



Perspectives of Dermatology Program Directors Post Step 1 Pass/Fail

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CONTEXT

- The shift of Step 1 to Pass/Fail has generated several questions and concerns on the future of obtaining residency positions among allopathic and osteopathic students alike.

OBJECTIVE

- To assess which aspects of a medical student’s application will become more important after the transition of Step 1 Pass/Fail.
- Share what Dermatology Program Directors stated as their most important metrics regarding whether an applicant receives an interview.
- Discuss possible reasoning as to why program directors made those choices and how it affects medical students interested in Dermatology.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Determining the perspectives of Dermatology Program Directors in regards to post Step 1 Pass/Fail is critical for students to better prepare for matching into dermatology.

METHODS

- After receiving IRB exemption status, the participants were chosen from 144 ACGME and 27 AOA Dermatology programs.
- Eight question survey was constructed on a three-point Likert scale along with a ranking activity, one free text response
- Data was collected and analyzed using IBM SPSS version 24.

CONCLUSION

Before multiple definitive match outcomes list is examined, definitive results are difficult to generate. Based on this survey study, dermatology program directors seem to want to focus more on LORs, Audition Rotations, and Step 2 CK scores.

RESULTS

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL
USMLE Step 1 scores were previously the most important metric when determining whether an applicant received an interview invitation.	27.27% 6	31.82% 7	22.73% 5	18.18% 4	22
Changing Step 1 to Pass/Fail is more objective.	18.18% 4	45.45% 10	22.73% 5	13.64% 3	22
Changing Step 1 to Pass/Fail, our program will now require Step 2 CK before an interview is offered to a residency candidate.	4.55% 1	31.82% 7	36.36% 8	27.27% 6	22
Changing Step 1 to Pass/Fail will make it more difficult for students to match into our dermatology program.	9.09% 2	50.00% 11	18.18% 4	22.73% 5	22
Changing Step 1 to Pass/Fail will make it more difficult for osteopathic medical students to match into our dermatology program.	18.18% 4	36.36% 8	22.73% 5	22.73% 5	22
Changing Step 1 Pass/Fail will help alleviate racial and socioeconomic disparities during the residency application process.	18.18% 4	45.45% 10	27.27% 6	9.09% 2	22
Changing Step 1 to Pass/Fail will make it more challenging to predict academic success during residency.	4.55% 1	22.73% 5	45.45% 10	27.27% 6	22
Changing Step 1 to Pass/Fail is reasonable.	27.27% 6	27.27% 6	36.36% 8	9.09% 2	22

RESPONSES

- I think that this change will disproportionately disadvantage exemplary students from less well known medical schools and may limit students to programs within geographic proximity of their medical school. As a person who attended a less well known medical school for family and financial reasons but scored in the 99th percentile on Step 1, I know that having the ability to distinguish myself by my performance on Step 1 opened doors for me that would have likely remained closed otherwise. I also acknowledge that Step 1 has caused significant stress for second year medical students in the past and that it is an incomplete metric with which to evaluate residency candidates. This is a complex issue and I am not sure that there is a "correct" answer. I will be advising my students to aggressively pursue research opportunities, to consider away rotations at institutions where they would like to match, and to work to craft unique and engaging personal statements.
- Changing to Pass Fail hurts those it implies it would like to help. If prejudices come out, they will not go away by not giving a score. The evaluator's pre-existing expectations will be manifest even more so. It is pointless and ludicrous.

- 54.54% of responders had “Letters of Recommendation” in their top 3. Ranked as the most important 18.18% of the responses
- 45% of responders had “Completed Audition Rotation at Program” in their top 3. Ranked as the most important 35% of the responses.
- 38.09% of responders had “USMLE Step 2 CK Scores” in their top 3. Ranked as the most important 9.52% of the responses