

# Program Directors Association Guide for Residency Applicants

## Surgical Critical Care

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 Surgical Critical Care 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

Surgical Critical Care has published a statement: None noted.

## Application Process

Application Process Details	Specialty Recommendation
Main Residency Match Season	No specialty recommendation to programs
Supplemental Offer and Acceptance Program (SOAP)	No specialty recommendation to programs
Application deadline to be considered for interview <sup>1</sup>	Individual Programs may decide when to offer interviews.
Application materials accepted after the deadline <sup>2</sup>	Letters of recommendation

### Additional Deadline Guidance:

- Application platform: Surgical critical care and Acute care surgery Fellowship Application Service (SAFAS).
- Website: [safas.smapply.io](https://safas.smapply.io)
- Applications open: March annually.
- Application deadline: July annually.
- Applicant Instructions and Resources are available on the SAFAS Website.

## Match Platform

Surgical Critical Care participates in the National Resident Matching Program (NRMP).

**Additional Guidance:** None noted.

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<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

## 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>	Individual Programs may decide how they use USMLE/COMLEX information.
USMLE transcripts required for DO applicants? <sup>5</sup>	No specialty recommendation to programs

**Additional Guidance:** None noted.

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<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	3
Required specialty-specific letters <sup>6</sup>	Specialty-specific standardized letter(s) of evaluation (e.g., SLOE, SEL, SLOR), Letter from someone in the specialty (e.g., faculty, attending)

### Additional Guidance for Specialty-Specific Letters:

- Recommended date by which all LORs should be submitted: As Soon As Possible (ASAP).
- Give your Recommenders advance notice.
- SAFAS application requires entering names and E-mail addresses for 3 Recommenders.
- Submit your Application - Do NOT wait for Recommenders to complete letters.
- Each Recommender will be asked to complete 2 tasks: Separate and Standardized LORs.

**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.

## Away Rotations

Away Rotation Details	Specialty Recommendation
Away rotations in the specialty <sup>7</sup>	Not required or recommended
Number of away rotations in the specialty	—

<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

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

**Additional Guidance:** Away rotations are not an expectation. Individual programs will decide if away rotations are available.

## Interviews

Interview Details	Specialty Recommendation
Universal interview offer date(s)	–
Typical interview offer window	March 2025 – June 2025
Interview scheduling platform	–
Interview format(s) <sup>8</sup>	Virtual

**Additional Guidance:** Although SCCPDS recommends a virtual interview format - It is the discretion of individual programs to use an in-person interview or hybrid format.

## Applicant Communications

**Pre-Interview Communication Guidance:** No specialty guidance to programs.

**Post-Interview Communication Guidance:** No specialty guidance to programs.

## Open Houses / Second Looks

**Open Houses:** It is the discretion of individual programs to offer Open House visits.

**Second Looks:** It is the discretion of individual programs to offer Second Look visits.

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

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