

Specialty Advising: Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation

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Advising Efforts

First and Second Year Students

- The Specialty Advisor works with the PM&R club officers to arrange a meeting schedule through each academic year covering information about PM&R, physical examination and the musculoskeletal system, and case vignettes with discussion of PM&R diagnosis and care.
- The summer after the first year, SUNY Upstate and the Association of Academic Physiatrists (AAP) offers the Medical Student Summer Clinical Externship (MSSCE). This eight-week summer program aims to provide a wide range of inpatient and outpatient clinical experiences in PM&R and to allow students to explore the human side of patient care and the psychosocial environments their patients face. This can be arranged to be up to a 6-credit elective. Included is development of an abstract for participation in the spring annual AAP meeting. Please see the Upstate PM&R web pages for details.
- The Specialty Advisor is available for individual meetings with 1st and 2nd year students about the specialty of PM&R.
- Shadowing opportunities are available.
- Clinical research opportunities are available.

Third and Fourth Year Students

- PM&R club activities are available.
- PM&R elective opportunity is available – usually a 4 week elective, but can be 2 weeks with special consideration. The elective offers 4 weeks of different aspects of PM&R practice. There is direct interaction with faculty and routine mentoring with the Specialty Advisor.
- The Specialty Advisor is available for individual meetings with 3rd and 4th year students to discuss the CV, personal statement, interview process/choices, and PM&R as a career.

Residency Planning Q & A

To be considered for this specialty, what is the Step 1 score range?	In general, Step 1 and 2 scores should be at least at average for that sitting. However, programs have become more competitive (no programs were unfilled the last 2 years), and scores at 200 and above would likely allow for an invitation to interview. 2016 Match statistics for those who matched – average Step 1: 226, average Step 2: 238.
Do students need to be at the top of the class to be competitive in this specialty?	Being at the top of your class is not a requirement, however those candidates within the top quartile may have an advantage in receiving an invitation to interview. Good solid students should expect to interview at most programs.
Is research a strong consideration for candidacy in this specialty?	Research is not required for an interview invitation or matching. However having engaged in research relevant to the field allows good conversation during the interview process, and allows you to demonstrate your understanding of PM&R.
How important are away electives? Acting Internships?	Since a PM&R experience at Upstate is elective, an Upstate elective allows you an opportunity to learn about the specialty and hopefully to receive a strong letter of support from someone within the specialty. Away electives at sites where you are most interested allow the programs there to “interview” you prior to the Match interview process. AI's are not common in PM&R, so not typically expected. However, participating in one would show strong interest, and would allow you to become more familiar with the specialty and improve your knowledge for interviews. Any of these options requires you to demonstrate your interest and skills, as well as to gain knowledge about PM&R-related issues.
If students did well on Step 1, should they try to take Step 2 before Rank Order Lists are due?	Step 2 scores are usually important for the Rank Order lists. Most programs will ask when you will be taking the exam if a score is not available at the interview. You should take the responsibility to report your score to programs if it was not available on the initial upload to ERAS. You are at a disadvantage if you have not received a score for Step 2 prior to Rank Order due dates.
Should letters of recommendations all come from this specialty or should also have others?	Letters of recommendation are helpful based on their content and elaboration of the applicant's qualities and skills. However, they usually do not have as much meaning as USMLE scores. Letters do not need to come from someone in the specialty, but having at least one from a physiatrist demonstrates interest and some level of knowledge. Candidates should request letters from attendings who can speak about a positive experience with them and/or someone who is in a senior or supervisory position.

<p>What do you want students to know about your program in particular</p>	<p>Our program offers a unique blend of inpatient and outpatient experiences throughout the three years of training, with a broad patient population base. The inpatient experience covers high acuity tertiary inpatient rehabilitation facility (IRF) acute services, VA services, and skilled nursing facility (subacute) services. Outpatient services are well rounded to include musculoskeletal, interventional spine, EMG, neurorehabilitation, tone management, pediatrics, and concussion/brain injury care. State of the art spinal cord injury rehabilitation care is a focus of the VA program, which also houses orthotic and prosthetic expertise. Clinical research opportunities are available. The faculty is diverse, interested in mentoring and teaching, supportive of resident activities, and active in program development, research, and national activities. Our residents work as a team, support each other, and work well with each other and with the faculty.</p>
<p>Does your specialty REQUIRE a Chair's letter?</p>	<p>A Chair's letter is not required, and often the Chair has had interaction with students only through lectures. Letters that better reflect knowledge of the student's performance are expected.</p>