



LIBERTY
UNIVERSITY | COLLEGE of
OSTEOPATHIC
MEDICINE

OFFICE OF CLINICAL ROTATIONS

Residency Application Guide

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Disclaimer	3
ERAS	4
Applying to Residency	7
The Match	9
Contact Information	

Introduction

Liberty University College of Osteopathic Medicine (LUCOM) seeks to educate osteopathic physicians instilled with Christian values who are holistic, self-directed, life-long learners, who also demonstrate a servant's heart. As the process of residency placement approaches, this guide will help the student navigate through these complex steps to advance the mission of the university and work towards the student's ultimate goals.

Disclaimer

The dates included in this document are reflective of the 2018-2019 match season. This document will be updated annually as new dates become available.

Be reminded that this document is *not* a primary source and students should *not* rely solely on these dates. It is important to consult timelines and calendars available on VSAS, ERAS, and any matching service websites for the most accurate information so that no deadlines are missed.

Also note, the residency application process is primarily student driven, with support from LUCOM where appropriate. It is the student's responsibility to seek out residency programs and be aware of program specific deadlines and requirements.

ERAS

ERAS is the AAMC's Electronic Residency Application Service. This program is used by most residency and fellowship programs across the United States. Students should visit program websites to learn about specific application requirements, including whether or not ERAS is used.

This service houses the application, personal statement, student photo, COMLEX and USMLE scores, transcripts, MSPE (medical student performance evaluation or "Dean's letter"), and all letters of recommendation (LoRs). ERAS allows the student, the medical school and the residency program all to access application materials through one central portal.

In the fall of the OMS-III year, students will be given limited access to ERAS. This will require an account with AAMC. Students should use the same account from their medical school applications. With this limited access, students can begin uploading personal information and generate Letter of Recommendation (LoR) Request Forms. LoR guidelines can be found in more detail further in this document.

Fully access to ERAS will be granted at the start of the following season. At this time, the student will be able to complete and submit residency applications, including personal statement, COMLEX and USMLE transcripts, and pay associated fees. Once the student's application has been certified and submitted, no changes can be made, except for updates to personal information.

Residency programs begin accepting applications and supporting documents in September. ERAS does not set residency program application deadlines or requirements, and the student should research this on program websites to find specific details.

ERAS provides online assistance with the *ERAS Residency Application Checklist* and the *MyERAS Residency User Guide* to aid the student through the entire process. There is also an ERAS HelpDesk available to assist the student with technical needs and inquiries. LUCOM is not responsible for support in this process, but the Office of Clinical Rotations may offer additional support after the student applicant has consulted these resources.

Personal Statement

The personal statement is one of the most important items considered by program directors when identifying interview candidates. It is recommended that the student begin writing his or her personal statement between three and four months before applying for residency. ERAS allows students to create multiple personal statements for students applying to multiple specialties. The student is responsible for assigning the correct personal statement to the corresponding application.

The personal statement is a student's opportunity to stand out from other qualified applicants. A student should communicate who he/she is, and why he/she is unique. This is where students should communicate passion for a specialty, describe specific experiences, and paint a picture to interviewers so they want to know more. A personal statement that stands out will convey a student's excitement for a specialty, and awareness for specific aspects of a program.

Good writing is also key to a good personal statement. The poor quality of an applicant's writing

skills can instantly turn a program director off, and be reason enough to reject a potential interviewee.

Medical Student Performance Evaluation

The medical student performance evaluation (MSPE), commonly referred to as the “Dean’s Letter” is a document prepared by LUCOM in accordance with AAMC guidelines to provide program directors with a well-rounded assessment of the student’s performance and professional attributes. This includes identifying information, noteworthy characteristics, academic history, academic progress, a summary and medical school information.

The noteworthy characteristics section includes a brief description of up to three achievements or professional activities to be selected by the student. Academic history includes information on matriculation and expected graduation dates, explanation of any extensions in the student’s academic progress, information on violations of medical school policy, and information on coursework the student was required to repeat/remediate. Academic progress summarizes the student’s academic progress in both preclinical/basic science courses as well as core/elective clinical rotations. This section also includes narrative assessments from faculty evaluations not edited for content. The summary assesses the student’s comparative performance relative to his or her peers. Medical school information includes characteristics of the COM’s educational program.

