

Program Directors Association Guide for Residency Applicants

Otolaryngology

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 Otolaryngology 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.

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Specialty Guidance for the 2025–2026 Cycle

Otolaryngology has published a statement: <https://suo-aado.org/page/2025-2026-interview-recruitment>

Application Process

Application Process Details	Specialty Recommendation
Main Residency Match Season	AAMC Electronic Residency Application Service (ERAS)
Supplemental Offer and Acceptance Program (SOAP)	AAMC Electronic Residency Application Service (ERAS)
Application deadline to be considered for interview ¹	Date applications are released to programs
Application materials accepted after the deadline ²	No specialty recommendation to programs

Additional Deadline Guidance: None noted.

Match Platform

Otolaryngology participates in the National Resident Matching Program (NRMP).

Additional Guidance: None noted.

Program Signals

Program Signals Details	Specialty Recommendation
Number of signals	25
Signal home institution or away rotation sites?	Yes

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

Geographic Preferences

While applicants may input geographic preference information into their MyERAS application (as part of a specialty pilot), Otolaryngology programs will not receive applicants' geographic preferences in the 2026 ERAS application season.

Use of USMLE and/or COMLEX-USA Scores

License Exam Details	Specialty Recommendation
Deadline to submit license exam transcripts to be considered for interview³	Initial application deadline
Deadline to submit license exam transcripts to be ranked⁴	Initial application deadline
USMLE transcripts required for DO applicants?⁵	Yes, USMLE scores are required for all applicants

Additional Guidance: None noted.

Letters of Recommendation (LORs)

LOR Details	Specialty Recommendation
Required number of LORs	3
Required specialty-specific letters⁶	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)

Additional Guidance for Specialty-Specific Letters: Most letters should come from Otolaryngology. However, a letter from someone who knows the applicant very well from another specialty or from an extended experience in research (1 year or longer) can be very helpful.

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

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

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 specialty recommendation to programs

Additional Supplemental Application Materials: None noted.

Away Rotations

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

Additional Guidance: No requirement. However, applicants have a high rate of interview offers from the site of an away rotation. Many applicants complete 1-2 away rotations.

Interviews

Interview Details	Specialty Recommendation
Universal interview offer date(s)	November 7, 2025, November 11, 2025, anytime after November 11, 2025
Typical interview offer window	–
Interview scheduling platform	–
Interview format(s) ⁸	No specialty recommendation to programs

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: Most Otolaryngology programs interviewed in-person. Some programs will choose to interview sub-interns who completed an away rotation in a virtual format.

Applicant Communications

Pre-Interview Communication Guidance: No specialty-specific guidance.

Post-Interview Communication Guidance: No specialty-specific guidance.

Open Houses / Second Looks

Open Houses: Second-look open houses may be offered by programs at their discretion.

Second Looks: Second-look open houses may be offered by programs at their discretion.

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