

Program Director Associations Guide for Residency Applicants

Thoracic Surgery - Integrated

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 Thoracic Surgery - Integrated 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	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? ²	No, USMLE scores are not required for DO applicants

Additional Guidance: USMLE scores are recommended but not required.

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	No specialty guidance

Additional Guidance: None noted.

Program Signals

Program Signals Details	Specialty Recommendation
Number of signals	4
Signal home institutions?	No specialty guidance
Signal programs where they completed away rotations?	No specialty guidance

Additional Guidance: Applicants do not need to signal their home program or those where they have done an away rotation.

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	No specialty guidance
Is there a specialty-specific standardized letter? ⁶	No

Additional Guidance: Recommended to provide at least one letter from a cardiothoracic surgeon if possible.

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

Guidance for IMG Applicants: None noted.

Research/Scholarly Activity

Each program weighs the importance of prior research relative to their institutional focus. Projects demonstrating results and/or long-term commitment are generally preferable. Some programs will require dedicated research time during training.

Supplemental Information

Supplemental Application Materials	Specialty Recommendation
Supplemental application materials required? ⁷	No

Additional Guidance: None noted.

Applicant Communications

Pre-Interview Communication Guidance: Not recommended.

Post-Interview Communication Guidance: Thank you letters are delightful but not required.

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 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)	10/20/2026
Typical interview offer window	–
Interview scheduling platform	–
Interview format ⁸	No specialty guidance

Additional Guidance: None noted.

Open Houses / Second Looks

Open Houses: None noted.

Second Looks: None noted.

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

Match Platform

Thoracic Surgery - Integrated participates in the National Resident Matching Program (NRMP).

Additional Guidance: None noted.

⁸ 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)