

FAQs: Diagnostic Radiology

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?

- Without USMLE scores to compare medical students from different schools, I would say that clerkship grades and basic science grades will play a bigger role in your application. Getting a strong letter of recommendation from a radiologist and participating in scholarly activity would be helpful as well.

Would you ever take someone with a Step 1 failure?

- I would think the candidate would have to be exceptional in some other way for us to consider taking them with a Step 1 failure.

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

- Ask early and get advice from residents about how to be a good medical student in front of the faculty you may be asking for a letter. Be personable and engaged in the rotation. The program director at your institution would be a great person to ask and so would anyone who serves in a leadership role at BUMC.

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

- It is my opinion that it does not help much unless it is at your home institution. I have heard several anecdotal stories of away rotations hurting the candidate.

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

- Generally, these could be deciding factors at the larger more academic institutions now that Step 1 is pass/fail. At our program publications are nice to see that you have some interest in scholarly endeavors but are not a requirement to match with our program.

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

- I will defer to the program director.

What does the perfect applicant look like in your specialty?

- A very good applicant has top 1/3 class rank, honors/As in several clinical rotations, some volunteer work or previous employment of any kind, outside interest such as personal hobbies, and communicates well.

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

- Not a requirement, but if Honors is a potential grade (not just pass/fail) and the candidate comes with a Pass only, they would have to be an outstanding candidate in many other facets of the application.

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?

- Surgical specialties (orthopedics, neurosurgery, vascular surgery), pathology, interventional radiology.

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

- Radiology of course! Vascular Interventional Radiology or Nuclear Medicine would additional choices.

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

- Work hard, show up on time, do not act uninterested in any of your rotations. Ask questions of the residents on how to succeed.