Anesthesiology

Application System	ERAS
Away Rotations	Away rotations are optional but are becoming more common. National Guidelines: Don't do more than 2 away rotations.
Signals (2026-2027)	5 gold & 10 silver signals. New 2026-2027 program Signal explanation for each program signaled. *National Guidelines: Signal both home and away programs (if those are preferred programs).*
Couples Match	"Applicants who are couples matching should ensure both members of the couple signal the same programs whenever possible. Asking a program that an applicant did not signal to grant the applicant an interview because their partner received an interview at the same institution is discouraged and unlikely to be successful."
Supplemental Questions (from 2026-2027) *500 character limit per question	• Describe a time when you faced adversity, how did you overcome it, and what lessons did you learn from this? • Describe a time when you made a difficult decision in a complex situation (not necessarily related to medicine). How did you make your decision, what was the result and what did you learn from this experience? • Describe your ideal career as an attending.
Letters of Recommendation	Most programs require 3, rarely will programs require 4. At least one letter must be from an anesthesiologist (some programs require two letters from an anesthesiologist). You will typically get a department letter from home Anesthesia AIs.
Interviews	• Interview Release Date: No release date. • Timing of Interview: The majority occur from late October to mid-January. • Interview Format: Virtual.
Pre/Post Interview Communication	**Pre:** PD guide recommends no letter of interest prior to receiving an interview. **Post:** Thank you letter or letter of interest are welcome but may not influence rank list/interview outcomes.
Second Looks	Second looks were offered by some programs. Programs are encouraged to lock rank list prior to offering second looks.

Anesthesiology

(Continued)

Links and Resources

- Assoc of Anesthesiology Core Program Dir (AACPD) Guide Residency Applicants https://www.saaapm.org/guide-for-residency-applicants-2026-2027
- Program Directors Assoc. Guide for Residency Applicants 26-27 https://cmss.org/program-directors-association-guides-for-residency-applicants/
- CWRU residency roadmap https://sites.google.com/a/case.edu/casemed-guidebook/information-by-specialty/anesthesiology
- Residency explorer https://www.residencyexplorer.org/
- NRMP Charting Outcomes: Characteristics of US MD Seniors Who Matched To Their Preferred Specialty: 2026 Main Residency Match https://www.nrmp.org/match-data/2026/07/charting-outcomes-characteristics-of-u-s-md-seniors-who-matched-to-their-preferred-specialty-2026-main-residency-match/

Child Neurology

Application System	ERAS
Away Rotations	Not recommended or required.
Signals (2026-2027)	3 gold and 6 silver. National Guidelines: Signal both home and away programs (if those are preferred programs).
Letters of Recommendation	3-4 letters are recommended. Specific letters required: at least one Pediatrics and one Neurology.
Interviews	◆ Interview Release Date: For the 2026-2027 application cycle, the Child Neurology Society recommended a universal interview offer date of October 5, 2026. ◆ Timing of Interview: Interviews occur in late October through mid-January. ◆ Interview Format: All interviews are virtual.
Second Looks	Second looks were offered, optionally, typically in late January.

Links and Resources

- Program Directors Association Guides for Residency Applicants 2026-2027 https://cmss.org/program-directors-association-guides-for-residency-applicants/
- CWRU residency roadmap https://sites.google.com/a/case.edu/casemed-guidebook/information-by-specialty/child-neurology
- Residency explorer https://www.residencyexplorer.org/
- NRMP Charting Outcomes: Characteristics of US MD Seniors Who Matched To Their Preferred Specialty: 2026 Main Residency Match https://www.nrmp.org/match-data/2026/07/charting-outcomes-characteristics-of-u-s-md-seniors-who-matched-to-their-preferred-specialty-2026-main-residency-match/

Dermatology

Application System	ERAS
Away Rotations	APD recommends no more than two away rotations. “Students will not be penalized for declining away rotations to follow these recommendations”.
Signals (2026-2027)	3 gold and 25 silver signals. National Guidelines: Signal both home and away programs (if those are preferred programs).
Letters of Recommendation	4 letters are required; all from Dermatology or 3 from Dermatology & 1 from Internal Medicine. Standardized Letter of Evaluation (SLOE) format encouraged . Specific letters required at least one SLOE from dermatology home program and others can be SLOE or narrative.
Interviews	• Interview Release Date: 3 centralized release dates (11/2/2026, 11/16/2026, and 11/30/2026). • Timing of Interview: Usually from November to early February, weekdays only. • Interview Format: Mostly virtual, but some are in-person.
Pre/Post Interview Communication	Recommends against all pre-post interview communication. Refrain from contacting programs to express interest or provide application updates prior to interviews, except in truly exceptional circumstances (e.g., couples matching updates, major life events that impact preferences).
Second Looks	Second looks offered, but rare.

Links and Resources

- Association of Professors of Dermatology Residency Program Directors Section https://www.dermatology professors.org/files/APD%20statement%20on%202026-2027%20application%20cy cle_5-1-26.pdf
- Association of Professors of Dermatology https://www.dermatology professors.org/programdirectors_resources.php
- Program Directors Association Guides for Residency Applicants 2026-2027 https://cmss.org/program-directors-association-guides-for-residency -applicants/
- CWRU residency roadmap https://sites.google.com/a/case.edu/casemed-guidebook/information-by-specialty/dermatology
- Residency explorer https://www.residency explorer.org/
- NRMP Charting Outcomes: Characteristics of US MD Seniors Who Matched To Their Preferred Specialty: 2026 Main Residency Match https://www.nrmp.org/match-data/2026/07/charting-outcomes-characteristics-of-u-s-md-seniors-who-matched-to-their-preferred-specialty -2026-main-residency -match/

