Association of Professors of Dermatology
Residency Program Directors Section

Information Regarding the 2026-2027 Application Cycle
May 1, 2026

This statement will cover a few aspects of the application cycle, including the new standardized letter of evaluation (SLOE), program signaling, interview release dates, interview formats, pre- and post-interview communication, and away electives.

Standardized Letter of Evaluation (SLOE)
In collaboration with ERAS, this year there will be a Standardized Letter of Evaluation (SLOE) integrated into the ERAS application platform. For the 2026-27 cycle, we are requiring applicants submit a minimum of *1* SLOE written by a dermatologist. This should come from either a home dermatology program, or, if applicants do not have a home program, from a dermatology program where the applicant completes an away rotation. All remaining letters may be the new SLOE or narrative format, but use of the SLOE is encouraged. The eventual goal is utilization of the SLOE for all letters in future cycles.

The SLOE will be entered directly into the ERAS Letter Writer Portal. Applicants will identify whether they are requesting a narrative letter or a SLOE from a potential letter writer when they enter the letter request into the ERAS portal. Letter writers are encouraged to review informational material on the SLOE provided by the APD Program Director Section and ERAS/AAMC prior to completing their first SLOE.

Program signaling
Most dermatology programs will participate in signaling through ERAS. A list of participating programs will be released by AAMC after July 1. This year, dermatology will continue with the strategy of 28 program signals – 3 gold, 25 silver. This allows applicants to denote their top 3 programs and an additional 25 programs of particular interest. Importantly, home programs and programs at which an away rotation was completed should be included in the signaling process. Signals should be used to denote an applicant's true preferences; thus, applicants can consider using a gold or silver for programs at which they rotated or at their home institutions, or they may not signal at all if that reflects their true preferences. Programs are encouraged to follow these guidelines and not offer conflicting advice to applicants.

Of note, based on data from past cycles, there is a near-zero chance of being invited to interview at non-signaled programs. A gold signal confers a greater chance of an interview invitation than silver. Please refer to AAMC's website for more information about program signaling and its impact on interview invitations across specialties: https://www.aamc.org/data-reports/data/eras-statistics-data.

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Given this data, applicants are highly discouraged from applying widely. Limiting applications to the 28 signaled programs and any program that is not participating in signaling is recommended. As a reminder to programs and applicants, a signal does not guarantee an interview invitation.

Coordinated interview invitation release

There will be three sets of interview invitation release dates. Participating programs will not release more interview invitations than interview slots available. Programs not participating have also been asked to follow this guideline and to post the date of interview invitation release on their websites. A list of participating programs will be released later in mid to late August, and a spreadsheet listing all participating programs and their selected interview release dates will be released in September.

Timeline for participating programs only

First set of dates

Monday November 2, 2026: first round of interview invitations released (generally for programs with November or early December interview dates)
Wednesday November 4, 2026: applicants begin scheduling interviews; must respond by November 6
Additional interview invitations will be released as they become available starting after November 6, 2026.

Second set of dates

Monday November 16, 2026: second round of interview invitations released (generally for programs with late December or January interview dates)
Wednesday November 18, 2026: applicants begin scheduling interviews; must respond by November 20
Additional interview invitations will be released as they become available starting after November 20, 2026.

Third set of dates

Monday November 30, 2026: third round of interview invitations released (generally for programs with January or February interview dates)
Wednesday December 2, 2026: applicants begin scheduling interviews; must respond by December 4
Additional interview invitations will be released as they become available starting after December 4, 2026.

Programs are encouraged to notify all applicants of their status (interview, waitlist or decline) by January 1, 2027.

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Interview formats and recruiting activities

Rather than enacting a specialty-wide decision, and recognizing the differences between programs, the APD Residency Program Directors Section recommends that every program consider the costs and benefits of various interview formats (in-person, virtual, hybrid) and make an educated decision for their program, taking into account applicant costs, exposure to the program, uniqueness of clinical sites, environmental/sustainability factors, equity, and the myriad of other aspects that influence this decision. Dermatology residency programs should share information about their interview format(s) with applicants early in the process.

Pre- and post-interview communication guidelines

Before and during interview season, applicants are asked to refrain from contacting programs to express interest or provide application updates prior to interviews, except in truly exceptional circumstances (e.g., couples matching updates, major life events that impact preferences). Questions about a program that cannot be easily answered by available materials (website, social media, etc.) can be directed to the program.

Post-interview communication of preference – including "letters of intent" and thank you letters – should not be sent to programs. These types of communication are typically not used by residency programs in decision-making and lead to downstream pressures on applicants.

Programs are also encouraged to either avoid direct communication with applicants after interviews and before Match Day, or at a minimum, ensure that such communication is informational in nature, avoiding efforts to persuade or pressure candidates, in line with NRMP guidelines. Applicants should not equate lack of communication from programs with lack of interest, just as programs will not equate lack of communication from applicants with lack of interest.

Additionally, faculty are discouraged from communicating on behalf of applicants to program directors and faculty at other institutions, either before or after interviews. Program faculty can reach out directly to letter-writers or faculty at other institutions to ask questions about an applicant or to gather more information than is available in the letter or application, but this should be instigated by the interviewing program, not by the applicant or an applicant's faculty mentor/advisor.

Away electives

A statement was previously released with information about away electives in dermatology. As a reminder, for this application cycle, students with a home dermatology program should limit their experiences to up to 2 external electives. Students without a home dermatology program may consider completing up to 3 external electives. Please be mindful of your future colleagues and equity concerns. Students will not be penalized for declining invitations to participate in external electives to follow these recommendations.