

# Program Directors Association Guide for Residency Applicants – Instructions for Completion

*Note that each PD Association has the choice to use the fillable PDF template provided or to provide a free text document with the domains below, depending on their preference.*

## **Instructions for completing this guide:**

- Please complete the **highlighted** information for each domain below.
- Each domain also includes recommendations for supplemental information that would be helpful if relevant to your specialty.
- Where appropriate, please feel free to include disclaimers that individual programs may have an approach that differs from these guidelines (e.g., “*The suggested interview invitation dates are...; however, individual programs may choose to select different dates based on their needs/practices*”, or, “*The PD Association workgroup recommends all programs utilize virtual interviews, however, individual programs may choose...*”).

## **Application platform:**

- *Please specify which platform applicants should use during the regular application season.*
- *Please specify which platform applicants will use to participate in SOAP.*
- *Supplemental information to consider adding if relevant:*
  - *If using a platform other than ERAS, please indicate the date applicants will be able to access that platform to begin their applications.*
  - *If relevant, please also share any training or support resources for applicants (e.g., webinars, resource documents, etc.).*

## **Application deadline:**

- *Please specify the recommended date by which all application materials should be submitted to programs. If there is no deadline, or if the specialty utilizes a rolling process, please indicate so.*
- *Supplemental information to consider adding if relevant:*
  - *Is it acceptable to have some materials added after the initial application is submitted? If so, please indicate which materials may be submitted later, and by what date they should be submitted (e.g., if it is permissible for an*

*applicant to submit an additional letter of recommendation within a month after the initial submission, or to submit an updated USMLE/COMLEX transcript after the initial submission).*

**Match platform:**

- *Please specify the Match platform that will be used.*
- *Supplemental information to consider adding if relevant:*
  - *If not NRMP, please include relevant dates and deadlines, or a link to the Match platform website here.*

**Letters of recommendation:**

- *Please specify the recommended number of letters of recommendation (e.g., three or four), whether all LORs must come from the same specialty, and the recommended date by which all LORs must be submitted (e.g., is it permissible for an applicant to submit an additional LOR within a month after the initial submission).*
- *Please specify whether there are any recommendations for standardized letters or a Chair letter, and the deadline for these letters (if different from above).*
- *If Chair or standardized letters are recommended, please indicate if they are included in the total recommended number of LORs, or in addition to other LORs.*
- *Supplemental information to consider adding if relevant:*
  - *Please indicate whether an LOR from an away rotation is recommended (e.g., as in Emergency Medicine). If there is no specialty-wide agreement and/or no specialty-specific recommendation in this area, then please indicate so.*
  - *Please indicate which LORs are required for applicants from Transitional Year programs.*
  - *Please indicate which LORs are required for IMG applicants.*
  - *Please consider linking to the template or instructions for any standardized letters.*

**Away rotation expectations:**

- *Please indicate whether applicants are expected or strongly recommended to complete away rotations in this specialty, and if so, whether there is a recommended minimum or maximum number of aways.*
- *Supplemental information to consider adding if relevant:*
  - *Please also specify what is expected of an away rotator during the rotation.*
  - *Please also specify what is expected of an away rotator for IMG applicants.*

**Supplemental information:**

- *Please indicate whether there are recommended supplemental application materials that are required by programs, such as the use of Altus Suites or supplemental essays.*

**Signal information:**

- *Please indicate the number of signals applicants may use for this specialty.*
- *If there is any additional specialty-specific information or guidance regarding the use of signals (e.g., if the specialty is using two-tiered signals), please provide that here.*
- *Please also confirm expectations around the use of signals for home and away rotations.*

**Use of USMLE/COMLEX scores:**

- *Please specify the recommended date that a USMLE Step 2CK/COMLEX Level 2 score must be available in order for the application to be reviewed.*
- *Please specify the recommended date that a USMLE Step 2CK/COMLEX Level 2 score must be available in order for the applicant to be ranked.*
- *Please confirm whether your specialty requires USMLE scores even in cases where an applicant has a COMLEX score.*
- *Supplemental information to consider adding if relevant:*
  - *If there is specialty-wide agreement, please indicate whether there is a minimum recommended score for applying to the field*
  - *If there is specialty-wide agreement, please indicate whether an applicant with a failure on a licensure examination will be considered.*

### **Interview invitation process:**

- *Please indicate whether the specialty is recommending use of universal interview release dates, and if so, what those dates are. If not, please indicate the typical window of time during which interview offers are released by programs.*
- *Supplemental information to consider adding if relevant:*
  - *If there is specialty-wide agreement, please also indicate which platform will be used to offer interviews.*

### **Interview format:**

- *Please specify whether interviews are recommended to be virtual, in-person, or hybrid.*
- *Supplemental information to consider adding if relevant:*
  - *Please provide any additional recommendations or guidance on interviews (e.g., expectations on attending additional virtual sessions that are offered and impact on competitiveness of application).*
  - *Please consider including a link to any guideline documents or websites, if relevant.*

### **Supplemental Information to Consider Including (optional):**

#### **Applicant communications:**

- *Please indicate whether there are recommended guidelines or prohibitions around:*
  - *Pre-interview communication and letters of interest*
  - *Post-interview communication, including thank you letters and “love letters” or letters of intent (e.g., emails stating an applicant’s intention to rank a program highly or first).*
- *Supplemental information to consider adding if relevant:*
  - *Please indicate whether any outreach from an applicant may negatively or positively impact their application.*

### **Second Look/Open House planning:**

- *Please indicate whether there is specialty-wide guidance on the timing of Second Look/Open House days.*
- *Will the specialty consider submission of program Rank Order lists PRIOR to the timing of second look invitations to help eliminate bias?*
- *Please also indicate if Second Look/Open House attendance is required or optional, if format is virtual or in-person, and whether attendance at Second Look/Open House events will impact interview/ranking decisions.*