

Program Directors Association Guide for Residency Applicants

Emergency Medicine

The *Program Directors Association Guide for Residency Applicants* is a collaborative effort between the Organization of Program Directors Association (OPDA), Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), and American Medical Association (AMA). Its purpose is to provide specialty-specific guidance, application information, and resources. This guide outlines specialty-level guidance and policies for applicants to Emergency Medicine programs.

Specialty responses in this guide were provided through a standardized web form. The corresponding questions from that form are referenced in the footnotes. If a specialty indicated "No specialty recommendation to programs," it means the specialty does not provide guidance on how programs should approach that aspect of the selection process.

Please note that not all aspects of the residency application process are standardized at the specialty level. Applicants should review individual program requirements in Residency Explorer™ tool, FREIDA™, or on program websites.

Table of Contents

Application Process	2
Match Platform.....	2
Program Signals.....	3
Use of USMLE and/or COMLEX-USA Scores.....	3
Letters of Recommendation (LORs)	4
Supplemental Information.....	4
Away Rotations.....	5
Interviews.....	5
Applicant Communications	6
Open Houses / Second Looks	6

Specialty Guidance for the 2025–2026 Cycle

Emergency Medicine has published a statement: EM strongly advises all applicants to the specialty to reference the EMRA and CORD Student Advising Guide, available at <https://www.emra.org/books/msadvisingguide-2023/msag>.

Application Process

Application Process Details	Specialty Recommendation
Main Residency Match Season	ResidencyCAS
Supplemental Offer and Acceptance Program (SOAP)	ResidencyCAS
Application deadline to be considered for interview ¹	Date applications are released to programs
Application materials accepted after the deadline ²	Letters of recommendation, MSPE, Step 1 or Level 1 transcripts, Step 2 or Level 2 transcripts

Additional Deadline Guidance: To have the highest chance of being considered by programs, applicants should aim to have their applications submitted by the application due date. It is better to submit an application on time, knowing they intend to add something like an updated score report or letter later, than to wait for that letter and submit after the due date.

Match Platform

Emergency Medicine participates in the National Resident Matching Program (NRMP).

Additional Guidance: None noted.

¹ By when should applicants submit applications to programs to be considered for interview?: Date applications are released to programs; Universal interview offer date for the specialty; Other

² Is it acceptable for applicants to submit some application materials after the initial application?: Yes; No

Program Signals

Program Signals Details	Specialty Recommendation
Number of signals	5
Signal home institution or away rotation sites?	No

Additional Guidance: The specialty of Emergency Medicine strongly encouraged students to use their signals for programs where they have a strong interest in interviewing and not to try to buffer an interview list.

Use of USMLE and/or COMLEX-USA Scores

License Exam Details	Specialty Recommendation
Deadline to submit license exam transcripts to be considered for interview ³	No specialty recommendation to programs
Deadline to submit license exam transcripts to be ranked ⁴	Prior to rank order list opening
USMLE transcripts required for DO applicants? ⁵	No specialty recommendation to programs

Additional Guidance: CORD's official policy supports the equity of USMLE and COMLEX exams. Many programs still have a preference for applicants with a USMLE Step exam score. Available evidence suggests that osteopathic medical student applicants who take at least the USMLE Step 2 CK exam, in addition to their required COMLEX Level 2 exam, will receive more opportunities for residency interviews.

³ By when must an applicant submit a USMLE Step 2 CK or COMLEX-USA Level 2 CE score to be considered for interview?: Initial application deadline; Other

⁴ By when must an applicant submit a USMLE Step 2 CK or COMLEX-USA Level 2 CE score to be ranked?: Initial application deadline; Prior to rank order list opening

⁵ Does your specialty require that DO applicants submit USMLE scores in addition to COMLEX-USA scores?: Yes, USMLE scores are required for all applicants; No, USMLE scores are not required for DO applicants

Letters of Recommendation (LORs)

LOR Details	Specialty Recommendation
Required number of LORs	2 - 4
Required specialty-specific letters ⁶	Specialty-specific standardized letter(s) of evaluation (e.g., SLOE, SEL, SLOR)

