

# Program Director Associations Guide for Residency Applicants

## Neurology

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 Neurology 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

Neurology has published a statement: The [American Academy of Neurology](#) released a [consensus statement for the 2026 Match cycle](#). Updates to this statement for the 2027 cycle are still pending and will be found [here](#).

## Away Rotations

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

**Additional Guidance:** The utility of an away rotation largely depends on the individual circumstances of the applicant. While away rotations are often recommended, they are typically not a strict requirement. However, for those without access to a neurology clerkship at their home institution, completing an away rotation is often strongly encouraged or even expected.

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

| License Exam Details                                       | Specialty Recommendation |
|--|--------------------------|
| USMLE transcripts required for DO applicants? <sup>2</sup> | No specialty guidance    |

**Additional Guidance:** It is in the best interest of all applicants to submit USMLE scores as the vast majority of programs utilize them. Applicants should ask their respective programs whether they should submit both scores. Generally, neurology programs do not have a minimum score for their USMLE/COMLEX scores.

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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>        | Applications open September 2, 2026 and programs begin reviewing applications September 23, 2026.   |
| <b>Application materials accepted after the deadline<sup>4</sup></b> | It is generally acceptable to add LORs within a month after initial submission. Applicants are encouraged to review program's websites on minimum number of LORs requested. |

**Additional Guidance:** Applicants are encouraged to review program's websites on minimum number of LORs requested. Applicants who have not met this minimum when programs begin their review may risk not being reviewed by programs.

Applicants are encouraged to review program's websites or contact Program Coordinators to learn about individual program's application requirements and policies regarding the use of the supplemental ERAS application. A directory of Adult and Child Neurology programs and contact information can be found through the [ACGME specialty directory](#).

## Program Signals

| Program Signals Details                                     | Specialty Recommendation |
|---|--------------------------|
| <b>Number of signals</b>                                    | 8                        |
| <b>Signal home institutions?</b>                            | No specialty guidance    |
| <b>Signal programs where they completed away rotations?</b> | No specialty guidance    |

<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

**Additional Guidance:** Select Neurology programs may participate in program signaling (8 signals per adult neurology). Please visit the [ERAS application webpage](#) for information, guidance, timelines, and resources on completing the ERAS application.

Please note that there are no universal practices across programs in the use of program signals (e.g., signaling acceptance/usage, need for signaling for home institution, etc.), LOR requirements/format, or interview invitation release dates.

Applicants are encouraged to review programs' websites or contact Program Coordinators to learn about individual programs' application requirements and policies regarding the use of the supplemental ERAS application. A directory of Adult and Child Neurology programs and contact information can be found through the [ACGME specialty directory](#).

The [American Academy of Neurology](#) released a [consensus statement for the 2026 Match cycle](#). Updates to this statement for the 2027 cycle are still pending and will be found [here](#).

## Letters of Recommendation or Evaluation

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

**Additional Guidance:** Most programs do not require letters from away rotations.

**Guidance for Applicants from Transitional Year/Prelim Programs:** Transitional year students are generally expected to have a LOR from their Program Director.

**Guidance for IMG Applicants:** IMGs are generally expected to have at least one LOR from a U.S. Neurologist.

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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

The importance of research and scholarly activity in the review of applications may vary significantly across individual residency programs. Programs may vary in how heavily scholarly activity is weighted in their application review process. Similarly, programs may differ in how they evaluate the quantity or perceived quality of such activity. Applicants are recommended to review program websites and other materials to help determine the values of individual programs to which they apply.

## Supplemental Information

| Supplemental Application Materials                        | Specialty Recommendation |
|---|--------------------------|
| Supplemental application materials required? <sup>7</sup> | No                       |

**Additional Guidance:** None noted.

## Applicant Communications

**Pre-Interview Communication Guidance:** There is no specific guidance on pre-interview communication. Applicants should contact programs individually on their communication policies.

**Post-Interview Communication Guidance:** The [American Academy of Neurology](#) released a [consensus statement including guidance on post-interview communication for the 2026 Match cycle](#). Updates to this statement for the 2027 cycle are still pending and will be found [here](#).

## Interviews

| Interview Details                 | Specialty Recommendation    |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Universal interview offer date(s) | –                           |
| Typical interview offer window    | October 2026 - January 2027 |
| Interview scheduling platform     | –                           |
| Interview format <sup>8</sup>     | Virtual                     |

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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

<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)

**Additional Guidance:** The [American Academy of Neurology](#) released a [consensus statement in favor of virtual interviewing for the 2026 Match cycle](#). Updates to this statement for the 2027 cycle are still pending and will be found [here](#).

## **Open Houses / Second Looks**

**Open Houses:** The [American Academy of Neurology](#) released a [consensus statement including guidance on open houses for the 2026 Match cycle](#). Updates to this statement for the 2027 cycle are still pending and will be found [here](#).

**Second Looks:** The [American Academy of Neurology](#) released a [consensus statement on second looks for the 2026 Match cycle](#). Updates to this statement for the 2027 cycle are still pending and will be found [here](#).

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

## **Match Platform**

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

**Additional Guidance:** None noted.