

Specialty Advising: Family Medicine

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Updated May 2017

Advising Efforts

First and Second Year Students

The Family Medicine Student Organization and the associated faculty sponsors (Drs. Picone and Finn) conduct informational activities and workshops about Family Medicine and Primary Care throughout the first and second years. In addition, the Introduction to Rural Health course for Rural Medical Scholars Program students has some programming that covers primary care in rural settings.

Third and Fourth Year Students

We are hosting “Strolling through the Match” a series of meetings about residency application issues focused on Family Medicine. This starts in March of 3rd year and continues through February of 4th year.

Residency Planning Q & A

To be considered for this specialty, what is the Step 1 score range?	Most directors say they cut off below about 200, but Step 2 scores rank higher in importance to PDs. A score below 200 does not automatically disqualify you from a good program. When developing rank order lists, programs look closely at clinical grades, letters of reference, service/activities, and your interview experience.
Do students need to be at the top of the class to be competitive in this specialty?	Grades in clerkships and clinical feedback tend to be the most important. Class rank factors less highly, and pre-clinical grades are not emphasized.
Is research a strong consideration for candidacy in this specialty?	Not generally, but may be an additional “stand out” criterion for more competitive/academic programs.
How important are away electives? Acting Internships?	If you come prepared to work hard, show enthusiasm, and be part of the team, away electives can help you and a program assess your “fit” into their program. However, if you take a long time to get acclimated to a new setting, it can be harmful. Acting Internships are very important, especially if in Family Medicine, but can be in another field as well.
If students did well on Step 1, should they try to take Step 2 before Rank Order Lists are due?	Yes, most programs want to see this before they rank you, ideally even before interviews, though that is not a must.
Should letters of recommendations all come from this specialty or should also have others?	At least one from Family Medicine, but a strong letter from clinical faculty in primary care outside of Family Medicine works well too. Letters should be from writers who know you well and had clinical time with you.
What do you want students to know about your program in particular	Dr. Tucker (program director at St. Joseph’s Hospital) is happy to meet with students interested in Family Medicine in general to describe more about these and other questions, as is Dr. Finn. Family Medicine values relationships and interpersonal qualities most, as these are the tools that we primarily use to care for our patients. Passion, performance in team care on rotations, good interactions with patients in all setting, and your performance in interviews, etc., weigh as or more highly than grades.
Does your specialty REQUIRE a Chair’s letter?	No. In fact, in general, if they did not work with you clinically, it will not be a very useful letter.