

FAQs: (Family Medicine)

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?

Show a well-rounded medical school experience including excellent grades/step scores, volunteer/service activities, and motivation towards family medicine.

Would you ever take someone with a Step 1 failure?

Unlikely –family med residencies are becoming more and more competitive and there are many qualified applicants who have not failed a step exam. So it is much more difficult to get interviewed with a failure.

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

Three letters with at least two from the applied specialty. Ask early and from preceptors you feel you really performed well with.

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

High value for places you expect to have at and near the top of your list. And if you can't do a full rotation, even spending a couple of days with residents in the hospital and clinic can be helpful. Audition rotations allow the residents and faculty to get to know you and see you perform. Invaluable for your #1 choice.

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

In family medicine it is nice to see students engaged in scholarly activity, but likely has very little impact on ability to match.

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

With the recent step 1 conversion to pass/fail, step 2 will be a more important piece in the overall application. Recommended prior to application submission.

What does the perfect applicant look like in your specialty?

Upbeat attitude, excited about the practice of family medicine; evident that you will work hard, get along with others, and be a team player. Well rounded, good fit for the program and personality of the residency. Passed step exams on first try.

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

No. Better performance is always preferred – but again attitude and teamwork matter!

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?

In addition to audition rotations, I recommend electives in disciplines where you know you may have a deficit. Otherwise, no specific expectations and would recommend rotations to further expand your knowledge and experience in areas of particular interest to you that relate to family medicine (e.g. ENT, Derm, PM&R, Endo, Rural medicine).

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

Same as above, but more rotations in Family Med in different locations and settings e.g. rural vs. urban, indigent, inpatient FM.

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

Family medicine is a rewarding field with a variety of options post-residency. You can decide to practice OB and even do your own surgeries/colonoscopies. Depending on one's interests they can tailor their practice (e.g. full-scope rural, urgent care, ER, wound care, nursing home, inpatient, and concierge). FM is a great choice if one likes treating a wide variety of ages and conditions.