Emergency Medicine

Application System	ResidencyCAS
Away Rotations	At least 1 away rotation strongly recommended. No more then 2 aways.
Signals (2026-2027)	5 Non-tiered signals. Guidance is that home and away programs should not require a signal. However they recommended to check with each home and away program.
Letters of Recommendation	3 Letters with two from Emergency Medicine (EM) in the Standardized Letter(s) of Evaluation (SLOE) format. Specific letters required: One SLOE from each EM AI.
Interviews	• Interview Release Date: Unified Interview Release Date for Emergency Medicine for the 2026– 27 recruitment season was October 13, 2026 (Not all programs are following this date). • Timing of Interview: November-January, weekdays only. • Interview Format: All virtual.
Pre/Post Interview Communication	There is no national guidance.
Second Looks	Offered in February. Optional, mostly informal.

Links and Resources

- Council of Emergency Medicine Directors (CORD) Student Advising Guides https://www.cordem.org/resource/medical-student-and-advisor-resources/
- EMRA and CORD Student Advising Guide https://www.emra.org/msag
- ResidencyCAS https://help.liaisonedu.com/ResidencyCAS_Applicant_Help_Center/Starting_Your_ResidencyCAS_Application/Getting_Started_with_Your_ResidencyCAS_Application/01_Quick_Start_Guide
- Program Directors Association Guides for Residency Applicants 2026-2027https://cmss.org/program-directors-association-guides-for-residency-applicants/
- CWRU residency roadmap https://sites.google.com/a/case.edu/casemed-guidebook/information-by-specialty/emergency-medicine
- NRMP Charting Outcomes: Characteristics of US MD Seniors Who Matched To Their Preferred Specialty: 2026 Main Residency Match https://www.nrmp.org/match-data/2026/07/charting-outcomes-characteristics-of-u-s-md-seniors-who-matched-to-their-preferred-specialty-2026-main-residency-match/

Family Medicine

Application System	ERAS
Away Rotations	Optional. No specific number of aways required.
Signals (2026-2027)	5 Non-tiered signals. Signal both home and away rotation sites, check with program.
Letters of Recommendation	Usually 2-4 letters of recommendation. Individual Family Medicine programs may have different requirements for the number of Letter(s) of Recommendation (LORs) or by whom they should be authored. Please check with individual programs for their requirements for letters of recommendation.
Personal Statement	Check residency websites beforehand; Some residency programs want a personalized one specific to their program.
Supplemental Application	A few programs invite you to complete a supplemental application after the primary application is due.
Interviews	◆ Interview Release Date: Rolling interview release, starts in early October. ◆ Timing of Interview: Weekdays October - January are generally a half day. A few programs have options to interview on weekends. ◆ Interview Format: Most virtual, but a few programs only have in-person or hybrid options.
Pre/Post Interview Communication	**Pre:** Communication should be confined to application material updates. **Post:** The National Residency Match Program discourages post-interview communication between applicants and programs. If an applicant would like to send a thank you note, they are welcome to do so, but they should understand the Family Medicine program may not respond.
Second Looks	End of January to mid-February. Most programs say they lock their rank lists before second looks. Not required.

Links and Resources

- Program Directors Association Guides for Residency Applicants 2026-2027 https://cmss.org/program-directors-association-guides-for-residency -applicants/
- CWRU residency roadmap https://sites.google.com/a/case.edu/casemed-guidebook/information-by-specialty /family -medicine
- Residency explorer https://www.residency explorer.org/
- NRMP Charting Outcomes: Characteristics of US MD Seniors Who Matched To Their Preferred Specialty: 2026 Main Residency Match https://www.nrmp.org/match-data/2026/07/charting-outcomes-characteristics-of-u-s-md-seniors-who-matched-to-their-preferred-specialty -2026-main-residency -match/

General Surgery

Application System	ERAS
Away Rotations	Strongly recommend doing at least one.
Signals (2026-2027)	15 Non-tiered signals. Check with individual home/away programs if you need to signal them. This varies by program if they want you to or not. Official guidance is to signal home/away if they are preferred program.
Letters of Recommendation	3-4 letters with majority or all from surgeons (especially from general surgery or its subspecialties). Very few programs require a chair letter; Be sure to read the program's website carefully.
Interviews	◆ Interview Release Date: In 2026, the Association of Program Directors in Surgery recommended that programs release interview invitations between Oct 21-23 (Note: In 2025 not all programs followed this). ◆ Timing of Interview: Interviews take place November through January, some programs offer weekend dates but majority on weekdays (resident social typically the night before). ◆ Interview Format : Majority virtual, some in-person (particularly programs looking to see commitment from applicants).
Pre/Post Interview Communication	**Pre:** Applicants to surgical programs are encouraged to maintain professional and timely communication to programs in order to provide the most consistent recruitment process possible. If necessary to cancel an interview, timely and professional communication is expected with at least one-week notice. **Post:** Thank you letters or post-interview communication is acceptable but not required. (Would strongly recommend sending letter of intent to top program).
Second Looks	Offered by some programs, many emphasize that the second look dates are after rank lists are already submitted and will have no bearing on your rank. The majority of second looks are in February; recommend not having a clinical rotation then to make it easier for you to travel if you are interested in doing so.

