

A Recruiter Q & A on Landing Your First Job Out of Med School

AAOS Job Board Partner Health eCareers (HEC) interviewed recruiter Ryan Dean and discussed landing your first job out of Med School.

HEC: DO YOU FEEL THAT IF A STUDENT COMPLETES THEIR MEDICAL EDUCATION AND OBTAINS BOARD CERTIFICATION THAT THEY'LL LIKELY LAND A JOB SOMEWHERE?

RD: I think there is a strong chance they will land a job somewhere. However, a lot of the weight on how quickly or when this happens largely depends on the provider.

HEC: WHAT TYPES OF THINGS DO YOU LOOK FOR WHEN YOU'RE HIRING SOMEONE JUST STARTING OUT IN THEIR CAREER?

RD: There are a number of things taken into consideration, but that first initial interaction often begins with reviewing their CV. I check to see if there are any unexplainable gaps or inconsistencies in their training and education. Beyond that, personality characteristics are extremely important. I look for people who have passion and ambition in the area of medicine they are pursuing, accountability, and those who want to be part of a team environment. These providers will have so much exposure to people in the community and across our organization; they really do have a tremendous impact on our strong culture here.

HEC: ARE COVER LETTERS JUST AS IMPORTANT AS RESUMES? IF SO, WHY?

RD: I think you will get a lot of mixed answers on this question, and I will briefly explain why. To me, personally, I think they are always a nice touch, but although I appreciate the time and effort that goes into preparing them, including one (or not) does not hold a ton of weight on my decision to pursue them as a candidate (as long as I do not have any concerns with their CV when it is presented to me). Some organizations do require a cover letter to be considered for opportunities, so in those instances, yes. I do a lot of digging into candidates' CVs. If candidates know that there is additional information that needs to be addressed or explained on their CVs, it may be a good idea to use a cover letter. If candidates are including a cover letter, they should view that as an opportunity to dive in and address those points, as well as highlight things about themselves so we can understand their path.

HEC: WHAT KINDS OF SOFT SKILLS DO YOU TEND TO LOOK FOR WHEN HIRING?

RD: Reliability and accountability are big for me. Patients look to these providers for their health and wellness, so I want someone who shows up on time, provides accurate value-based medicine, and is there for the community. Others offhand are communication, time management, a strong work ethic, leadership, and adaptability.

HEC: WHEN LOOKING AT A RESUME, WHAT KIND OF EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES DO YOU WANT TO KNOW ABOUT? IS IT HELPFUL TO KNOW ABOUT VOLUNTEER WORK, MISSION TRIPS, SPECIAL INTERESTS, ETC.?

RD: I want to know everything. I really enjoy this part. One big piece that is very important to recruitment is retention. If someone is right for the job, but not necessarily right for the community/area that the job is in, eventually life may pull that person in a different direction to satisfy that life piece that is not being met. Having a really good understanding about what is important to the candidate outside of work allows me to connect some dots around if Colorado would be a favorable landing spot based on their passions, hobbies, and personal interests.

HEC: IN WHAT WAYS DOES YOUR HOSPITAL HIRE PHYSICIANS? ARE YOU LOOKING STRICTLY FOR THOSE WHO PRACTICE OR DO YOU ALSO HIRE PHYSICIANS AS RESEARCHERS AND/OR TEACHERS?

RD: As a system, UCHealth focuses on all the above. For my role here, I focus on our employed medical group; UCHealth Medical Group (UCHMG). We hire for both hospital and outpatient-based providers of all specialties that provide various levels of care. There are so many different types of providers that we recruit for in addition to physicians, and we are very proud to be able to provide multiple levels of care to the community by doing this.

HEC: CAN YOU GIVE ME AN EXAMPLE OF A QUESTION YOU MIGHT ASK DURING THE INTERVIEW PROCESS?

RD: Yes: "If I asked any of your colleagues or your program director about working with you and your care for patients, what would they say?"

HEC: HOW IMPORTANT IS IT FOR A CANDIDATE TO HAVE A SITE VISIT? HAVE YOU DEvised A WORKAROUND FOR THIS DURING THE PANDEMIC?

RD: Very important. Beyond the candidate, it is equally important to have the buy-in from other family members or significant others that may be relocating to the area as well. There is a very good process in place here that was implemented quickly through the pandemic. We offer virtual tours as well as in-person site visits with approval. This is contingent on where that person may be traveling from, and if it will pose a great risk to employees or patients here.

HEC: ARE THERE CERTAIN LIFESTYLE PARTICULARS YOU WANT TO KNOW ABOUT A CANDIDATE? FOR EXAMPLE, IF THEY HAVE A FAMILY AND PLAN TO RELOCATE TO YOUR FACILITY, IS IT IMPORTANT TO KNOW IF THEIR PARTNER IS AS ENTHUSIASTIC AS THEY ARE? WHY WOULD SOMETHING LIKE FAMILY SUPPORT BE IMPORTANT FOR A RECRUITER TO KNOW?

RD: Relocation is a big decision for all parties involved. It is appropriate and necessary to ask if there is anyone who needs to be included in this decision, and we often extend the opportunity for that person to be involved in the site visit if able. The reason this is so important for everyone is due to the fit long term. If there is not buy-in from the candidate's partner or family, there is a high potential for turnover. Beyond that, the last thing we want to do as an employer is have a family or partner feel that we forced anyone into a decision they were not ready to commit to.

HEC: WHAT IS THE BEST WAY FOR A CANDIDATE TO KNOW IF THEY WOULD BE A GOOD FIT AT A FACILITY?

RD: There are a lot of pieces to that question. First, I think the understanding for what the role is, and laying out clear expectations for how the job will function, is essential. From there, a site visit to meet the providers and team is a great part of the process as well. We make sure to engage the existing group in this process, and that there is buy-in from both sides completely.

HEC: DO YOU HAVE ANY ADVICE FOR RECENT GRADUATES STARTING THEIR JOB HUNT FOR THE FIRST TIME?

RD: My advice would be to spend time creating a thorough and complete CV. That is essentially the first appearance for you. I would also recommend starting your search early. I regularly sign candidates six to ten months out from their program completion date. The more time you give yourself to interview, the more you understand what you are looking for and what does or does not interest you.