



APDS General Surgery Application and Interview Recommendations 2025-2026 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.
- To preserve equity in number of signals, we recommend that applicants 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 2025-2026 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 22, 2025**. The first round of offers should be sent between **Wednesday October 22, 2025, and October 31, 2025**. 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

Justification of Recommendations:

To further support the task force recommendations, here is an excerpt from the NRMP match agreement:

6.2 Interview Period: The recruitment phase for the Main Residency Match must be transparent, grounded in equitable practices, reflect mutual respect for the needs of applicants and programs, and minimize unnecessary pressure. To that end, applicants and programs are bound by the terms of the applicable Match Participation Agreement to demonstrate ethical behavior when engaging in interview offers and acceptances. During the recruitment phase, programs shall:

1. Extend interview offers that equal, not exceed, the total number of available interview slots;
2. Provide applicants no less than 48 hours to accept or reject an interview invitation; and
3. Apply reasonable measures of notification (e.g., one-to-two weeks' notice) when needing to cancel or reschedule an interview.

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](#)