Links and Resources

- Association of Program Directors in Surgery https://www.apds.org/recruitment-requirements
- Program Directors Association Guides for Residency Applicants 2026-2027 https://cmss.org/program-directors-association-guides-for-residency -applicants/
- CWRU residency roadmap https://sites.google.com/a/case.edu/casemed-guidebook/information-by-specialty /general-surgery
- Residency explorer https://www.residency explorer.org/
- NRMP Charting Outcomes: Characteristics of US MD Seniors Who Matched To Their Preferred Specialty: 2026 Main Residency Match https://www.nrmp.org/match-data/2026/07/charting-outcomes-characteristics-of-u-s-md-seniors-who-matched-to-their-preferred-specialty-2026-main-residency-match/

Internal Medicine

Application System	ERAS
Away Rotations	Optional. Not required however, more students are doing them.
Signals (2026-2027)	3 gold and 12 silver signals. Signal Away rotations. Signal Home institutions to be determined (last year CCF and UH did not require signals).
Letters of Recommendation	3-4 letters with at least one from Internal Medicine (IM) attending (most students acquire from Acting Internships) others optional. Letter(s) of Recommendation (LOR) required one IM Standardized Letter of Evaluation (SLOE) also called "Department of Medicine" or "Chair" LOR (most easily obtained from UH/VA Acting Internship). You can get "Armitage" letter from either UH or VA AI.
Interviews	• Interview Release Date: Rolling. Start Mid-October. Recommended to release initial invitations on Tuesdays and Fridays after 3 PM ET. • Timing of Interview: Interviews take place November through December with a few in January, weekdays only. • Interview Format: Virtual.
Pre/Post Interview Communication	**Pre:** None noted. **Post:** National guidance - applicants should not send thank you notes.
Second Looks	Some programs offered, most didn't. If offered, they were mostly in February. All programs that offered second looks stated that second looks were optional and would not have an on how applicants were ranked. IM participating in NRMP Voluntary Rank Order List (ROL) Lock Pilot, so rank lists will be locked before second looks.

Links and Resources

- Alliance for Academic Internal Medicine https://www.im.org/ume-gme/all-resources/recommendations-residency -recruitment
- Program Directors Association Guides for Residency Applicants 2026-2027 https://cmss.org/program-directors-association-guides-for-residency -applicants/
- CWRU residency roadmap https://sites.google.com/a/case.edu/casemed-guidebook/information-by-specialty /internal-medicine
- Residency explorer https://www.residency explorer.org/
- NRMP Charting Outcomes: Characteristics of US MD Seniors Who Matched To Their Preferred Specialty: 2026 Main Residency Match https://www.nrmp.org/match-data/2026/07/charting-outcomes-characteristics-of-u-s-md-seniors-who-matched-to-their-preferred-specialty -2026-main-residency -match/

Medicine-Pediatrics

Application System	ERAS
Away Rotations	Not recommended or required.
Signals (2026-2027)	5 signals National Guidance regarding signaling home and away rotations sites are program specific.
Letters of Recommendation	3-4 letters. Ideally letters include at least one from Peds and at least on from Internal Medicine (IM). Up to one from non IM/Peds/Med-Peds letter writer is fine. Preferences for or against department letters are program specific. Prefer letter writers who know you well over name/prestige.
Interviews	◆ Interview Release Date: Rolling, beginning 2 weeks after ERAS opens (some programs may invite early). ◆ Timing of Interview: November - January. ◆ Interview Format: Virtual.
Pre/Post Interview Communication	**Pre:** Pre-interview emails discouraged. **Post:** National guidance: Post interview communication discouraged unless it is: ◆ A thank you note (and this is considered optional). ◆ Specific follow-up questions from the interview day. ◆ Updates to an application (e.g., new publication, award). Letters of intent are discouraged. Programs are not expected to reply to such communications.
Second Looks	Yes, Optional. Programs are encouraged to lock their rank list before these second looks.

Links and Resources

- CWRU residency roadmap https://sites.google.com/a/case.edu/casemed-guidebook/information-by-specialty/med-peds
- Residency explorer https://www.residencyexplorer.org/
- NRMP Charting Outcomes: Characteristics of US MD Seniors Who Matched To Their Preferred Specialty: 2026 Main Residency Match https://www.nrmp.org/match-data/2026/07/charting-outcomes-characteristics-of-u-s-md-seniors-who-matched-to-their-preferred-specialty-2026-main-residency-match/

Neurology

Application System	ERAS
Away Rotations	Not required but can help if you have a strong geographical preference.
Signals (2026-2027)	8 non-tiered signals. No National Guidelines about signaling home/away: ask individual programs.
Letters of Recommendation	3-4 letters, at least one from a neurologist. Some prelim programs require 1 Internal Medicine (IM) Standardized Letter(s) of Evaluation (SLOE) (department letter) or IM recommendation letter.
Interviews	• Interview Release Date: Early to mid-October - November. • Timing of Interview: Scheduling options from mid-October through the end of January. Weekdays. Some programs lumped prelim interview and neuro interview into 1-2 days during the week. • Interview Format: All virtual.
Pre/Post Interview Communication	**Post:** Overall, limited program to applicant communication, but programs were very responsive and receptive to thank you letters.
Second Looks	Most programs offered second looks in late January/early to mid-February post rank list submission (at least internally rank list submission per the program).

