations are restricted by graduating class size and specialty mix. To be approved for civilian deferment, individuals must have already attended BOLC, be in compliance with the Army standards for Army Body Composition Program (ABCP) and Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT), have passed Step 1 and Step 2 on first attempt at time of application, and are in good academic standing at their school.

In the unlikely circumstance of a civilian deferment, the residency deferment will be only in the specialty that is detailed as your specialty goal on your Army PGY-1 Preference Priority List. The training length granted for any civilian deferment will be for the minimum time required for board eligibility in the specialty. **No deferments will be granted for combined residency, residency/fellowship programs or dual certification residency programs (e.g.: Med/Peds).** Students who are granted a deferment must comply with all the rules and requirements of the NRMP.

HPSP and ROTC students who feel they have special personal circumstances that support a need for deferment and meet stated eligibility requirements may send a separate letter by e-mail (see paragraph 14) to the Army GME office. The request must be specific. **Submission of a letter in no way guarantees that a deferment will be granted**, but it will serve to apprise the board of your desires. Submission of a letter is the only way to request deferment consideration. This letter must be received in the Army GME office no later than **15 October 2019** and will only be utilized by the personnel in the Army GME office.

USU students will be matched only to an Army PGY-1 program or VA-DoD/Integrated program. They are not required to complete the PGY-1 Deferment Information Form.

(3) **Physical Examination Data:** You must have a current Periodic Health Assessment (PHA) to document your fitness for active duty. For additional PHA information go to the PGY-1 General Info Tab and click on Instructions for Annual Physical. **Additionally, students must be prepared to meet the Army's Physical Fitness and ABCP requirements upon initial entry onto active duty. Failure to do so will affect progression into training beyond PGY-1.** USU students should contact their military personnel office at USU for physical verification. If you need a new physical, contact your military personnel office at USU for additional instructions.

(4) **Spousal Considerations/Joint Domicile:** Married couples issues are considered at the time of the board. **There is no guarantee that spouses can be assigned together; however, every effort is made to do this while meeting the needs of the Army.** Please be aware that the military recognizes only the legal institution of marriage for purposes of joint domicile. An engagement and/or future wedding date will not be considered for joint domicile. Priority is given to couples where both spouses are in the Army. The objective will be to make the best match for the couples as well as the programs. Additionally, if both spouses are applying, please ensure that the locations ranked are in agreement if joint domicile is desired.

(5) **Constructive Service Credit (CSC) for Grade Determination:** In order to determine if additional credit beyond the normal credit granted for grade determination should be awarded for a particular individual, consideration is given for prior active/reserve commissioned Service. For any credit to be awarded, the following documents should be forwarded to the PGY-1 Program Manager: Credit for Prior Service: (a) DD Form 214 (**Please check all dates and calculations on DD Form 214s for accuracy before you submit to this office for CSC credit**) or (b) National Guard Bureau (NGB) Form 22 (Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty).

It should be understood that CSC credit cannot be awarded if the required documents are not received in the Army GME office by **15 October 2019**. Any credit awarded will be indicated on the active duty orders for those individuals selected to participate in the Army PGY-1 Program.

a. **HPSP or ROTC students**: If a student has previously provided these documents to the Army Student Management office or is unsure of whether or not they have done so, they should enter the HPSP section of the website to verify this information on their student file. If the documentation is shown on the website, then there is no requirement to resubmit the documentation. The Army GME office will automatically consider the documentation and award credit appropriately.

b. **USU students**: A student who desires consideration for additional CSC should upload their documents via MODS.

c. **Service Agreement & 2LT Oath copies:**

- **HPSP or ROTC students**: originals are on file with the Army Student Management office, therefore there is no requirement to provide another copy with this application.

- **USU students**: will upload these documents via MODS. Students needing to retrieve copies of these documents should contact their military personnel office at USU for assistance.

NOTE: Per DoDI 6000.13, credit for advanced degrees other than MD, will not be awarded.

7. DEADLINES: All application materials must be received by the Army GME office by **15 October 2019**. Changes may be made to the documents up until this date but **none will be accepted after 15 October 2019**. After **15 October 2019**, all access to the PGY-1 website will be read only until the results of the PGY-1 match are communicated to the applicants in mid- December 2019.

