

Program Directors Association Guide for Residency Applicants

Transitional Year

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 Transitional Year 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

Transitional Year has published a statement: None noted.

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

Transitional Year participates in the National Resident Matching Program (NRMP).

Additional Guidance: None noted.

Program Signals

Program Signals Details	Specialty Recommendation
Number of signals	12
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

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	No, USMLE scores are not required for DO applicants

Additional Guidance: None noted.

Letters of Recommendation (LORs)

LOR Details	Specialty Recommendation
Required number of LORs	3
Required specialty-specific letters⁶	No specialty recommendation to programs

Additional Guidance for Specialty-Specific Letters: We recommend at least one of the letters of recommendation written by an attending from a medical or surgical inpatient rotation or sub-internship rotation in General Medicine, General Surgery, Pediatrics, OB/Gyn, Family Medicine or ICU.

Guidance for Transitional Year/Prelim Programs: To apply to a Transitional Year Residency Program, the candidate should provide at least 3 recommendation letters. These letters do not have to be Transitional Year specific. The letters targeting their advanced program specialties are acceptable. We recommend at least one of the letters of recommendation written by an attending from a medical or surgical inpatient rotation or sub-internship rotation in General Medicine, General Surgery, Pediatrics, OB/Gyn, Family Medicine or ICU.

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 IMG Applicants: Transitional Year specialty requirements for letters of recommendation for IMG applicants are the same as for non-IMG applicants.

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: None noted.

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) ⁸	Virtual

Additional Guidance: None noted.

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

Applicant Communications

Pre-Interview Communication Guidance: All Transitional Year Residency Programs are expected to follow the NRMP recommendation, and remain equitable and professional during pre-and post interview communications with the applicants.

Post-Interview Communication Guidance: All Transitional Year Residency Programs are expected to follow the NRMP recommendation, and remain equitable and professional during pre-and post interview communications with the applicants.

Open Houses / Second Looks

Open Houses: All Transitional Year Residency Programs are expected to follow the NRMP recommendation, provide truthful and realistic information and remain equitable to all applicants throughout the recruitment process when considering and arranging open houses.

Second Looks: All Transitional Year Residency Programs are expected to follow the NRMP recommendation, and remain equitable to all applicants throughout the recruitment process when considering and arranging second look activities. The specialty will leave the specific decisions on timing and format to the programs themselves. To mitigate the risk of bias, the specialty recommends the programs that hold second looks to consider designating program members (residents, core faculty, or staff members) who are not in the program leadership positions to host these activities. The programs may also consider ways to ensure that the Rank Order list will not be altered by the outcome of the Second Looks. The programs are encouraged to share these bias mitigating strategies with all of their applicants.

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