



2026 Road to Residency IMG Webinar

Would you recommend to apply to every program to increase the changes of IV or would be better to focus on IMG friendly programs?

Do you think matching as a US IMG but with a board failure is still possible?

Sima Desai: I would definitely address in your personal statement about the failure and making sure you do better on further boards (step 2 especially). While rotating for PMR rotation — try to get time with the PD or APD to explain what led to the failure and what you are doing moving forward to improve upon future boards

Mahmood Gharib: Board failure should not disqualify you but 1. Hopefully the passing marks remain competitive. 2. Be able to communicate /articulate why you may have failed, what you gained from that experience , etc

Diana Molinares: Agree. most programs (probably all) look at the applications holistically so understanding what you learned from it is helpful

For someone who doesn't have a home PM&R department at their home institution, whose LOR can I use for the home institution letter.

Sima Desai: if you can gain an away rotation — you can try to obtain a letter from an away rotation. Does not need to be from home institution

Participant: I fortunately have 2 rotations in PM&R in the US, but if I'm not wrong, people use chair of home department LOR. I haven't started the application yet but if I am wrong, let me know.

Sima Desai: does not need to be from home department as a lot of US applicants also don't have home programs so they obtain their LOR from their away rotations

if you worked with an attending in 2022 (but saw you working directly as an intern) and they are willing to write you a updated LOR, will that letter be viewed as favorably (due to the dates)?

Participant: Same questions, my rotations were hands on but were in 2024. I am worried that programs will think they are outdated.

Sima Desai: it won't hurt your application, make sure your letter writer is speaking to your patient experience and expertise

What would be a good way to find observerships / rotations or contacts for PM&R?

Sima Desai: can look on PMR residency websites and contact the program coordinator if it is not on the website

Regarding the number of LORs: if a program's website and MyERAS show they require 3 letters but do not specify a maximum limit, can we assign 4 letters? Thank you!

Sima Desai: yes you can assign 4 letters

If a program website explicitly states YOG <5, is it worth applying esp if you don't have any connections at that program?

If an IMG doesn't have any U.S. clinical electives, can a productive research year compensate for the lack of U.S. clinical experience in the eyes of program directors? Or is it still important to complete observerships or other U.S. clinical experiences while doing research?

Sima Desai: very important to get US clinical experiences whether via observorship or rotation

Is it common for research fellows to gain meaningful U.S. clinical exposure while doing research within a residency program, or do you recommend arranging separate observerships/formal rotations?

Sima Desai: separate observership or formal rotation

Thank you all for taking the time to share such helpful information with us today. I was wondering if there is a preferred way for applicants to reach out in the future if we have

follow-up questions or would like to express our interest in your program. We truly appreciate your time and insights!

Does your graduation year matter for residency applications?

How exactly is YOG calculated? Does it take into account home country residency program?

Diana Molinares: Depends on the program. There is not an standardized way to calculate YOG

What would be the best way to find out how programs calculate YOG? Or are there a few common types of calculations?

Where do we explain what we did between YOG? If its in the experiences section, do we have to fill out everything we did in-between graduation and now so it doesn't seem like there are any gaps, even if it might not be the most meaningful part of our application we want to highlight?

What is the best way to find out if the program sponsors visa?

Participant: You can check the program website. You can also look through Frieda. Its a website.

Namrata Raut: Usually it is mentioned in the criteria for application on program websites, but you can also email the GME office or program coordinator/contact person for that program- visa sponsorship