Links and Resources

- American Academy of Neurology https://www.aan.com/tools-resources/program-director-resources
- Program Directors Association Guides for Residency Applicants 2026-2027 https://cmss.org/program-directors-association-guides-for-residency-applicants/
- CWRU Residency Roadmap https://sites.google.com/a/case.edu/casemed-guidebook/information-by-specialty/neurology
- Residency Explorer https://www.residencyexplorer.org/
- NRMP Charting Outcomes: Characteristics of US MD Seniors Who Matched To Their Preferred Specialty: 2026 Main Residency Match https://www.nrmp.org/match-data/2026/07/charting-outcomes-characteristics-of-u-s-md-seniors-who-matched-to-their-preferred-specialty-2026-main-residency-match/

Neurological Surgery

Application System	ERAS
Away Rotations	Recommended to do 1 home Acting Internship and 2-3 away. Aways are strongly recommended however, do not do more than 3.
Signals (2026-2027)	25 non-tiered signals. No National Guidelines about signaling home/away, ask individual programs.
Letters of Recommendation	3 Letters including one Society of Neurological Surgeons (SNS) Standard Letter(s) of Evaluation (SLOE) from home program and one SNS Standard Letter(s) of Recommendation (SLOR) from away rotation.
Supplemental Questions (from 2026-2027) *1000 character limit per question	• Describe a time when you had to make a quick decision. What did you consider when making the decision? Who did you consult or not and why? • Describe a specific situation where you received negative feedback about your performance. How did you adjust your behavior? What did you learn from this situation? • Describe a specific situation when your workload was overwhelming. What specific actions did you take to manage your workload? What was the outcome?
Personal Statement	For the 2026-2027 application season, applicants were asked to follow this prompt for their personal statement: *Neurosurgery is an arduous but rewarding career track. Describe your vision for your future career as a neurosurgeon. Discuss the challenges you foresee for your career as a neurosurgeon. Discuss the competencies and experiences you have had that prepare you for that future career and to face those challenges effectively.*
Interviews	• Interview Release Date: Fridays in October at/after 4:00 PM EST. Applicants have until Sunday to schedule and are guaranteed a spot (although choice of date will be first come first served). • Timing of Interview: Interviews take place end of October through January both weekend and weekdays. • Interview Format: Vast majority were in-person with a few virtual interviews. https://www.societyns.org/medical-students/interview-dates
Pre/Post Interview Communication	**Pre/Post:** Discouraged.
Second Looks	Optional second looks for programs that interviewed virtually (after last interview date) will not impact ranking.

Neurological Surgery

(Continued)

Links and Resources

- The Society of Neurological Surgeons https://www.societyns.org/medical-students/interview-dates
- Program Directors Association Guides for Residency Applicants 2026-2027 https://cmss.org/program-directors-association-guides-for-residency-applicants/
- CWRU Residency Roadmap https://sites.google.com/a/case.edu/casemed-guidebook/information-by-specialty/neurological-surgery
- Residency Explorer https://www.residencyexplorer.org/
- NRMP Charting Outcomes: Characteristics of US MD Seniors Who Matched To Their Preferred Specialty: 2026 Main Residency Match https://www.nrmp.org/match-data/2026/07/charting-outcomes-characteristics-of-u-s-md-seniors-who-matched-to-their-preferred-specialty-2026-main-residency-match/

Obstetrics & Gynecology

Application System	ResidencyCAS
Away Rotations	Aways rotations are optional and not required. They can be helpful if there is a particular program you are interested in, but can be detrimental if you do not perform well. People will typically do one gynecology AI and one obstetrics AI.
Signals (2026-2027)	3 gold and 15 silver signals. Signal home and aways if they are preferred programs.
Letters of Recommendation	4 letters total - 1 Standardized Letter(s) of Evaluation (SLOE) plus 2-3 additional letters. SLOE can replace chair letter or traditional/narrative letter. Not all programs require it, but most do. You can get a chair letter from UH or CCF
Interviews	• Interview Release Date: October 27, 2026 • Timing of Interview: APGO has an interview start date, usually the first Monday of November. Exception: Home programs sometimes interview before the stated date. The majority of interview are in November and December some in January with very few programs interviewing in February. • Interviews are on weekdays with socials the night before. • Interview Format - Virtual.
Pre/Post Interview Communication	**Pre/Post:** Most programs discourage post-interview communication in general.
Second Looks	A few programs offer a second look. They were either in-person or virtual, depending on the program. The programs said they do not impact rank and are truly options.

Links and Resources

- Summary of Guidelines for the OB/GYN 2026-2027 Application Cycle. https://cdn.ymaws.com/apgo.org/resource/resmgr/rrr/26-27_Application_Cycle_Guid.pdf
- Residency CAS Applicant Quick Start Guide. https://help.liaisonedu.com/ResidencyCAS_Applicant_Help_Center/Starting_Your_ResidencyCAS_Application/Getting_Started_with_Your_ResidencyCAS_Application/01_Quick_Start_Guide
- Program Directors Association Guides for Residency Applicants 2026-2027
- https://cmss.org/program-directors-association-guides-for-residency -applicants/
- CWRU residency roadmap https://sites.google.com/a/case.edu/casemed-guidebook/information-by-specialty /obstetrics-and-gynecology
- NRMP Charting Outcomes: Characteristics of US MD Seniors Who Matched To Their Preferred Specialty: 2026 Main Residency Match https://www.nrmp.org/match-data/2026/07/charting-outcomes-characteristics-of-u-s-md-seniors-who-matched-to-their-preferred-specialty -2026-main-residency -match/

Ophthalmology

Application System	SF Match
Away Rotations	2+ away rotations are strongly recommended.
Signals (2026-2027)	15 signals, same weight (not gold/silver). National Guidelines Recommend signaling home and away rotations.
Letters of Recommendation	3 letters are needed. At least 2 Ophtho, and the third can be Ophtho or from any field e.g. IM/Surg etc.

