



INSIDER TIPS TO KNOW



Medical Fields

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- If you haven't been able to decide between flying and the medical profession, the Air Force is much more forgiving in transitioning from pilot to physician than the other way around. There aren't many pilot-physicians in the Air Force on active duty now, but they are very resource and needed.
- Your transition from USAFA to medical school/grad school can be pretty shocking. Make sure you establish a good connection with your host unit (usually ROTC or reserve detachment). Many things we take for granted can become difficult while at a civilian institution away from any base. Submission for moving expense reimbursement, pay and finance issues, summer programs...etc. Of course, this is on top of all you must do for getting ready to start a new school. Also, upon graduation you'll be pinning on a new rank.... Making sure your transition back from inactive reserve in HPSP back to active reserve (yes... Reserve) on active duty needs to be accounted for correctly... As well as activating special pay.
- I was always one to attend every class and lab on time. However, your school (except USUHS) will NOT at all be like USAFA. Plan to make full use of your classmates, online resources, and note sets. Look for old test bank resources... These are usually super helpful in the basic sciences years. Do not spend classroom time off you don't have to (esp in this environment) and live a little! Some friends bartend on the side, etc. Learn and know your limits. Explore them.
- You'll likely have down time after graduating and starting school. We had a short casual status before taking off. Depending on the virus environment, you might still be able to consider mil air. My roommate and I took a hop overseas. Not advisable at present, but you might be able to travel mil air stateside a bit in a more protected environment.

- Explore your medical campus before school starts. If you have even a slight idea of what you might like to specialize in look into opportunities to volunteer or join in research. If you're able to get on a team that actually publishes their research, it's a big bonus when you later are trying to match into a specialty. Make these connections early. Be persistent... There's always something you can do to be involved. Use ZoomieLink or other resources like AOG to find grads that can hook you up. We're ALL over the map!
- Consider medical fraternity or other organizations. It was a great way for us to blow off steam.... For some, it was a great way to quickly meet others, have an inexpensive place to live, etc.
- Keep an eye on the horizon. If you think you might like to go into a competitive specialty or end up at a particular base assignment, try to schedule your summer rotations to accommodate a pathway there. Maybe even burn done vacation time to do so... You will get a preview into that life that could significantly impact your decisions.
- Going off to a civilian graduate program will change you in ways that is hard to comprehend right now. You will have gone from a very regimented environment with like minded people to one that has people who come from very different perspectives. Be prepared to take it all in, embrace the real blessing you have been given to have this opportunity, and don't be afraid to grow and change. It will be tough and suck at times just like these last four years.... But in different ways. You're going to love it.