The student will have the opportunity to review their MSPE for accuracy before it is released to programs through ERAS. The MSPE becomes available to programs on October 1.

Student support for the MSPE is provided by the Office of Clinical Rotations.

Letters of Recommendation

Letters of recommendation (LoRs) have become one of the most important factors determining residency placement, second only to board scores.

Process:

Applicants must first add and confirm a LoR author in the ERAS Letter of Recommendation Portal (LoRP). The system will then generate a customized Letter Request Form with a unique pin. At this time, ERAS will give the student the option whether or not to waive his or her right to view individual letters. It is recommended that students do not

view letters submitted to programs. The ERAS generated form is then given to the author via email, mail, fax, or in person. For the sake of authenticity, ERAS requires that all letters be uploaded directly by the author in the LoRP, which will ask for the pin found on the Letter Request Form. Authors will need an AAMC account to submit a letter through the LoRP.

Most residency programs require a minimum of three LoRs. Four is the maximum number of letters that may be submitted to one program. ERAS allows the student to have an unlimited number of letters housed on the site. The student is responsible for assigning the correct LoR(s) to the corresponding application. LoRs should be uploaded by late spring through summer, towards the end of the OMS-III year. It is recommended that the student allow the author at least three to four weeks to write the letter.

Residency program directors commonly agree that LoRs from physicians within their specialty, who have worked with the applicant clinically, that are exceptionally positive are the most beneficial for students seeking placement within that program. It is also common for clinical chairs from educational institutions to write LoRs for students seeking placement within a particular specialty. It is not recommended to ask residents to write LoRs. The student should heavily consider these factors when asking individuals to author LoRs.

Students are given the option to waive their right to see LoRs. It is *strongly* recommended that students do waive this right.

ERAS also allows the option to import LoRs for applicants who have certified and submitted an application in a prior season. Students reapplying for residency in a new season can import all application data and associated LoRs from their most recent application into the current season.

Exam Transcripts

Students must authorize the release of all NBME and NBOME transcripts, and assign them to the programs he or she designates based on program requirements and benefit to a student's application. Once a student has released his or her COMLEX and/or USMLE transcript, chosen programs to assign it to, and paid associated fees, ERAS will send requests to NBOME and/or NBME. While these requests are usually processed same day, it can take as many as five business days before scores are made available to programs.

Applying to Residency

Choosing a specialty

When choosing how many/which programs to apply to, it is important for the student to first perform an honest self-assessment of his or her qualifications. It is important that the student creates realistic expectations when applying for residency programs. This requires that the student be open to possibilities, consider interests, skills and experiences. The student should compare his or her qualifications/board scores with the competitiveness of the program when considering application.

It is recommended that the student narrow down his or her desired specialty by early spring of the OMS-III year to start researching and planning audition rotations for that fall.

The number of programs the student should apply for is dependent on several variables including competitiveness of a specialty, competitiveness of the applicant, and interpersonal/interviewing skills. It is ideal for the student to work towards a minimum of eight interviews. To accomplish this the student may need to apply to 20 or more programs.

Audition Rotations

During the fall semester of the OMS-IV year, the student will spend elective time at clinical sites with residencies he or she may wish to apply to. These rotations are the best way to find out what a program is really like, and are very beneficial to determine whether a student's needs and goals will be met. Popular and competitive specialty rotations typically fill up months in advance, so it is advised that the student begin planning his or her auditions within the winter/spring of the OMS-III year. As with all away electives, the establishment of audition rotations is solely the responsibility of the student.

The Visiting Student Application Service (VSAS) is an important tool for students in the planning of his or her away elective rotations. This AAMC application is designed to make it easier for medical students to apply for elective rotations. Be mindful that not all hospitals that a student wishes to rotate at will be found using this service. It is the responsibility of the student to contact the appropriate staff at a hospital to apply or schedule an away elective rotation.

Interviewing

The interview is an important factor in the evaluation process as it allows program directors to assess how you would fit into their program. This is also an important step for an applicant in determining whether personal goals and expectations will be met in a program. The interview process begins after programs have received all applications and supplemental materials, and usually occurs between October and January of the OMS-IV year.