Personal Statement	Instead of a personal statement the following is required
	• Autobiographical statement (Approx 500 words) narrative focusing on your unique path to ophthalmology, personal story and future aspirations
	• Choose 2 short answer questions (Approx 250 words each)
	  ◦ **Resilience:** Describe a situation in your personal or professional life where you have demonstrated resilience and what it means to you.
	  ◦ **Mentorship**: Describe an important mentor and discuss their impact on your development.
	  ◦ **Diversity** : Discuss how you will add diversity to your residency class, including background, experiences and/or perspectives.
	  ◦ **Core Values**: Outline three core values you would use to build an ophthalmology residency program.

Interviews	• Interview Release Date(s): 2 official dates, October 13th and October 20th. • Timing of Interviews: October 27th through December 19th (2025-2026). Interview cap of 15 can only hold 15 interviews, if you get more offers than that then you will need to give up one to take another interview. • Interview Format - Virtual
Pre/Post Interview Communication	**Pre/Post:** Most programs encourage post interview communication if there were specific things you connected with interviewers. If they do not want you to send post interview communication, they will explicitly tell you. Should send Letter of Interest to your #1 program, do not send this to multiple programs.
Second Looks	Ophthalmology programs submit their rank list (beginning of January) before these second looks (early-mid Jan), no impact on rank list. Not all programs have it. They are all in-person, 4 hours, include facility tour/resident Q&A

Ophthalmology

(Continued)

Links and Resources

- Program Directors Association Guides for Residency Applicants 2026-2027 https://cmss.org/program-directors-association-guides-for-residency-applicants/
- CWRU residency roadmap https://sites.google.com/a/case.edu/casemed-guidebook/information-by-specialty/ophthalmology
- NRMP Charting Outcomes: Characteristics of US MD Seniors Who Matched To Their Preferred Specialty: 2026 Main Residency Match https://www.nrmp.org/match-data/2026/07/charting-outcomes-characteristics-of-u-s-md-seniors-who-matched-to-their-preferred-specialty-2026-main-residency-match/

Orthopedic Surgery

Application System	ERAS
Away Rotations	Strongly recommended to do at least one, no more than three (Per AOA / CORD, no more then four total home/away).
Signals (2026-2027)	30 signals. Signal home/away if they are preferred programs. Orthopedics does not use geographic preferences.
Letters of Recommendation	3-4 letters required. At least two should be from the field of orthopaedic surgery (many say all unless research letter)**.** These can be from your home institution and/or an institution where you completed an away rotation. Specialty specific electronic standardized letter(s) of recommendation (eSLOR) are encouraged.
Interviews	• Interview Release Date: November 16, 2026. • Timing of Interviews: December - February. • Interview Format - In Person.
Pre/Post Interview Communication	**Pre/Post:** No national guidance given.
Second Looks	Only allowed after the Rank Order List has been submitted and certified by the Program. This should not affect Rank Order decision.

Links and Resources

- Program Directors Association Guides for Residency Applicants 2026-2027 https://cmss.org/program-directors-association-guides-for-residency-applicants/
- CWRU residency roadmap https://sites.google.com/a/case.edu/casemed-guidebook/information-by-specialty/orthopedic-surgery
- Residency explorer https://www.residencyexplorer.org/
- NRMP Charting Outcomes: Characteristics of US MD Seniors Who Matched To Their Preferred Specialty: 2026 Main Residency Match https://www.nrmp.org/match-data/2026/07/charting-outcomes-characteristics-of-u-s-md-seniors-who-matched-to-their-preferred-specialty-2026-main-residency-match/

Otolaryngology

Application System	ERAS
Away Rotations	Most CWRU students will do both the UH and CCF rotations and 2-3 additional away rotations.
Signals (2026-2027)	25 non-tiered signals. Signal home/away if those are preferred.
Letters of Recommendation	3-4 letters recommended. It is recommended that all letters be from Otolaryngologists.
Interviews	• Interview Release Date: Uniform Interview Release Date November 5, 2026. • Timing of Interview: Interviews are conducted late November through the end of January. • Interview Format - All in person. Some away rotations will offer virtual interviews for rotators.
Pre/Post Interview Communication	**Pre/Post:** No specialty specific guidelines listed for pre/post interview communications.
Second Looks	No second look offers. You will get a good "first look" since nearly all interviews are held in person.

Links and Resources

- Program Directors Association Guides for Residency Applicants 2026-2027 https://cmss.org/program-directors-association-guides-for-residency-applicants/
- CWRU residency roadmap https://sites.google.com/a/case.edu/casemed-guidebook/information-by-specialty/otolaryngology
- Residency explorer https://www.residencyexplorer.org/
- NRMP Charting Outcomes: Characteristics of US MD Seniors Who Matched To Their Preferred Specialty: 2026 Main Residency Match https://www.nrmp.org/match-data/2026/07/charting-outcomes-characteristics-of-u-s-md-seniors-who-matched-to-their-preferred-specialty-2026-main-residency-match/

Pathology

Application System	ERAS
Away Rotations	Not necessary or required per local guidance. National Guidelines recommend at least one away rotation.
Signals (2026-2027)	5 non-tiered signals. No guidance signaling home and away programs.
Letters of Recommendation	3-4 letters recommended with at least one from a pathologist.
Interviews	• Interview Release Date: Rolling starting October 15th, 2026. • Timing of Interviews: October through February. • Interview Format - Virtual.
Pre/Post Interview Communication	**Pre/Post:** Refer to the National Residency Match Program (NRMP) code of conduct.
Second Looks	To be determined by individual programs. Optional to applicants. Programs are required to submit their Rank Order list in advance.

