

Questions fellow applicants should ask

Program

Curriculum

- How long is the program? (There are quality 2 year programs out there, but many programs demand 3 years).
- How many in-patient weeks?
- How many out-patient weeks?
- How often is out-patient clinic?
- How much time spend in out-patient dialysis?

Director

- How long in her/his position?
- Any plans for leaving/retirement?
 - Who will replace PD in the event of departure?
- Do fellows feel that program leadership hears their concerns?
 - Do these concerns result in change?

Teaching

- What teaching activities does the program provide?
 - Lectures?
 - Symposia?
 - Workshops?
- Is the fellow's time sufficiently protected to attend teaching activities?
- How much of the faculty do fellows see while on service?
- Procedures
 - How many lines / biopsies to fellows perform?
 - Do fellows learn other skills? (renal ultrasound, thrombectomies, PD catheter de-clotting)
- Do fellows feel comfortable with out-patient HD and PD following fellowship?
- Does the program provide review for boards?
- How does the program handle fellows who are struggling?
- Is there financial support for additional training (e.g. masters programs, PhD)
- Are fellows expected to participate in teaching?
- Do fellows attend ASN? NKF? Other conferences?
 - What topics have they presented recently?
 - Is there financial support to attend these conferences?

Research

- Is there financial support for research (e.g. training grant)?
- How many papers have fellows published?
- How many abstracts?
- Do graduates of the fellowship acquire faculty positions or are they "terminal instructors"?

Recruitment

- Has the program ever not filled?
- What is the contingency plan should the program not fill?
 - If the program does not fill, will the call demands of the other fellows increase?

Personal support

- How has the fellowship responded to former fellows with unforeseen personal or health crises?

Financial

- What fringe benefits does the program subsidize?
 - Parking?
 - Book fund?
 - Meals?
- Moonlighting opportunities?

Clinical Duties

- Call schedule – how often?
- Primary svc or solely consulting?
- How many patients covered?
- Computerized health record
 - Modern?

- Easy to use or cumbersome?
- Plan for back-up if fellows drop out or fall ill?
- Physician extenders?
 - What happens when PA is not there?

Former fellows

- How many went into private practice? Research? Clinician educator?
- How many felt they needed additional fellowship training?
- How many fellows have failed to complete the program (What is the attrition)?
 - Why?
- Any former fellows who did not pass boards?

Division/Department

- How supportive of the fellowship program?
- Does the division protect fellow/faculty time so that they may attend academic events (Visiting speakers? Grand rounds?)
- How many faculty and other division members come to grand rounds, journal clubs, biopsy conferences, symposia?
- How many different faculty attend on wards?

Location

- Cost of living?
- Is the city safe?
- How many different hospitals do the fellows cover? How far apart are they? How do they get there?
- Average commute times?
- Do fellows have safe/convenient parking?
- Quality of public schools?
- Day-care
 - Supported financially by hospital system?
 - Hours sufficient for fellows who are parents?
- Care for sick kids when they cannot attend school/day-care?