

Program Director Associations Guide for Residency Applicants

Urology

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 Urology 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

None noted.

Away Rotations

Away Rotation Details	Specialty Recommendation
Away rotations in the specialty ¹	Strongly Recommended Purpose: important to being considered, but not always required given certain circumstances
Number of away rotations in the specialty	No specialty guidance

Additional Guidance: There is no requirement for applicants to complete away rotations. That being said, in the last several years, almost all applicants have completed at least one away rotation, and the majority have completed more than one away rotation. An away rotation is particularly helpful for applicants with limited exposure/opportunities in urology at their home institution.

Use of USMLE and/or COMLEX-USA Scores

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

Additional Guidance: Submission of a USMLE score in addition to a COMLEX-USA score by DO applicants is encouraged as many urology programs are unfamiliar with the COMLEX-USA.

¹ 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)

² 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
Main Residency Match Season	AAMC Electronic Residency Application Service (ERAS)
Supplemental Offer and Acceptance Program (SOAP)	AAMC Electronic Residency Application Service (ERAS)
When programs start reviewing applications³	Date applications are released to programs by the application service
Application materials accepted after the deadline⁴	See below

Additional Guidance: Additional application materials may be submitted after the initial application. However, applicants are strongly encouraged to have all materials submitted prior to the date when applications are opened up to programs for review, as many programs may download the application packets as PDFs for review on the date of opening and may not revisit ERAS to see if additional materials have been uploaded.

Program Signals

Program Signals Details	Specialty Recommendation
Number of signals	30
Signal home institutions?	Yes
Signal programs where they completed away rotations?	Yes

Additional Guidance: Applicants are encouraged to use their preference signals to indicate credible interest in a program. If they are interested in training at their home institution or where they did an away institution, then it would be appropriate for the applicant to send a signal to those programs.

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

⁴ 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 ⁵	Someone within the specialty (e.g., faculty, attending): At least 2 letters must be from urologists.
Is there a specialty-specific standardized letter? ⁶	Yes
Specialty-specific standardized letter required? ⁷	Required

Additional Guidance: Urology will require at least two standardized letters (SLOEs) from urologists and must be submitted through the AAMC Letter Writer Portal (LWP) using the new online form. PDF versions of previous standardized letter formats will not meet this requirement. There are no other requirements for other submitted letters and no chair letter is required.

Guidance for Applicants from Transitional Year/Prelim Programs: The same requirements listed above apply to letters for applicants from Transitional Year/Preliminary programs.

Guidance for IMG Applicants: The same requirements listed above apply to letters for IMG applicants.

Research/Scholarly Activity

Most urology programs view research experience as adding value to an application as it adds an extra dimension to the applicant's package, potentially demonstrating initiative, innovation, critical thinking, and follow-through. There are some urology residencies with required research rotations, and for those programs, research experience may be particularly important. All research efforts are commendable. However, it is understood that not all research efforts carry the same weight; for instance, a first-author peer-reviewed publication signifies a greater contribution than a subsequent author on a poster or abstract presentation. It is also understood that there are multiple avenues by which to showcase an applicant's aptitudes, including (but not limited to) life experiences, leadership experiences, community service, and advocacy.

⁵ 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

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

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

Supplemental Information

Supplemental Application Materials	Specialty Recommendation
Supplemental application materials required? ⁸	No

Additional Guidance: None noted.

Applicant Communications

Pre-Interview Communication Guidance: Pre-interview communication is discouraged, whether that be directly from an applicant or from others advocating for an applicant. The preference signal system is intended to serve as a credible signal of genuine interest in a program.

Post-Interview Communication Guidance: Program directors and interviewing team members will avoid post-interview communications — Program directors must instruct their interviewing team members they may not solicit or require post-interview communication from applicants, nor shall they engage in post-interview communication. This behavior may appear disingenuous or be seen as an attempt to influence an applicant’s Match rank list. Only urology applicants may initiate written contact regarding any follow-up questions they may have about a program. Responses to these questions should be submitted in writing only. Program directors and interviewing team members will not require thank you notes from applicants. However, applicants may write thank you notes. Programs should not respond to thank you notes.

Interviews

Interview Details	Specialty Recommendation
Universal interview offer date(s)	October 23, 2026, October 26, 2026, October 27, 2026
Typical interview offer window	–
Interview scheduling platform	Thalamus Core
Interview format ⁹	No specialty guidance

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

⁹ 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: Programs may determine independently their preferred interview format (in-person, virtual, or hybrid). The interview format must be communicated to the applicant at the time that the interview invitation is extended.

Open Houses / Second Looks

Open Houses: Many urology residency programs will hold open houses in advance of application review and interviews. The majority are held virtually. There is no formal policy on open houses.

Second Looks: Programs will not state, suggest or imply that visiting rotations or second-looks are required or have any impact on the applicant ranking order. The SAU strictly prohibits requiring visiting rotations or mandating or offering second looks. Required rotations or visits and mandated second looks for consideration by a program to match with that program are over-burdensome for many applicants, unfair to all applicants and not in line with the SAU Match process. Program directors and interviewing team members should appreciate and respect the logistical and financial burden applicants face in being pressured to have multiple, physical interactions with a program or imply that these measures are used in determining rank order on a Match list. Some medical students do not have the financial means to make a second visit, which may put them at a disadvantage with regard to other medical students. This policy is not intended to interfere with pre-existing mentor-mentee relationships. Communications between a mentor and mentee that began before the interview process started are excluded from this policy. Applicants may visit the city or hospital of a particular program after the interview process, but are not allowed to request or seek to request a second look with anyone in the program, including the chair, program director/administrator, faculty or residents/fellows in the program.

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

Match Platform

Urology participates in the SAU/AUA Match (i.e., Urology Match).

Additional Guidance: None noted.