

# OSA S.T.E.P.S. to Success



## November: OSA STEPS to Success

The OSA Steps to Success Career Advising Program is a longitudinal program designed to support your personal and professional growth on your journey to becoming a physician.

**OSA Career Advisors**—including Drs. Allen (Friedenwald), Flaherty (MGP), Lamos (ED), and Thom (LYT)—are here to support your self-exploration, personal growth, career planning, specialty choice, and navigation of medical school and the residency process. **Specialty Advisors** can offer specialty-specific guidance. The [Residency Application Manual | Specialty Advising](#) website lists each specialty along with its Faculty Advisor, OSA Advisor, and MS4 Student Ambassadors.

**Tools/Resources:** [Specialty Profiles | CiM aamc.org](#)

### Turning Clinical Rotations into Career Support

*Rotations are a **real-time test-drive** of specialties, informing future career decisions.*

#### **1. Using Rotations to Clarify Specialty Fit.**

- What types of pathologies do you enjoy the most
- What clinical tasks energize you? (procedures, DDX, longitudinal care, counseling)
- Which team environments do you thrive (inpt, outpt, acute care)
- Lifestyle or workflow patterns that feel sustainable (call, shift, team-based)

#### **2. Building Relationships That Become Mentorship**

- Access to attendings and residents who can advise on specialty pathways
- Opportunities to ask about training, lifestyle, fellowship options
- Foundations for longer-term mentorship relationships

#### **3. Creating Content for Personal Statements and Interviews**

- Memorable patient encounters
- Moments of growth or challenge
- Stories demonstrating resilience, insight, teamwork, and professionalism

#### **4. Identifying Gaps or Skills to Strengthen**

- Areas where additional practice or electives would help
- Skills needed for the specialty they're considering
- Whether they need more exposure before deciding

#### **5. Networking Within the Specialty**

- Grand Rounds or Tumor Boards

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### OSA Career Advising

### OSA STEPS to Success

- S. Self-Assessment
- T. Target Specialty
- E. Experience
- P. Preparation & Planning
- S. Strategy Execution

### OSA Student Handbook

- [Administrative Support](#)
- [Commitment to Professionalism](#)
- [Commitment to Wellbeing](#)
- [School Policies](#)

### AAMC Resources

[Four-phase career planning process](#)

## Build Your Residency Application Strategy Early (Without the Stress)

*Explore specialties effectively, track experiences for future personal statements, consider geographic preferences, and interpret competitiveness data. The goal is not to finalize decisions, but to build a clear, manageable strategy that sets you up for success when application season arrives.*

### 1. Create a Light, Flexible Framework Instead of a Final Decision

- ✓ Knowing what factors matter (fit, competitiveness, geography, lifestyle)
- ✓ Paying attention to what aligns with your strengths
- ✓ Keeping an open list of 1-2 possible specialties
  - \* Prevent the panicked “I have to decide everything NOW” feeling

### 2. Keep a Simple Running Log of Meaningful Clinical Experiences

- ✓ Meaningful patient stories
- ✓ Moments that clarified the kind of physician you want to be
- ✓ Times you demonstrated teamwork, communication, professionalism
- ✓ Any standout feedback you received
  - \* This becomes ready-made content for: Personal statements, “Experience” entries, Interview examples
  - \* A career strategy begins with simple documentation.

### 3. Starting to Understand Specialty Competitiveness Early

- ✓ [Residency Explorer](#)
- ✓ [Careers in Medicine | Competitiveness](#)

#### Tools/Resources

- [Medical Specialty Preference Inventory \(MSPI\)](#)
- [Physician Values in Practice Scale \(PVIPS\)](#)
- [Physician Skills Inventory \(PSI\)](#)

## OSA Insider Podcasts

[Apple Podcasts](#)

E 127: Deciding Specialty  
E 105 Gap Year  
E 103 Gap Year

## How Can OSA Help You?

### Registration

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### OSA Career Advisors

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## Undecided

Most students don't have clarity until later in third year, and exploration is part of the process. Focus on what **energizes you during rotations**, talk with **residents or mentors** about what they love (and don't love) about their fields, and **write down** a few moments that felt especially meaningful. **Clarity comes from exposure, not pressure.**

#### Tools/Resources

- [CiM | How to get Unstuck](#)
- [Specialty Indecision Scale](#)

## Gap time?

Many students take an LOA at some point in medical school, and it's a legitimate **part of the path, not a detour**. Reach out early if you're considering it so you **can understand your options** and **get the support** you need.

#### Tools/Resources

- [Leaves, Gaps, and Breaks from the Curriculum](#)
- [OSA Academic Handbook | Additional Resources: Taking a Gap Year PPT](#)