

FAQs: ENT (Otolaryngology)

Given Step 1 is now Pass/Fail, what advice would you give to a first-year medical student about what they can or should be doing early on to be competitive in your specialty?

- I am not sure how this will affect competitive specialties, but likely more weight will be given to step 2 and research experience.

Would you ever take someone with a Step 1 failure?

-not likely

What advice would you give about getting letters of recommendation in your specialty?

-you will need a letter from the program director and department/division chair, then usually 2 more letters from ENT's. It is probably better to get a great letter from a non-ENT than an luke warm letter from an ENT. 4 letters are better than 3. you will need to spend time with the people writing your letters to allow them to get to know you.

What is the value of doing audition rotations in your specialty?

-I am not sure what audition rotations are, but if you are talking about away rotations, I think they are highly valuable if you really like a specific program or geographically want to live in an area. Generally speaking, if you commit a month to a program, it shows you are interested in them and they will usually consider you more competitively vs routine applicants. This is a generalization, of course. you still need to work hard and be a great team player.

To what extent does research, publications, or presentations affect one's ability to match in your specialty?

-It is becoming more of a factor now that step one has gone to pass fail.

Is a Step 2CK score needed before you will invite someone for an interview?

-It is hard to say right now, but I think it will begin to weigh more in the future.

What does the perfect applicant look like in your specialty?

-Well rounded with glowing letters, ENT research where they are first author and evidence of innovation and true leadership through prior employment and/or volunteerism.

Does a student need to Honor in your specialty to match?

-It certainly doesn't hurt, but not all schools are created equal and therefore it is not always a straight forward comparison between candidates. Classically step 1 and 2 scores evened the playing field. Same can be said for AOA, it is good to have but some programs don't have it.

The students have significant elective time during their 3rd year for career exploration.

a. What electives would you recommend to a student who knows they are interested in your specialty?

-Start looking into it as a second year. It is almost too late to get research experience in ENT by the time you are a third year.

b. What electives would you recommend to a student who is undecided but considering your specialty?

-ENT only. No other specialty really translates well to what we do.

Is there anything else I haven't asked that you feel an applicant to your specialty ought to know?

- It is very competitive and we are seeing more and more applicants. You need to start prior to 3rd year to optimize your opportunities to be a competitive applicant.