

Residency Directors' Criteria for Prospective Residents

Neurosurgery



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Do you look for a specific Step 1 score?

We look for candidates that have Step 1 scores greater than or equal to one standard deviation above the national mean.

If we don't fill all of our interview slots (generally 32) with individuals meeting that requirement, we are willing to interview individuals who scored above the national mean.

For MCW students, even if they don't meet the above cited criteria, we usually extend one courtesy invitation.

Do you require Step 2 exam prior to interviewing?

We do not require that the Step 2 exam be taken. If the exam has been taken, the score can either help or hurt their chances of getting an interview.

Is research in the specialty necessary?

Research achievement is highly desirable. Research participation is adequate. It need not necessarily be in Neurosurgery, as some institutions just don't have any ongoing research programs or even academic neurosurgery departments.

Do you recommend more than one rotation in the chosen specialty?

We rarely see any value in doing away rotations.

If the applicant is from MCW, do you recommend an away rotation?

MCW students who want to stay at MCW for neurosurgery should rotate on the service.

An away rotation can help or hurt a candidate, and I have seen both.

Any other considerations or factors?

Letters of recommendation are very important. Neurosurgery is a very small field and we usually know most of the neurosurgeons who would send a letter. We can also discern, based on this knowledge, whether the letter is strong or weak, regardless of what is actually said. If there are any questions about the letter, we call for candid commentary.

The department strongly considers other factors, especially the perceived 'fit' with strengths and weaknesses of the program, faculty, and current residents. This 'fit' is the most important factor. The qualifications are a ticket to an interview and the interview is the ticket to a good rank.