

# Program Director Associations Guide for Residency Applicants

## Osteopathic Neuromusculoskeletal Medicine

The *Program Director Associations 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 programs. **Specialty-specific guidance reflects the specialty’s intent for applicant preparation and the residency application process but may not reflect all individual program requirements.** Applicants should review individual program requirements in Residency Explorer™ tool, FREIDA™, or on program websites.

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 guidance,” it means the specialty does not provide guidance on that aspect of the selection process.

## Table of Contents

Specialty-Specific Resources.....	2
Away Rotations.....	2
Use of USMLE and/or COMLEX-USA Scores.....	3
Application Process .....	3
Program Signals .....	4
Letters of Recommendation or Evaluation .....	4
Research/Scholarly Activity .....	5
Supplemental Information.....	5
Applicant Communications .....	5
Interviews.....	6
Open Houses / Second Looks .....	6
Match Platform.....	6

# Specialty Guidance for the 2026–2027 Cycle

## Specialty-Specific Resources

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 the varied data and preferences among the programs. They are encouraged to update their own information page on the AAO website regularly. Go to [www.academyofosteopathy.org](http://www.academyofosteopathy.org) to find links for a Residency Program Catalog, residency openings, as well as many other useful links.

## Away Rotations

Away Rotation Details	Specialty Recommendation
<b>Away rotations in the specialty<sup>1</sup></b>	Strongly Recommended Purpose: important to being considered, but not always required given certain circumstances
<b>Number of away rotations in the specialty</b>	At least 1. More than 1 is strongly recommended.

**Additional Guidance:** Most programs recommend 1 to 3 away rotations. A prolonged commitment to seeking out training in ONMM should be clearly evident, noting, e.g., local and away rotations, regional and national workshops, AAO Convocation. Programs recommend demonstrating current level of OMT skills and willingness to learn; being physically and mentally present and available for all learning opportunities while there (day, night, weekend, etc.); staying interested and curious (i.e., you don't have to come in knowing everything).

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<sup>1</sup> Even if an applicant's home institution has a program in your specialty, are completing away rotations in the specialty optional, strongly recommended, or required for applicants?: Optional, Not Expected (to gain additional exposure or confirm interest in specialty before applying); Strongly Recommended (important to being considered, but not always required given certain circumstances); Required (will not be considered without it)

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

License Exam Details	Specialty Recommendation
<b>USMLE transcripts required for DO applicants?</b> <sup>2</sup>	No, USMLE scores are not required for DO applicants

**Additional Guidance:** Most programs do not require USMLE scores for DO applicants. However, check individual programs. Scores were most commonly desired by the initial application deadline.

## Application Process

Application Process Details	Specialty Recommendation
<b>Main Residency Match Season</b>	AAMC Electronic Residency Application Service (ERAS)
<b>Supplemental Offer and Acceptance Program (SOAP)</b>	AAMC Electronic Residency Application Service (ERAS)
<b>When programs start reviewing applications</b> <sup>3</sup>	Date applications are released to programs by the application service
<b>Application materials accepted after the deadline</b> <sup>4</sup>	Letters of recommendation, MSPE, USMLE Step 1 or COMLEX-USA Level 1 transcripts, USMLE Step 2 CK or COMLEX-USA Level 2 CE transcripts

**Additional Guidance:** Most programs request materials within “1 month” of the application deadline or “before interviews”. Do not delay a submission if waiting on materials. Partial submissions will have a better chance than no submission. Dates vary widely among the programs and with the three different entry pathways to an ONMM program. Check with the individual program for details.

<sup>2</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

<sup>3</sup> Which best describes when programs will start reviewing applications for this application cycle (2026-2027)?: Date applications are released to programs; Other

<sup>4</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 institutions?	–
Signal programs where they completed away rotations?	–

**Additional Guidance:** None noted.

## Letters of Recommendation or Evaluation

LOR Details	Specialty Recommendation
Required number of LORs	No specialty guidance
Required letter writers <sup>5</sup>	Someone within the specialty (e.g., faculty, attending), Department chair, from your current program director in case of the ONMM3 pathway
Is there a specialty-specific standardized letter? <sup>6</sup>	No

**Additional Guidance:** Not all programs have specific requirements. Most programs require 2 or 3 letters and some programs require letters from an osteopathic physician, physicians who practice ONMM, a board certified specialist in ONMM.

**Guidance for Applicants from Transitional Year/Prelim Programs:** None noted.

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

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<sup>5</sup> Who is required to submit letters? (Select all that apply): Someone within the specialty (e.g., faculty, attending); Department chair; Program director; Physician preceptor at an away rotation (e.g., program director, faculty); Other

<sup>6</sup> Does your specialty have a specialty-specific standardized letter of evaluation or standardized letter of recommendation?: Yes; No

## Research/Scholarly Activity

Check with individual programs as answers vary widely. Some programs will expect a “senior project” be done before graduation. Others will have a much more robust set of yearly projects. Many will encourage experience as teachers or table trainers in OMM.

## Supplemental Information

Supplemental Application Materials	Specialty Recommendation
Supplemental application materials required? <sup>7</sup>	Yes

**Additional Guidance:** Program requirements vary. Supplemental materials may include a short answer written quiz; demonstrating OMT with a volunteer “patient”; a block diagram from initial residency, a case log on any ONMM performed during initial residency (-ies) or last 3 years of clinical practice; letter of good standing from current program, if resident, or current supervisor, if clinical practice; a video recording of the applicant performing OMT if interviewing remotely; a short video of the applicant doing an osteopathic screening and evaluation and brief treatment on a volunteer “patient”; a 1-hour presentation showcasing a topic of your choice, 1, 2, 3, & PE (original or certified copy from med school); list of all rotations completed as 3rd and 4th year as student, intern, and residency years.

## Applicant Communications

**Pre-Interview Communication Guidance:** Program guidance varies. Some programs may suggest emailing a program to express interest or talking with the program director or other core faculty. Letters of interest are also acceptable.

**Post-Interview Communication Guidance:** Program guidance varies. Some programs may suggest emailing or talking with the program to express interest or send a thank you letter. Applicants must understand that programs may not respond to any of these communications in order to maintain neutrality during interview season.

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<sup>7</sup> Does the specialty require applicants to submit supplemental application materials (e.g., use of other assessments, supplemental videos or essays)? Yes; No

## Interviews

Interview Details	Specialty Recommendation
Universal interview offer date(s)	–
Typical interview offer window	September 2026 - November 2026
Interview scheduling platform	–
Interview format <sup>8</sup>	In-person

**Additional Guidance:** Interview offer timeframes may vary across programs, but most programs plan to send interview offers September – November 2026. In-person interviews and audition rotations or at least a 2-day visit to have some clinic time are highly recommended to assess hands-on skill. Some programs may offer a hybrid interview format.

## Open Houses / Second Looks

**Open Houses:** These seemed rare. Check with individual programs for dates and events.

**Second Looks:** Most programs do not offer second looks, but check with individual programs. Second looks may be used if the applicant interviewed virtually and would like to come in person to get to know the program better and see the area, clinic, hospital, etc.

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

## Match Platform

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

**Additional Guidance:** The ONMM3 entry pathway is unlikely to use a matching program currently. Email interest and documents directly to the program coordinator.

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<sup>8</sup> Which interview format does the specialty recommend that programs use?: Virtual; In-person; Hybrid (an applicant chooses either an in-person or virtual interview format); Hybrid (an applicant completes both virtual and in-person interviews)