Links and Resources

- Program Directors Association Guides for Residency Applicants 2026-2027 https://cmss.org/program-directors-association-guides-for-residency-applicants/
- CWRU residency roadmap https://sites.google.com/a/case.edu/casemed-guidebook/information-by-specialty/pathology
- Residency explorer https://www.residencyexplorer.org/
- NRMP Charting Outcomes: Characteristics of US MD Seniors Who Matched To Their Preferred Specialty: 2026 Main Residency Match https://www.nrmp.org/match-data/2026/07/charting-outcomes-characteristics-of-u-s-md-seniors-who-matched-to-their-preferred-specialty-2026-main-residency-match/

Pediatrics

Application System	ERAS
Away Rotations	Optional, aways not required.
Signals (2026-2027)	5 non-tiered signals. National guidance recommends signals to home/away if they are in top 5 programs.
Letters of Recommendation	3-4 letters with at least one from pediatrics. Specific letters required: It is strongly recommended getting a department letter from Dr. Michael Dell, Vice Chair of Education at Rainbow (not mandatory).
Interviews	• Interview Release Date: Earliest release date was October 5th then rolling. • Timing of Interviews: October -January. • Interview Format - Virtual.
Pre/Post Interview Communication	**Pre/Post:** We discourage post-interview communication unless it is: • A thank you note (and this is considered optional). • Specific follow-up questions from the interview day. • Updates to an application (e.g., new publication, award). Letters of intent are not expected and if sent, should only be sent to one program. Programs are not expected to reply to such communications.
Second Looks	Optional. Pediatrics is participating in the National Resident Matching Program (NRMP) voluntary rank order list lock pilot

Links and Resources

- Association of Pediatric Program Directors https://www.appd.org/resources-programs/recruitment/
- Program Directors Association Guides for Residency Applicants 2026-2027 https://cmss.org/program-directors-association-guides-for-residency-applicants/
- CWRU residency roadmap https://sites.google.com/a/case.edu/casemed-guidebook/information-by-specialty/pediatrics
- Residency explorer https://www.residencyexplorer.org/
- NRMP Charting Outcomes: Characteristics of US MD Seniors Who Matched To Their Preferred Specialty: 2026 Main Residency Match https://www.nrmp.org/match-data/2026/07/charting-outcomes-characteristics-of-u-s-md-seniors-who-matched-to-their-preferred-specialty-2026-main-residency-match/

Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation

Application System	ERAS
Away Rotations	Not required but many students will do 1-2.
Signals (2026-2027)	20-non tiered signals. Signal home/away if they are preferred programs.
Letters of Recommendation	3-4 Letters with at least one from PM&R faculty. Applicants are strongly suggested to have a PM&R Standardized Letter of Evaluation (SLOE) submitted. Information for the PM&R SLOE can be found on the Association of Academic Physiatrists' (AAP) website. Other narrative letters of recommendation, from PM&R faculty or other specialties, remain acceptable.
Interviews	◆ Interview Release Date: Rolling. ◆ Timing of Interviews: Late October through January (many were later). ◆ Interview Format - Both in person and virtual, it is program dependent.

Links and Resources

- Association of Academic Physiatrists https://www.physiatry.org/resource/aap-position-statement-on-resident-recruitment/
- Program Directors Association Guides for Residency Applicants 2026-2027 https://cmss.org/program-directors-association-guides-for-residency-applicants/
- CWRU residency roadmap https://sites.google.com/a/case.edu/casemed-guidebook/information-by-specialty/physical-medicine-rehabilitation
- Residency explorer https://www.residencyexplorer.org/
- NRMP Charting Outcomes: Characteristics of US MD Seniors Who Matched To Their Preferred Specialty: 2026 Main Residency Match https://www.nrmp.org/match-data/2026/07/charting-outcomes-characteristics-of-u-s-md-seniors-who-matched-to-their-preferred-specialty-2026-main-residency-match/

Plastic Surgery - Integrated

Application System	ERAS 2027 Pilot features: • A pricing package pilot - see MyERAS for details. • A program signal explanation to accompany each signal. • Specialty specific questions.
Away Rotations	At least one strongly recommended. National guidance: Students with a home rotation are encouraged to do home AI and no more than two aways.
Signals (2026-2027)	20 non-tiered signals (signal home and away programs if preferred). Geographic preferences not used.
Supplemental Questions (from 2026-2027) *500 character limit per question	• Describe a specific situation when a team you were on had to collaborate to achieve an outcome and there was a disagreement. How did you specifically contribute to the solution? • Describe a specific situation where you experienced a setback. How did you overcome this challenge? • Describe a time when you had to make an important decision quickly. What did you consider when making the decision?
Letters of Recommendation	3-4 letters with at least two from plastic surgeons. All three required letters should use Standardized Letter of Evaluation (SLOE) format.
Interviews	• Interview Release Date: Uniform Release Date November 6th, 2026. • Interview Date: Listed by program and whether virtual or in person https://aceplasticsurgeons.org/interview-dates/ • Interview Format: Most in person, some virtual or hybrid.
Pre/Post Interview Communication	**Pre:** Applicants who are interested in a program may find better results by asking a trusted mentor to reach out on their behalf. **Post:** Applicants who are interested in a program may find better results by asking a trusted mentor to reach out on their behalf.
Second Looks	Will not affect rank list.

