



AOAO Official Position Statement

The Orthopedic Surgery community values the diverse educational backgrounds of applicants to graduate medical education programs. We affirm that applicants from osteopathic medical schools (DOs) bring unique strengths and perspectives that enrich the field of Orthopedic Surgery, particularly given the historic emphasis on the musculoskeletal system and structural anatomy in the osteopathic medical school curricula and in the COMLEX-USA licensure examination program.

We strongly encourage all Orthopedic Surgery residency and subspecialty fellowship programs to recognize COMLEX-USA results as equivalent to USMLE scores when conducting holistic application reviews. Osteopathic applicants should not face discrimination in the application process, and programs should neither require nor recommend that DO applicants take additional licensing examinations beyond the COMLEX-USA.

To support equitable evaluation, programs are advised to use COMLEX-USA percentile scores to provide more context as part of a holistic review of osteopathic applicants: [COMLEX-USA Percentile Scores](#). Beginning with the 2026 ERAS cycle, the percentile for an applicant's COMLEX-USA Level 2-CE and Level 3 scores are displayed within the Thalamus platform.

By embracing these practices, Orthopedic Surgery programs can foster a more inclusive and fair selection process that reflects the values of our specialty.