

Specialty Advising: Orthopaedic Surgery

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Advising Efforts

<u>First and Second Year Students</u>	<u>Third and Fourth Year Students</u>
<p>Meet with students individually upon request to explain the application process for orthopedic surgery and what they can do to strengthen their applications.</p> <p>Assist with arrangements for shadowing experiences and research.</p>	<p>Meet with students individually to review their current status and discuss their competitiveness for an orthopedic surgery position.</p> <p>Review what can be done to strengthen their applications.</p> <p>Discuss options for AI's, including away electives.</p> <p>After completion of interviews I meet with students to review programs and rank lists after they have interviewed.</p>

Residency Planning Q & A

To be considered for this specialty, what is the Step 1 score range?	From talking to many orthopedic program directors, it is my impression that several programs use 230 or 240 as a cutoff for offering interviews. Getting an interview is the essential first step to getting accepted into a program. Another way to be considered is to do an AI at the program. I haven't compiled the data on our students, but it's my impression that it gets much more difficult if your scores are below 220. Although lower scores don't make it impossible to match, they make the probability much lower. We have had people match in our program with scores in the 200 range. We have also had students match at other programs with scores in the 200 range and below. It usually takes something extra, such as doing a PG1 year or AI at the program and getting to know the people there.
Do students need to be at the top of the class to be competitive in this specialty?	In orthopedics, the USMLE step I scores seem to count much more than the grades or class rank. Programs argue that it is the best way to compare students from one school to another.
Is research a strong consideration for candidacy in this specialty?	The importance placed on research seems to vary among programs. It is important to some programs, while other programs consider it very little. It isn't as strongly weighted as the step I score. The research doesn't necessarily have to be in orthopedics. The quality of the project and the level of participation are more important. If a student starts a project, it is important to follow it through. It hurts students' evaluations to start a project and not complete it.
How important are away electives? Acting Internships?	They are important for getting an interview and allowing the program get a closer look at the student. Many programs will interview most or all of the students who do electives in their program. In some ways it's an extended interview. Unless the USMLE step I score is very high, I would consider one or more away electives almost a requirement.
If students did well on Step 1, should they try to take Step 2 before Rank Order Lists are due?	In the past I have advised students who scored well on Step I to wait to take Step 2, figuring that it could only hurt. Recently I have heard that some programs are starting to require step 2 scores. My advice is for students to look at what programs are requiring when they begin organizing their applications.
Should letters of recommendations all come from this specialty or should also have others?	It is usually helpful for at least 2 of the 3 letters to come from the specialty. In general, letters don't help applications much. Most people are able to get 3 positive letters. Since orthopedics is a relatively small specialty, sometimes programs will know the authors of letters that come from within the specialty and as a result, look at them more closely. I also usually advise the students that letters outside the specialty are helpful if they are from someone who knows the student well and it's clear in the letter.
What do you want students to know about your program in particular	It's a strong program and they would get a good education. Our graduates are competitive for good fellowships and practice opportunities.
Does your specialty REQUIRE a Chair's letter?	A Chair's letter is not required for most programs, but is highly recommended. It is noticeable when it's absent.