Each residency program director will carry a unique perspective on what factors are most important when considering a candidate for an interview. However, a nationwide poll of program

directors ranked COMLEX Level 1/USMLE Step 1 scores as the most important factor, followed by LORs, MSPE, COMLEX Level 2 CE/USMLE Step 2 CK, and the personal statement.

The interview process for residency is typically very costly. Many students report spending between \$5,000 and \$10,000 between applications and interviewing expenses (travel, lodging, food). Students should budget their OMS-IV year accordingly.

Interview invitations typically arrive via email or through MyERAS. The student should respond quickly and professionally to select an interview date that works best with his or her clinical schedule. Notify programs right away with changes in plans so that they may be accommodating. Likewise, if a student decides not to attend an interview, it is required that the program is contacted so that they may make other arrangements.

When preparing for an interview, the student should begin with thoroughly researching the program and why he or she is interested. The student should begin interview preparation well in advance of his or her interview dates. Common interview questions include:

1. Why are you interested in this specialty?
2. What are your strengths and weaknesses?
3. Where do you see your medical career ten years from now?
4. What are your hobbies outside of medical school?
5. What has been your biggest challenge?
6. Why did you choose an osteopathic medical education?
7. Why are you interested in this particular program?

The student should be kind, courteous, and professional with each person he or she encounters throughout the interview process. It is common for each of these individuals to provide input and feedback to program directors. If you are mean to the coordinator, you will not match in that program.

The Match

The matching process was developed to allow applicants the ability to visit and evaluate training programs systematically without the pressure of committing to any one program before visiting others. The student will register for one or more match in the early fall of the OMS-IV year. The student may participate in more than one matching service, but once a contract has been signed, the student will be withdrawn from the other services. Results of a matching service are binding for both students and participating institutions. An applicant can only be released from a commitment with written consent and agreement from both the applicant and the institution.

Students must apply to programs independently of the matching service. Registration with matching services is separate from ERAS, and the applicant must register for both. Programs receive applications and interview students independently from the match. Application deadlines for programs vary, and students should check with programs directly regarding their deadline dates.

Couples Match

Any two individuals who wish to be matched to programs in the same location can register as a couple. This presents a number of challenges, and will frequently require students to compromise for one another. However, typically match rates for couples fall above 90%. It is recommended that couples participating in a match apply for more programs than what is typically recommended. Couples will each enroll individually for a matching service, while indicating that they wish to participate as a couple. Couples must work closely with one another when completing rank order lists (ROLs).

Rank Order List

The applying student will be required to submit a list of programs ranked in order of preference after he or she has registered for a match and completed the interview process. Similarly, program directors will submit their own rank order list of applicants. A computerized algorithm then matches applicants to the highest program on his or her list that has also ranked the applicant.

When ranking programs, it is important that the student rank all programs he or she is interested in matching. He or she should include reach programs, and thoroughly weigh personal preferences.

All match agreements are binding. Once the student's ROL has been certified, the student must attend the program they match to, regardless of where the program fell on the ROL. This is important to consider when including programs on the ROL to make sure the student matches somewhere he or she would be reasonably happy.

Match Programs

Military Match

The Joint Services Graduate Medical Education Selection Board (JSGMESB) is responsible for administration of residency selection processes for students on active duty who apply to Air Force, Navy, or Army training programs. Students pursuing military residency positions apply through this service using the Medical Operational Data System (MODS). This is separate from ERAS, though students will need to complete ERAS applications as well. It is recommended that students applying for military positions also apply the programs through the NRMP.

Air Force, Army, and Navy all have their own office responsible for the match. Each branch will put out a list of residency training spots in June each year. The application and ROL deadlines for military programs occur in September of the OMS-IV year.

The Graduate Medical Education Board meets in November to complete ranking using criteria including grades, board scores, research, audition rotations, interviews, and prior military service.

Match results become available to students in December. Candidates may be matched into the military residency of their choice, matched into a military second choice specialty, “deferred” into a civilian residency of their choice, or matched into a military transitional year.

Medical students with an obligation to the U.S. government must enter this match unless formally released from that obligation.

For more information on this process, please reach out to your branch of service or the Office of Clinical Rotations.

Urology Residency Match

The Urology Residency Match Program is run through the American Urological Association. This service is for students looking into advanced or categorical positions in urological surgery.

