



AMERICAN
ORTHOPAEDIC
ASSOCIATION

AOA/CORD 2026 Away Rotations Universal Offer Day
Updated Recommendations for Orthopaedic Surgery Residency Programs
January 19, 2026

BACKGROUND

The AOA/CORD convened a workgroup (PDs, PCs, and student coordinators from a varied pool of MD and DO programs) to re-consider and update guidelines concerning the away rotations process. The workgroup administered a survey to CORD members to help determine programs' home and away rotation procedures and gauge interest in an away rotations universal offer day. Additionally, several current PGY1 residents from a heterogeneous set of programs were consulted to elicit recent applicant input as well.

AOA/CORD is recommending the below guidelines and advocating for an Away Rotations Universal Offer Day(s). ***The goals of these recommendations are to create a more uniform application process, to level the playing field for all students and programs including students from "orphan" medical schools and international students, and to decrease the burden of the away rotations application process for both applicants and programs.***

AOA / CORD GUIDELINES FOR MEDICAL STUDENT AWAY ROTATIONS

- AOA/CORD recommends four total rotations per student per application cycle. One rotation is considered up to four weeks. This total would include home rotations for those who have home programs.
 - Most applicants apply to 1-3 programs per rotation.
- It is recommended that students with home programs complete their home AI/Sub-I rotation before July (if allowed by the home institution).
- AOA/CORD recognizes that some students, with limited orthopaedic resources or exposure at their home program, may opt to do more than four total rotations if needed.
- Refer to individual program websites for visiting and international student guidelines, supplemental application requirements, or any other program-specific details.

STUDENT APPLICATION PROCESS

- AOA/CORD recommends the following be included in every application for a standardized application for all schools/programs:
 - Curriculum Vitae (CV)
 - Program specific statement of interest, 350 word limit (please refer to individual program websites if alternative 350 word limit statement is requested)
 - Step 1 (Pass or Fail on first attempt) and/or COMLEX Level 1

- Step 2 (if taken) and/or COMLEX Level 2 (if taken)
 - Current medical school transcript
- AOA/CORD recommends against required letters of recommendation or secondary applications.
- Students should apply to no more than 3 rotations/month.

UNIVERSAL AWAY ROTATION OFFER DAYS

- **AOA / CORD is recommending all programs participate in a voluntary system of Universal Away Rotation Offer Days**
- **Universal Away Rotation Offer Days will occur in three cycles, permitting three opportunities for students to apply for away rotations.** Offer days will be as follows:
 - 1st Cycle: Monday, April 13, 2026, 12:00pm EST – offer day for July and August Away Rotations (+/- two weeks)
 - 2nd Cycle: Monday, May 4, 2026, 12:00pm EST – offer day for September and October Rotations (+/- two weeks) or any unfilled 1st Cycle spots.
 - After Thursday, May 7, 2026, all admissions are rolling for any unfilled spots.
- **All programs should send away rotation offers on Monday, April 13, 2026 12:00pm EST for the 1st cycle, and on Monday, May 4, 2026 12:00pm EST for the 2nd cycle.**
 - Programs should only offer as many away rotation spots as they have available.
 - A **24-hour moratorium** on accepting or scheduling away rotations will follow the offer.
 - During the moratorium, students should review their invitations with faculty mentors, advisors, family or others who can help create a plan for which away rotations to accept.
 - Students should not reach out to programs during these 24 hours.
 - Programs should not accept or confirm early responses during these 24 hours.
 - Beginning **Tuesday, April 14, 2026, 12:00pm EST, and Tuesday, May 5, 2026, 12:00pm EST**, students can accept away rotation offers.
 - Each applicant will have **48 hours to respond to the program** without fear of the offer being rescinded.
 - If a student declines an away rotations offer or there is no response by **Thursday, April 16, 2026, 12:00pm EST or Thursday, May 7, 2026, 12:00pm EST**, the program may extend an away rotations offer to another student.
 - **After Thursday, May 7, 2026, all admissions are rolling for any unfilled spots.**
- All applications for the **1st cycle** should be submitted no later than **March 16, 2026**.
- All applications for the **2nd cycle** should be submitted no later than **April 6, 2026**.
- Programs should indicate their participation in AOA/CORD Away Rotations Offer Day on their profiles in the AOA/CORD Orthopaedic Residency Information Network (ORIN).
- Programs should update their ORIN profile by Thursday of the offer cycle week to indicate the number of spots unfilled.
- AOA/CORD recognizes that programs may not have control over actual VLSO offers, as these are often dictated by the the program's UME or school of medicine. If so, communication of offers and acceptances will need to be issued and honored via email until the applicant gets the official VLSO offer.