If you need to reprioritize your location preferences after **15 October 2019**, you may submit an email request to the PGY-1 Program Manager (see paragraph 16) detailing your new rank order list. This request can only change the rankings of the

training locations that you have submitted and **CANNOT** change your specialty goal. These changes will be processed through **31 October 2019**.

8. INTERVIEWS: Interviews are an important part of the application and selection process. It is your responsibility to arrange the interviews with the program directors of your desired training programs (Note: most HPSP students perform interviews during ADT rotations). Applicants are encouraged to interview with all program directors in all desired specialties. If you are not able to interview in person, a telephonic interview may serve as a reasonable alternative. Schedule this ahead of time to ensure you have the focused attention of the program director. It is recommended that you provide your curriculum vitae to the program director for reference during the interview. **Curriculum vitae and the MODS personal statement are the only documents that a program director can request and an applicant can supply. If you are interested in a specialty which does not have a categorical PGY-1 year, you should interview with both the specialty program director and the Transitional Year, or other preliminary year, program director as both will be involved in the ranking process.**

If applying for consideration to a VA-DoD or other affiliated program, you must ensure that you interview with the desired civilian program no later than **15 October 2019**. VA-DoD/Affiliated program interviews will likely not be conducted at the same time standard civilian programs interview their applicants. **Interview costs are not reimbursable.** An applicant on ADT may, if approved by site coordinator, utilize leave to interview at a VA-DoD/Affiliated program in close proximity to the ADT site.

9. CONTINUOUS GME TRAINING CONTRACT: Current service agreements for participants in the HPSP, ROTC and USU require application for Army PGY-1 and performance of the year on active duty if selected. In some cases, those desiring to train beyond the PGY-1 must apply for the additional specialty training. For most specialties, however, we offer a continuous training contract. This process allows a medical student to be considered and selected for a graduate medical education (GME) program leading to specialty board certification in their chosen specialty without having to submit a separate application for post-graduate year level 2 (PGY-2) and above training.

The Army offers continuous training in the specialties of Anesthesiology, Dermatology, Emergency Medicine, Family Medicine, General Surgery, Internal Medicine, Neurology, Neurosurgery, OB-GYN, Ophthalmology, Orthopaedics, Otolaryngology, Pathology, Pediatrics, Physical Medicine, Psychiatry, Radiology (Diagnostic) and Urology.

The Army will offer all students who are selected for these designated specialties the option of entering into a contract for the entire duration of their specialty training (continuous training contract) if they have passed **all** parts of their respective licensing exams.

- **Continuous training contracts will be issued after entry onto active duty with the contingency that trainees meet the Army's Physical Fitness Test (APFT) and ACBP standards. If a trainee fails to meet APFT and ABCP**

standards or does not pass Step III by the start of their PGY-2 year, they will be placed on a leave of absence as per OTSG policy.

10. VA-DoD and AFFILIATED TRAINING PROGRAMS: The established training initiative between the Department of Defense (DoD) and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and certain civilian training programs has created training opportunities beginning at the PGY-1 level. These initiatives, will be offered to graduates in the class of 20120 in the specialties of Emergency Medicine, General Surgery, Neurosurgery and Urology. It will allow Army medical students to apply for consideration to these specialties only at pre-designated VA or other affiliated civilian training facilities. The locations of these opportunities are **detailed on the PGY-1 Fact Sheet**. Please refer to this resource for information on your specialty specific VA-DoD/Affiliated program options.

These programs are intended to augment Army training capacity in specialties with critical shortages. The selections made for this program are made as part of the Army PGY-1 match. To be selected, students must have already attended BOLC, be in compliance with the Army standards for ABCP and APFT, have passed Step 1 and Step 2 on first attempt at time of application, and are in good academic standing at their school.

Students desiring consideration to these training opportunities should understand that if selected for this program, training will be Army-sponsored, and the training obligation incurred as a result of participation in this program will be served concurrently with any existing undergraduate obligation. A continuous contract will be offered to those selected for the VA-DoD or affiliated training programs. If a student accepts the VA-DoD/affiliated training program offer, the offered continuous contract cannot be declined.

