

## FAQs: PMR

**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?**

-Given the diversity within our field, I would say we are really just looking for overall success across the board

**Would you ever take someone with a Step 1 failure?**

-We have taken someone in the past who had significant extenuating circumstances in their life the week of boards. We then looked at the second score for a significant improvement.

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

-It is always best to get letters from someone that knows you well even if in a different specialty. The generic letters from attendings we read tend to add little to help your ranking as they don't give us any real insight into you as a candidate.

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

-I can't think of any residents in the recent past that did not do an audition rotation with us. We are a small program and so how you fit in is readily apparent to the team during your time here. That said, there is only so much time for electives, so I would be very mindful of which programs you want to target and try and get time there.

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

-It is always helpful but not essential

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

-Not required but very helpful to give us an idea of how you are doing. Also if the score is not good it gives you an opportunity to try and explain it

**What does the perfect applicant look like in your specialty?**

-We look for applicants that have good "people skills" as much of what we do is based on communication with patients, families, and team members. We look for someone that asks thoughtful questions on rounds which shows they have done some reading on their own and are looking for more insight.

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

-Not required but given the competitive match it is helpful of course

**The students have significant elective time during their 3<sup>rd</sup> year for career exploration.**

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

-Neurology , orthopedics , rheumatology , radiology , and surprisingly we many skin conditions so dermatology is helpful

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

-Neurology and orthopedics as much of what we do is related Anesthesia if you are thinking about the pain management route

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

-The residency programs are similar in covering core subjects but also quite different in size and focus. When auditioning and applying it is important to try and see what "fits" you best as sometimes the place that sounds good on paper just doesn't seem right when you are there. Unfortunately this means requires some real introspection. In practice, there are a multitude of various practice models and options which gives you some flexibility as you mature and interests and circumstances in your life change.