

# Program Directors Association Guide for Residency Applicants

## Osteopathic Neuromusculoskeletal 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 Osteopathic Neuromusculoskeletal Medicine (ONMM) 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.....	3
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

Osteopathic Neuromusculoskeletal Medicine has published a statement: The AAO (American Academy of Osteopathy) has been working with the individual ONMM programs across the country to be a common information source to compare data and preferences among the programs. The programs are encouraged to update their own information page on the AAO website, including links to further information. Visit the AAO's website for more information.

Go to <https://www.academyofosteopathy.org/onmm-residencies> where you can find links for Residency Program Catalog, residency openings, as well as many others useful links. Of note, there are 3 main entry pathways for the ONMM programs. ONMM1 (1st year entry pathway) brings you into a standard 3-year residency program. This is a stand-alone residency preparing you to become board certified in ONMM as a stand-alone physician specialty.

ONMM2 (2nd year entry pathway) allows entry into the ONMM program after completing training in a general 1st year (e.g., after a traditional rotating internship / transition year).

ONMM3 (3rd year entry pathway) brings you into a unique pathway to become board eligible in the stand-alone specialty of ONMM. It can only be done following successful completion of some other certified residency. It considers the training you have received in your prior residency, and, in most cases, it is able to use the prior experience to cover most of the general requirements toward completion of an ONMM residency. Therefore, you can obtain a second board eligibility for a stand-alone specialty in ONMM with just 1 additional year of training. What makes this unique is that the ONMM residency, even through the ONMM3 pathway, remains a *Primary* residency, not a fellowship linked to any other Board Specialty.

There are also some programs offering a combined residency. For example, some programs have fused the curriculum for Family Medicine and ONMM to allow a 4-year program that will allow the resident to become board eligible for both specialties at the end of 4 years.

## Application Process

Application Process Details	Specialty Recommendation
<b>Main Residency Match Season</b>	No specialty recommendation to programs
<b>Supplemental Offer and Acceptance Program (SOAP)</b>	AAMC Electronic Residency Application Service (ERAS)
<b>Application deadline to be considered for interview<sup>1</sup></b>	Date applications are released to programs
<b>Application materials accepted after the deadline<sup>2</sup></b>	Letters of recommendation, MSPE, Step 1 or Level 1 transcripts, Step 2 or Level 2 transcripts, supplemental educational experiences that occurred after the application submission

<sup>1</sup> 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

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

**Additional Deadline Guidance:** Dates vary widely among the programs and with the entry pathways within that program. Check with the individual program for details. Most commonly programs request materials within “1 month” of the application deadline or “before interviews”.

## Match Platform

Osteopathic Neuromusculoskeletal Medicine participates in NRMP for some pathways. ONMM3 pathway unlikely to use a matching program; email interest and documents directly to program coordinator.

## Program Signals

Program Signals Details	Specialty Recommendation
Number of signals	Not applicable or specialty does not participate in signaling
Signal home institution or away rotation sites?	-

**Additional Guidance:** None noted.

## Use of USMLE and/or COMLEX-USA Scores

License Exam Details	Specialty Recommendation
Deadline to submit license exam transcripts to be considered for interview <sup>3</sup>	Initial application deadline
Deadline to submit license exam transcripts to be ranked <sup>4</sup>	Initial application deadline
USMLE transcripts required for DO applicants? <sup>5</sup>	No, USMLE scores are not required for DO applicants

**Additional Guidance:** Most programs follow the specialty’s recommendation; however, some programs may vary. Check with individual programs.

<sup>3</sup> 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

<sup>4</sup> 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

<sup>5</sup> 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	No specialty recommendation to programs
Required specialty-specific letters <sup>6</sup>	No specialty recommendation to programs

**Additional Guidance for Specialty-Specific Letters:** Not all programs have specific requirements and specialty-specific letter requirements vary. Most programs require 3 LORs, but this varies across programs. Programs may require specialty-specific standardized letter(s) or evaluation, a letter from a Chair, or a letter from someone in the specialty. For example, some programs require letters from an osteopathic physician or DO's that practice OMM, an attending either specialized in ONMM or one who actively engages in the use of Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine, a Program Admin or Core Faculty attesting to the resident's ability to perform job duties, or someone who specializes in OMM and/or is AOBNNM board certified. The ONMM 3 pathway may require a letter from a Program Director. Check with individual programs.

**Guidance for Transitional Year/Prelim Programs:** Encouraged to have one from their program director

**Guidance for IMG Applicants:** None noted.

## Supplemental Information

Supplemental Application Materials	Specialty Recommendation
Supplemental application materials recommended	Yes

**Additional Supplemental Application Materials:** Programs may require supplemental information, but requirements vary. Check with the individual programs. Examples of supplemental information that may be required include:

- Block diagram from initial residency, case log on any ONMM performed during initial residency/residencies or last 3 years of clinical practice, letter of good standing from current program (if resident at time of application) or current supervisor (if applicable in clinical practice)
- Video of performing OMM if interviewing remotely;
- Each virtual applicant is required to submit a short video of the applicant doing an Osteopathic screening and evaluation and brief treatment on a volunteer "patient", at least

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<sup>6</sup> 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;

ONE WEEK prior to their virtual interview date. In person interviewees, if present during resident didactics will be expected to do a one-hour presentation showcasing a topic of their choice.

## Away Rotations

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

**Additional Guidance:** Most programs strongly recommend that students complete at least one away rotation; some recommend multiple. Programs may expect the student to demonstrate current level of OMT skills and willingness to learn; be physically and mentally present and available for learning ALL opportunities while there (day, night, weekends, etc.; be mentally present at all times, attentive, ask questions, seek knowledge. Some programs may recognize conferences or education experiences within the specialty or rotating with a preceptor that actively performs ONMM within their practice.

## 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	Thalamus Core
Interview format(s) <sup>8</sup>	Virtual, In-person, Hybrid

**Additional Guidance:** The interview dates will vary widely based on program and based on entry pathway within each program. Some conduct interviews throughout the year; others focus on about a three-month window. Check with the individual programs.

A few programs use Thalamus. Most do not use a special platform.

The programs have a wide variety of responses about in-person versus virtual. In-person is most common.

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

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

## **Applicant Communications**

**Pre-Interview Communication Guidance:** No specialty guidance to programs. Programs vary in their approach to pre-interview communication.

**Post-Interview Communication Guidance:** No specialty guidance to programs. Programs vary in their approach to pre-interview communication.

## **Open Houses / Second Looks**

**Open Houses:** This does not apply to most ONMM programs. Check with individual programs for dates and events.

**Second Looks:** This does not apply to most ONMM programs. Check with individual programs.

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