Plastic Surgery - Integrated

(Continued)

Links and Resources

- 2027 Match Plastic Surgery Residency Recommendation Form: Integrated Applicant https://aceplasticsurgeons.org/multimedia/files/2025/Integrated-Cover-Letter-Form-ACPS25-Fillable.pdf
- American Council of Educators in Plastic Surgery https://aceplasticsurgeons.org/Resources/?dID=1
- Program Directors Association Guides for Residency Applicants 2026-2027 https://cmss.org/program-directors-association-guides-for-residency-applicants/
- CWRU residency roadmap https://sites.google.com/a/case.edu/casemed-guidebook/information-by-specialty/plastic-surgery
- Residency explorer https://www.residencyexplorer.org/
- NRMP Charting Outcomes: Characteristics of US MD Seniors Who Matched To Their Preferred Specialty: 2026 Main Residency Match https://www.nrmp.org/match-data/2026/07/charting-outcomes-characteristics-of-u-s-md-seniors-who-matched-to-their-preferred-specialty-2026-main-residency-match/

Psychiatry

Application System	ERAS
Away Rotations	Not required.
Signals (2026-2027)	10 non-tiered signals. Signal home and away programs if they are preferred.
Letters of Recommendation	3-4 Letters with at least one from psychiatry, one from primary care also good (IM or FM elective/rotation/AI).
Interviews	• Interview Release Date: September through January (front loaded). • Timing of Interviews: October through February (front loaded). • Interview Format - Virtual.
Pre/Post Interview Communication	**Pre:** Only for extenuating circumstances (couples match). **Post:** None other than simple thank you note.
Second Looks	Scheduled after submission of rank lists.

Links and Resources

- A Roadmap to Psychiatric Residency https://www.psychiatry.org/getmedia/b7007db1-b815-45fa-93bd-1f1eaf3dff99/APA-Roadmap-to-Psychiatric-Residency.pdf
- Program Directors Association Guides for Residency Applicants 2026-2027 https://cmss.org/program-directors-association-guides-for-residency-applicants/
- CWRU residency roadmap https://sites.google.com/a/case.edu/casemed-guidebook/information-by-specialty/psychiatry
- Residency explorer https://www.residencyexplorer.org/
- NRMP Charting Outcomes: Characteristics of US MD Seniors Who Matched To Their Preferred Specialty: 2026 Main Residency Match https://www.nrmp.org/match-data/2026/07/charting-outcomes-characteristics-of-u-s-md-seniors-who-matched-to-their-preferred-specialty-2026-main-residency-match/

Radiation Oncology

Application System	ERAS
Away Rotations	Away rotations highly recommended as Rad Onc is a small field. Would recommend doing at least 3 total rotations.
Signals (2026-2027)	4 non-tiered signals. Signal explanations required.
Letters of Recommendation	# of letters is program specific, pay attention to websites. At least one rad onc letter required. Specific letters required: • Standardized Letter of Evaluation (SLOE) or chair or other type letter not necessarily required; nice to have one of your letters be written as a "department letter" and/or one from a PD (could combine these. • Note also need letters for Prelim or Transition Year: Department Letter of Recommendation (LOR) medicine or surgery, so do a pre ERAS MED or SURG AI before applying to get departmental LOR.
Interviews	• Interview Release Date: No central release date, interview sent October to December. • Timing of Interviews: Mid November through end of January. • Interview Format - 50/50 in person and virtual. Most places cover hotel costs for one night.
Pre/Post Interview Communication	**Pre/Post:** Each program is different. Most do not want post-interview communication. Letters of interest are ok pre-interview. Letters of intent are not ok for all places so make sure to ask.
Second Looks	Places with virtual interviews offer second looks, most being from February. This is said not to impact rank list .

Links and Resources

- Program Directors Association Guides for Residency Applicants 2026-2027 https://cmss.org/program-directors-association-guides-for-residency-applicants/
- CWRU residency roadmap https://sites.google.com/a/case.edu/casemed-guidebook/information-by-specialty/radiation-oncology
- Residency explorer https://www.residencyexplorer.org/
- NRMP Charting Outcomes: Characteristics of US MD Seniors Who Matched To Their Preferred Specialty: 2026 Main Residency Match https://www.nrmp.org/match-data/2026/07/charting-outcomes-characteristics-of-u-s-md-seniors-who-matched-to-their-preferred-specialty-2026-main-residency-match/

Radiology Diagnostic

Application System	ERAS
Away Rotations	Away rotations are not expected.
Signals (2026-2027)	6 gold, 9 silver. Signal Home/Away if preferred.
Letters of Recommendation	3 letters, at least one from a diagnostic radiologist; however radiology programs want to see at least one clinical letter NOT from a radiologist.
Interviews	• Interview Release Date: No universal release date/time; majority of interview invites go out between end of September and November (some in December). • Timing of Interviews: October through January. • Interview Format Virtual and some may be in-person.
Pre/Post Interview Communication	**Pre/Post:** No specialty specific guidance.
Second Looks	No specialty wide guidance regarding second looks. Refer to individual programs for additional information. Programs are “generally recommended to lock ranking prior to any second look”.

Links and Resources

- Program Directors Association Guides for Residency Applicants 2026-2027 https://cmss.org/program-directors-association-guides-for-residency-applicants/
- CWRU residency roadmap https://sites.google.com/a/case.edu/casemed-guidebook/information-by-specialty/radiology-diagnostic
- Residency explorer https://www.residencyexplorer.org/
- NRMP Charting Outcomes: Characteristics of US MD Seniors Who Matched To Their Preferred Specialty: 2026 Main Residency Match https://www.nrmp.org/match-data/2026/07/charting-outcomes-characteristics-of-u-s-md-seniors-who-matched-to-their-preferred-specialty-2026-main-residency-match/

Radiology Interventional

Application System	ERAS
Away Rotations	Away rotations not required.
Signals (2026-2027)	8 non-tiered signals. Signal home/away if preferred programs.
Letters of Recommendation	3-4 Letters, at least one from interventional radiology.
Interviews	◆ Interview Release Date: Rolling starting in September. ◆ Timing of Interview: October through January. ◆ Interview Format: Majority virtual.
Pre/Post Interview Communication	**Pre/Post:** No specialty specific guidance.
Second Looks	No specialty wide guidance regarding second looks. Refer to individual programs for additional information. Programs are "generally recommended to lock ranking prior to any second look".

