



General Surgery Application and Interview Recommendations 2026-2027 Cycle

Prepared by the APDS Recruitment Committee

Applicant Considerations

- Applicants should use available data and their unique characteristics to determine the number of applications to submit and number of interviews to accept.
- We recommend that applicants utilize their **15 signals** to indicate their top fifteen programs.
- Applicants should signal home institution, away rotations, and/or audition rotations that fall within their top fifteen preferred programs (i.e., these experiences should not count as additional signals).
- We acknowledge that applicants utilize resources to refine, edit, and proofread aspects of their applications, including peers, advisors/mentors, and/or generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools. We recommend that all submitted materials be the applicant's original work that reflects honest and accurate information about their life and experiences. Work not original to the applicant must be properly cited.
 - Applicants should be aware that programs may have separate policies about the use of AI tools in generating their applications and may use AI detection software in evaluating the applications.

Program Considerations

- Holistic application review is strongly recommended as part of the General Surgery residency selection process.
- Transparency relating to program values and characteristics is strongly encouraged to provide applicants insight into the selection process as well as program use of signaling during holistic review.
- We acknowledge that programs may utilize AI platforms in the process of application review, this may include document review, collation, and other review mechanisms. We strongly recommend that all programs transparently share their use of AI in publicly available policies or statements.
- We encourage all programs to consider COMLEX-USA or USMLE exams when engaging in holistic review, and we encourage all programs to offer transparency about their policies and expectations about these exams (which may include a statement regarding acceptance and use of both USMLE and COMLEX scores).
 - Please use the following link: [COMLEX-USA Percentile Scores - NBOME](#) to directly compare COMLEX-USA percentile to USMLE percentile score.
- USMLE Step 1 and COMLEX Level 1 numerical scores, when available for some applicants, should still be deemphasized in the current Application Cycle. Applicants and their standardized scores should be considered within the context of a holistic review, and programs should disclose how USMLE Step 2 and COMLEX Level 2 will be considered.
- Programs should not offer their first round of interviews prior to **Wednesday October 21, 2026**. The first round of offers should be sent between **Wednesday October 21, 2026, and October 30, 2026**. Programs should provide transparency to applicants if making interview offers outside of this window.
- Programs should allow a minimum of 48 hours for the candidates to respond after any interview offer before extending an offer to a different candidate.
- Programs should only send the number of interview invitations for which they have available interview slots and disclose expectations about interview offer response and cancellation policies. (e.g., if a program has 20 interview slots, only 20 invitations should be released, and additional invitations may be offered only after applicants deny or cancel their invitation.)



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- We recognize that the AAMC has advocated for virtual interviews to provide equity, cost savings, and reduced environmental impact. Nevertheless, the Committee recommends that each program, in consultation with their GMEC, identify their values and best practices when choosing an interview format. We do emphasize that all applicants should be considered equally by the program regardless of the interview format that is utilized.
- We recommend that interview methods adhere to the following best practices:
 - equitable opportunities to all invited applicants
 - uniformity of the evaluation process within the program
 - transparency about the process
 - mitigation strategies to prevent bias (this may include offering only one type of interview per cycle)
- Programs must not initiate post-interview targeted communication to individual candidates with the purpose of influencing the candidate's ranking decisions.

Justification of Recommendations:

The NRMP provides a Code of Conduct for Programs [NRMP-Match-Code-of-Conduct_Programs.pdf](#)

Below are two excerpts from that Code of Conduct that support our recommendations.

Engage in application and recruitment activities that promote transparency and wellness

Program directors and members of the recruitment team must express professional behavior and communication throughout the application and recruitment process and maintain an environment that is respectful and free from harmful bias. To ensure applicants are fully informed of and understand how to effectively engage in application and recruitment, programs are required to establish and widely publish the application service or process the program requires for both the Main Residency Match and SOAP. Programs and members of the recruitment team are encouraged to engage in interactions with applicants that promote transparency, equity, and wellness during application and recruitment, including:

- o Minimizing bias by conducting interviews in-person or virtually, but not both
- o Setting and publishing a universal interview release date or small number of dates so that applicants can be attuned to any invitations they might receive and be better positioned to respond promptly to offers.
- o Establishing and publishing a deadline by which all applicants would be notified of their interview status so that they may finalize their schedules and make any travel arrangements, if applicable

Limit post-interview communication

Program directors and other recruitment team members must ensure all information related to the program's mission, aims and eligibility are clearly communicated to applicants. However, applicants may not have adequate time to obtain the information needed to make informed decisions about ranking and may wish to clarify information following interviews. The recruitment team may exchange clarifying information with applicants following the interview but must not solicit or require post-interview communication for the purposes of influencing applicants' ranking preferences. Program directors and all members of the recruitment team should take great care not to promote misleading communication to applicants about ranking intentions and preferences or inappropriately share private information (e.g., letters of recommendation) with outside parties

Here is a link to the AAMC position statement regarding interviews for the 2024-2025 recruitment cycle:

[Interviews in GME: Where Do We Go From Here? | AAMC](#)