Additional Guidance for Specialty-Specific Letters: Emergency Medicine requires a minimum of one EM Standardized Letter of Evaluation (eSLOE) obtained after completing an EM audition rotation and recommends obtaining up to two eSLOEs. An eSLOE should be written by the Clerkship Director, EM residency program leadership, or be a Group SLOE following the completion of an audition rotation. These rotations may occur at the student's home institution or other qualifying institutions with an EM residency program. Some students may not be able to obtain a second eSLOE by the application deadline. These students may submit additional eSLOEs after the initial application has been submitted. With a few exceptions, students are not recommended to obtain three or more SLOEs. An EM department chair letter is not required. Additional LORs may come from any faculty supporting the applicant's fit in Emergency Medicine. We recommend these letter writers use the standardized letter of evaluation format, provided at <https://esloe.cordem.org/>

Guidance for Transitional Year/Prelim Programs: None noted.

Guidance for IMG Applicants: None noted.

Supplemental Information

Supplemental Application Materials	Specialty Recommendation
Supplemental application materials recommended	No

Additional Supplemental Application Materials: None noted.

⁶ Which specialty-specific letters of recommendation should an applicant submit to a program? (Select all that apply): Specialty-specific standardized letter(s) of evaluation (e.g., SLOE, SEL, SLOR); Letter from a Chair; Letter from someone in the specialty (e.g., faculty, attending); Other letters

Away Rotations

Away Rotation Details	Specialty Recommendation
Away rotations in the specialty ⁷	Strongly recommended
Number of away rotations in the specialty	No specialty recommendation to programs

Additional Guidance: Emergency Medicine requires a minimum of one eSLOE obtained after completing an EM audition rotation and recommends obtaining up to two eSLOEs. For many students, this means completing one EM rotation at their home institution and possibly another away rotation elsewhere. Prospective applicants without an EM residency program at their home institution will require at least one away rotation. Some students may be tempted to complete multiple away rotations to obtain three or more eSLOEs. No EM program requires three or more eSLOEs for interview consideration. This practice is not helpful for the average applicant and exacerbates inequity against students who need multiple away rotations due to their lack of a home rotation. For this reason, CORD recommends that most students limit the number of away rotations to the minimum necessary. Students may also complete sub-specialty EM rotations (ultrasound, toxicology, etc) and earn sub-specialty SLOEs, but these are typically not counted towards the academic group eSLOE tally. Similarly, off-service SLOEs, or oSLOEs, generally do not count towards the recommended two academic group eSLOEs.

Interviews

Interview Details	Specialty Recommendation
Universal interview offer date(s)	No specialty recommendation to programs
Typical interview offer window	No specialty recommendation to programs
Interview scheduling platform	ResidencyCAS
Interview format(s) ⁸	Virtual

⁷ Does the specialty expect or strongly recommend that applicants complete away rotations in the specialty?: No; Strongly recommended; Expected

⁸ Which interview format does the specialty recommend that programs use? (Select all that apply): Virtual; In-person; Hybrid

Additional Guidance: Emergency Medicine strongly supports the virtual interview format as a way of providing equitable access to interview experiences for all students. That being stated, CORD recognizes the fact that a virtual format may cause a potential disadvantage in recruitment for certain training programs based on geographic location or other subtleties. These programs may elect to pursue an in-person or hybrid interview format. Guidance can be found on the Best Practices for the 2025-2026 Residency Application and Interview Season:

<https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:va6c2:5c85d60e-da29-43df-933c-2867fafd3401?viewer%21megaVerb=group-discover>

Applicant Communications

Pre-Interview Communication Guidance: Applicants may reach out to programs to inform them of important updates to their application (such as a late SLOE becoming available) or to a curated subset of their most desired programs they have not yet heard from by early November in order to reaffirm their interest. The preferred method of communication is by email, addressed to the program coordinator who will then be able to forward it through the appropriate channels.

Post-Interview Communication Guidance: Emergency Medicine discourages post-interview communication, including thank you letters, love letters, and letters of intent.

Open Houses / Second Looks

Open Houses: Please refer to the Best Practices for the 2025-2026 Residency Application and Interview Season:

<https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:va6c2:5c85d60e-da29-43df-933c-2867fafd3401?viewer%21megaVerb=group-discover>

Second Looks: Please refer to the Best Practices for the 2025-2026 Residency Application and Interview Season:

<https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:va6c2:5c85d60e-da29-43df-933c-2867fafd3401?viewer%21megaVerb=group-discover>

NRMP Voluntary Rank Order List (ROL) Lock Pilot Initiative: No