

# Program Director Associations Guide for Residency Applicants

## Psychiatry

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 Psychiatry 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.

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# Specialty Guidance for the 2026–2027 Cycle

## Specialty-Specific Resources

Psychiatry has published a statement: [APA Roadmap to Psychiatry Residency](#)

## Away Rotations

Away Rotation Details	Specialty Recommendation
Away rotations in the specialty <sup>1</sup>	Optional, Not Expected Purpose: to gain additional exposure or confirm interest in specialty before applying
Number of away rotations in the specialty	–

**Additional Guidance:** None noted.

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

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

**Additional Guidance:** None noted.

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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)

<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

## 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<sup>3</sup></b>	Date applications are released to programs by the application service
<b>Application materials accepted after the deadline<sup>4</sup></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letters of recommendation by interview</li> <li>• USMLE Step 1 or COMLEX-USA Level 1 transcripts by interview</li> <li>• USMLE Step 2 CK or COMLEX-USA Level 2 CE transcripts prior to rank order list opening</li> </ul>

**Additional Guidance:** None noted.

## Program Signals

Program Signals Details	Specialty Recommendation
<b>Number of signals</b>	10
<b>Signal home institutions?</b>	Yes
<b>Signal programs where they completed away rotations?</b>	Yes

**Additional Guidance:** None noted.

<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

## Letters of Recommendation or Evaluation

LOR Details	Specialty Recommendation
Required number of LORs	At least 3, No more than 4
Required letter writers <sup>5</sup>	Someone within the specialty (e.g., faculty, attending)
Is there a specialty-specific standardized letter? <sup>6</sup>	Yes
Specialty-specific standardized letter required? <sup>7</sup>	No specialty guidance

**Additional Guidance:** There is an option of a standardized letter of recommendation (<https://www.admsep.org/matchrelated.php>).

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

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

## Research/Scholarly Activity

No specialty recommendation

## Supplemental Information

Supplemental Application Materials	Specialty Recommendation
Supplemental application materials required? <sup>8</sup>	No

**Additional Guidance:** 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

<sup>7</sup> If yes, is the specialty-specific standardized letter of evaluation recommended or required?: Recommended; Required

<sup>8</sup> Does the specialty require applicants to submit supplemental application materials (e.g., use of other assessments, supplemental videos or essays)?: Yes; No

## Applicant Communications

**Pre-Interview Communication Guidance:** Unless there are extenuating circumstances (e.g., couples match or related process), reaching out early is generally discouraged.

**Post-Interview Communication Guidance:** No post-communication aside from a simple thank-you is recommended. The overall goal is to limit post-interview communication.

## Interviews

Interview Details	Specialty Recommendation
Universal interview offer date(s)	–
Typical interview offer window	September 2026 - February 2027
Interview scheduling platform	–
Interview format <sup>9</sup>	Virtual

**Additional Guidance:** [APA Roadmap to Psychiatry Residency](#)

## Open Houses / Second Looks

**Open Houses:** Open houses should occur before ERAS opens to programs, allowing residency applicants to be reviewed in late September. Attendees should not be tracked and blinded to the selection/evaluation committee.

**Second Looks:** The specialty recommends that second looks are not mandatory, have no effect on ranking, and that ROLs be submitted in advance of the second look.

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

## Match Platform

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

**Additional Guidance:** None noted.

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<sup>9</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)