Links and Resources

- Program Directors Association Guides for Residency Applicants 2026-2027 https://cmss.org/program-directors-association-guides-for-residency-applicants/
- CWRU residency roadmap https://sites.google.com/a/case.edu/casemed-guidebook/information-by-specialty/radiology-interventional
- Residency explorer https://www.residencyexplorer.org/
- NRMP Charting Outcomes: Characteristics of US MD Seniors Who Matched To Their Preferred Specialty: 2026 Main Residency Match https://www.nrmp.org/match-data/2026/07/charting-outcomes-characteristics-of-u-s-md-seniors-who-matched-to-their-preferred-specialty-2026-main-residency-match/

Thoracic Surgery

(Integrated 6 year cardiothoracic surgery Programs)

Application System	ERAS
Away Rotations	2-3 away rotations recommended.
Signals (2026-2027)	4 signals. No specialty guidance given about signaling home/away, ask programs.
Letters of Recommendation	3-4 Letters, prioritize letters from CT surgeons. Some programs do not accept letters from general surgeons.
Interviews	• Uniform Interview Release Date: October 20, 2026. • Timing of Interviews: Take place in late November through January. • Interview Format: Mix of in-person and virtual interviews.
Pre/Post Interview Communication	**Pre/Post:** No specialty specific guidance.
Second Looks	Some programs offer second looks; consult each program for their policy on whether it will affect ranking.

Links and Resources

- Cardiothoracic Residency Application Process for Medical Students https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hcrhg6QkFyk
- TSMA Residency Interview Advice Series on YouTube https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLebFjn5nlJmyNqdHBXlaz3BCyXeoNFgTM
- Thoracic Surgery Medical Student Association https://cmss.org/program-directors-association-guides-for-residency-applicants/
- Program Directors Association Guides for Residency Applicants 2026-2027 https://cmss.org/program-directors-association-guides-for-residency-applicants/
- CWRU residency roadmap https://sites.google.com/a/case.edu/casemed-guidebook/home
- Residency explorer https://www.residencyexplorer.org/
- NRMP Charting Outcomes: Characteristics of US MD Seniors Who Matched To Their Preferred Specialty: 2026 Main Residency Match https://www.nrmp.org/match-data/2026/07/charting-outcomes-characteristics-of-u-s-md-seniors-who-matched-to-their-preferred-specialty-2026-main-residency-match/

Urology

Application System	ERAS
Away Rotations	1-3 away rotations are strongly recommended.
Signals (2026-2027)	30 signals. Signal home and away programs if they are preferred, Urology match is early (February 1, 2027).
Letters of Recommendation	Specialty specific standardized letter(s) of evaluations (SLOE). At least 2 required from Urologists.
Interviews	◆ Interview Release Date: Universal release dates October 23, 26, and 27, 2026. ◆ Timing of Interview: End of October through December. Rank list due end of December (2027 dates TBD). ◆ Interview Format: Virtual, in-person, hybrid.
Pre/Post Interview Communication	**Pre:** Program director guide recommends no letter of interest prior to receiving an interview from either applicant or mentor on their behalf. **Post**: Thank you or letter of interest are welcome but may not influence rank list/interview outcomes.
Second Looks	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.

Links and Resources

- Program Directors Association Guides for Residency Applicants 2026-2027 https://cmss.org/program-directors-association-guides-for-residency-applicants/
- CWRU residency roadmap https://sites.google.com/a/case.edu/casemed-guidebook/information-by-specialty/urology
- Residency explorer https://www.residencyexplorer.org/
- NRMP Charting Outcomes: Characteristics of US MD Seniors Who Matched To Their Preferred Specialty: 2026 Main Residency Match https://www.nrmp.org/match-data/2026/07/charting-outcomes-characteristics-of-u-s-md-seniors-who-matched-to-their-preferred-specialty-2026-main-residency-match/

Vascular Surgery

Application System	ERAS
Away Rotations	Strongly recommended, at least one away rotation.
Signals (2026-2027)	3 gold, 12 silver. They did not use signals in 2025-2026. Signal home and away programs if preferred.
Letters of Recommendation	3-4 Letters with at least one from within specialty.
Interviews	◆ Interview Release Date: October 15th, 2026 uniform release date. ◆ Timing of Interview: Most programs interview on 2-3 days only. ◆ Interview Format: National recommendations to return to in-person for 2026-2027, programs that do virtual encouraged to offer post-rank-lock second look.
Pre/Post Interview Communication	**Pre/Post:** No specialty specific guidance.
Second Looks	Participating in voluntary rank order list lock deadline February 8, 2027.

Links and Resources

- Association of Program Directors in Vascular Surgery Guidance Statement https://vascular.org/sites/default/files/2026-05/APDVS_Guidance_2026-27.pdf
- Program Directors Association Guides for Residency Applicants 2026-2027 https://cmss.org/program-directors-association-guides-for-residency-applicants/
- CWRU residency roadmap https://sites.google.com/a/case.edu/casemed-guidebook/information-by-specialty/vascular-surgery
- Residency explorer https://www.residencyexplorer.org/
- NRMP Charting Outcomes: Characteristics of US MD Seniors Who Matched To Their Preferred Specialty: 2026 Main Residency Match https://www.nrmp.org/match-data/2026/07/charting-outcomes-characteristics-of-u-s-md-seniors-who-matched-to-their-preferred-specialty-2026-main-residency-match/