Registration for these programs begins in June, one year prior to the start of residency. There is a \$75 fee associated, and registrants will receive an AUA issued ID number within 2-3 days of registering.

Preference List submissions can be made starting in December, and must be completed by the deadline in early January. The matching process typically takes two weeks, and results become available in mid to late January.

If a student matches to a urology program, he or she must then check with the institution to determine if the National Residency Matching Program process must be completed for surgical training at the same institution.

The San Francisco Match

This service is specific to students pursuing advanced positions in ophthalmology or plastic surgery.

Applicants wishing to match to an ophthalmology program will participate in the Ophthalmology

Residency Matching Program (OMP). This program is supported by the National Residency Matching Program, and is timed to allow students to submit their NRMP ROLs after being matched to a program in ophthalmology. Registration for the OMP match begins on June 1 and is open until the ROL deadline. Students will register on the SF Match website with a \$100 fee.

The SF Match's Central Application Service (CAS) distributes applications to programs electronically. This must be completed in addition to any ERAS applications. The ROL submission period opens in December of the OMS-IV year for OMP applicants. Applicants and programs must both submit their ROLS by the deadline in early January. Match results become available to students on Friday of the week following the ROL deadline. Ophthalmology residency begins in July of the following year.

The Plastic Surgery Residency Matching Program (PSMP) is required for applicants wishing to place in a plastic surgery residency. This program is in addition to the NRMP and applicants must have completed prerequisite surgical training before the start of the residency. The SF Match's Central Application Service (CAS) distributes applications to programs electronically. This must be completed in addition to any ERAS applications. Registration for the PSMP opens on August 15. There is a \$100 fee associated. ROLs must be submitted by a deadline in early May. The following week, match results become available to applicants. Plastic surgery residency begins in July of the following year.

National Residency Matching Program

The NRMP is the service that the majority of students use. This includes both the Main Residency Match as well as the Specialties Matching Service for fellowships and fellowship subspecialties accredited by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME).

To participate in the Main Residency Match, the student must meet all requirements for entry into GME as defined by ACGME by July 1 the year of match.

All NRMP Matches are coordinated through the Registration, Ranking, and Results system, referred to as R3. A user guide for this program can be found on the NRMP website.

NRMP registration opens on September 15. There is a standard fee of \$75, and any registration after November 30 has an additional \$50 late fee. The final deadline for late applicants to register is on the ROL submission deadline in February. Couples registering in the NRMP pay an additional \$15 per partner.

The Rank Order List submission period begins on January 15. The deadline is in February of the OMS-IV year. It is the responsibility of the applicant to certify and submit his or her ROL on time.

The third week of March of the OMS-IV year is "Match Week." On Friday of this week, all students who participated in the NRMP Main Residency Match find out their placement.

The applicant will be notified whether or not they matched on Monday of Match Week in the NRMP R3 system with one of the following messages:

1. "Congratulations, you have matched"
2. "Congratulations, you have matched to an advanced position"
3. "Congratulations, you have matched to a one year position"
4. "We are sorry, you did not match to any position"
5. "You are NOT matched because you did not submit a certified rank order list"
6. "You are NOT matched because you are withdrawn"

A student who receives the first message is contractually obligated to his or her match. A student

who receives any of the other messages and is deemed eligible to enter GME on July 1 in the year of the Match will then be eligible to participate in the Supplemental Offer and Acceptance Program (SOAP).

If the student participates in the NRMP Main Residency Match and is not accepted to a program, he or she may enter the Supplemental Offer and Acceptance Program (SOAP). This organized

“scramble” is a collaborative effort between the AAMC/ERAS and NRMP that seeks to place eligible applicants in training programs that did not fill all of their spots during the Main Residency Match. Students who are unmatched or only partially matched notified of their SOAP eligibility on the Monday of Match Week. The list of unfilled Match-participating programs then becomes available in the NRMP, and ERAS can be used to apply to up to 45 additional programs. By Monday afternoon during Match Week, the student will become aware of whether or not he or she has matched. If not, applications may be sent out, and programs will begin offering positions on Wednesday. SOAP ends on Thursday before Match Day.

If a student does not match during SOAP, there are still several options. Students are welcome to reach out to LUCOM’s Office of Clinical Rotations for a Post-SOAP Student Support Guide.