11. SELECTION PROCESS: Selection for Army PGY-1 is done using a computerized match similar to the process used by the NRMP. The algorithm used for the match gives preference to the student's rankings while considering where Army position fills need to occur. It is modified occasionally to ensure that fairness and objectivity are applied to the Match. The process is designed to give the best possible match for the student and programs. The match results are reviewed by the program directors during the Joint Service Graduate Medical Education Selection Board to be held the week of 18-22 **November 2019**. At the conclusion of the board, the Surgeon General of the Army must approve the results in order for them to become official.

12. Diversity and Equal Opportunity. The Army's organizational success is dependent upon the ability of people of all backgrounds to work together. With this in mind, the

selection board will uphold an inclusive environment where individual attributes are recognized, accepted, and, most importantly, valued, regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, sex (including gender identity), or sexual orientation. The selection board will be alert to the possibility of past personal or institutional discrimination - whether intentional or inadvertent - in the assignment patterns, evaluations, or professional development of all applicants. Such discrimination may be unintentional, not motivated by malice, bigotry or prejudice, and may have been the result of past service utilization practices. The selection board will strictly avoid consideration of any factors other than merit and ability, as specified elsewhere in this LOI, in selecting only the absolute best applicants. The foregoing guidance shall not be interpreted as requiring or authorizing any preference of any sort to any officer or group of applicants on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex (including gender identity) or sexual orientation.

13. NOTIFICATION OF RESULTS: The anticipated release date of the results of the PGY-1 selection is **11 December 2019**. Results of the match will be posted on the PGY-1 website on the release date (in the student's file under the match tab). Students will need to use their assigned logon IDs and passwords to access their match results. Students will receive an official PGY-1 selection letter with an enclosed acknowledgment form by **31 January 2020**. In order to finalize the Army match process, this acknowledgment form must be completed and returned to the Army GME office by the posted deadline date stated in the PGY-1 selection letter.

If a student has elected to apply to the NRMP, he or she must withdraw from the NRMP if selected for an Army PGY-1 position.

14. PGY-1 TRAINING REQUIREMENT: The completion of PGY-1 training (becoming medical license eligible) is a condition of service in the Medical Corps (MC). Failure to complete this MC branch requirement will result in a re-branch to another Corps in the Army with the appropriate reduction in rank or initiation of separation procedures with recoupment of funds. Once an officer in another Corps, you will no longer be eligible to apply for specialty training in the Army Medical Corps. This must be factored into any decision to withdraw out of PGY-1 training prior to the completion of this training year.

15. ACTIVE DUTY OBLIGATION (ADO):

a. All PGY1 selects must sign a training agreement before GME participation is authorized. The training agreement sets forth the ADO. Current Department of Defense guidance requires a military service obligation for training sponsored by the government. Notwithstanding any provision that may appear in Army regulations, under the current Department of Defense Instructions governing military service obligations, a GME participant will incur an ADO under the terms of the training agreement. The final separation date and any ADO incurred for GME will be as determined by the U.S. Army Human Resources Command and will supersede ADO listed in the contract.

b. The ADO will be one-half for each one-half year of training or portion thereof, but the minimum ADO shall not be less than two (2) years. If performing GME in a military facility or in a VA/DoD or other affiliated civilian institution, this ADO can be repaid concurrently with any other military service obligation that may already have been incurred, except any GME ADO previously incurred. A GME ADO must be added to and it cannot be repaid concurrently with another GME ADO.

c. If performing Army sponsored -training in any other civilian facility, the ADO is in addition to any other ADO and it cannot be repaid concurrently with other ADOs incurred as a result of government-funded education and training, including other GME ADOs.

d. No portion of an existing GME ADO may be satisfied during participation in any GME program.

16. POINTS OF CONTACT:

a. Any application questions/website processing concerns should be directed to the PGY-1 Program Manager, Ms Patricia Norman at (703) 703-681-4804 or email: patricia.g.norman.civ@mail.mil.

b. Any questions concerning specific training programs or career guidance should be directed to the Chief, GME Division, Linda Diehl, at (703) 681-8043 or the Deputy Director of Medical Education/Student Academic Advisor, COL Douglas Maurer at 703-681-4809 or email: douglas.maurer4.mil@mail.mil