Ranking Applicants in the 2019 Main Residency Match® Webinar - Questions and Answers

On Monday, January 14, NRMP Chief of Match Operations Jeanette Calli presented a webinar designed to provide program staff with information about the process for ranking Match applicants and how the matching algorithm works.

To further assist programs as they rank applicants for the 2019 Main Residency Match, below are the questions received during the webinar as well as the answers prepared by NRMP staff.

My program is showing that we are registered for a categorical program and a preliminary program on my DIO’s page; however, I am only able to view the categorical program on my (Coordinator) page. Why is that?

You may not be listed in the R3 system as the program coordinator for the preliminary program. Your institutional official, institutional administrator, or program director can access the “Program Director/Coordinator” tab for the program to confirm and update the coordinator information if it is not correct. Please see the Adding & Maintaining Program Coordinators Support Guide for instructions.

Please confirm...we can decrease the AOA Match quota this week before submitting the rank order list (ROL) to National Matching Services (NMS) this Friday, January 18, and increase the NRMP quota for a dually-accredited program by February 11.

Please verify with NMS their deadlines for the AOA Match. Programs accredited by both the American Osteopathic Association® (AOA®) and the ACGME and jointly enrolled in the AOA and Main Residency Match can request an NRMP quota increase after the Quota Change Deadline to place in the NRMP any positions that did not fill in the AOA Match. Requests must be emailed to support@nrmp.org no later than 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on Monday, February 11, 2019. The NRMP will not reduce quotas for dually-accredited programs.

I understand that we cannot ask candidates any rank preferences--but can we tell a candidate that we plan to rank them and even specify what number we plan to rank them as?

Interactions between applicants and program directors during the application, interview, and matching processes are an essential component of professionalism. Section 6.0 of the Match Participation Agreement, Restrictions on Persuasion, permits program directors and applicants to express interest in each other, including telling applicants how the program intends to rank them; however, the Agreement prohibits the solicitation of statements implying a commitment. Nonetheless, some applicants may misinterpret statements of encouragement to signify a commitment on the part of the program, and some programs may make misleading statements.
Such statements are not binding, and neither applicants nor program directors should rely on them when creating their rank order lists. Program directors, institutional officials, and medical school officials should avoid making misleading statements and at all times display a professional code of behavior in their interactions with applicants. The NRMP recommends that each program director and applicant read carefully the Match Communication Code of Conduct for information on acceptable methods of interaction during the interview and matching processes.

For clarification; can programs voluntarily communicate to applicants where they plan on ranking them?
Yes. See previous answer for additional details.

How does the program director (PD) know that he/she has registered?
If the program director can log in to the R3 system, has electronically signed the Match Participation Agreement, and can see the program details for the program(s) in the 2019 Main Residency Match, they are registered. Program coordinators can confirm if their PD is registered/pledged by logging in to the R3 system and selecting the “Program Director/Coordinator” tab. If it says “Not Registered” next to the PD’s name, the PD is not registered for the Match.

Why would you donate a slot?
The R3 system offers institutions the option to revert, or donate, unfilled positions in one program to another during the matching process. If a donor program does not fill its quota, a designated number (equal to, or less than, the quota) of its unfilled positions can be added automatically to the quota of a receiver program. Reversions offer a degree of protection against the possibility that positions will not fill when the matching algorithm is processed. Please see the Creating Reversions for Residency Programs page for additional details.

My program is participating for the first time as an ACGME approved program. We are ranking for PGY-2 starting June 2019 and PGY-2 starting July 2020. How do I do that?
Your program will create two tracks in the Match – one track for physician-reserved or R positions which are PGY-2 positions that begin in July 2019, and one track for advanced or A positions which are PGY-2 positions that begins in July 2020. Please see the Basics for New Programs page for additional details.

Can we reach out to the applicants (via email) to let them know our NRMP number to find us after we have interviewed them?
Yes, programs can and should provide the NRMP program code(s) to all applicants to assist them in ranking the program.

When applicants email thank you notes, are we able to respond thanking them in return (without asking any ranking info)?
Yes, programs can respond to thank you emails.

This is my first time participating in the Match program. I coordinate Vascular and Thoracic Surgery. Vascular Surgery says the Match opens on Jan 23 and the deadline is May 1. Is that correct? Just to clarify, I work with the Vascular Integrated and Thoracic Surgery programs. Those have different calendars, right?

Integrated Vascular Surgery and Integrated Thoracic Surgery programs participate in the Main Residency Match. Please see the Match Calendar for important dates in the Main Residency Match. Independent Thoracic Surgery and Independent Vascular Surgery programs participate in the Thoracic Surgery and Vascular Surgery Fellowship Match, which has a separate calendar.

Are dually-accredited programs permitted to participate in the scramble?

Yes, programs accredited by both the AOA and the ACGME and jointly enrolled in the AOA and Main Residency Match can request a quota increase after the Quota Change Deadline to place in the NRMP any positions that did not fill in the AOA Match and scramble. Requests must be emailed to support@nrmp.org no later than 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on Monday, February 11, 2019. The NRMP will not reduce quotas for dually-accredited programs, so the program should not fill any positions in the scramble after February 11.

For the SOAP, do you have to submit a rank order list for the program?

Programs that have unfilled positions and opt to participate in SOAP can submit a list of applicants who have applied to the program during SOAP and to whom the program wishes to offer a position. Programs are not required to submit a SOAP preference list if they do not wish to do so.

If my program director logged in to the R3 system and we are listed as active and have our number we plan to match, does this mean we are good to go? You had mentioned there are 300 programs that have not done this yet.

Yes, if the program director has registered and electronically signed the Match Participation Agreement and confirmed or updated the program’s quota, reversions, and other settings, the program is up to date with all current Match tasks. The next task is to ensure any program changes are approved by the institutional official and to begin ranking applicants. Ranking opened for the Main Residency Match on January 15, 2019.

Do we have to fill all available slots?

Under the NRMP All In Policy, any program registering for the Main Residency Match must register and attempt to fill all positions through the Match or another national matching plan. The Policy applies to those positions a program wishes to fill, which may be fewer than the number of positions for which the program is accredited. Programs planning to participate in the Match cannot offer positions outside the Match prior to program director registration and program activation. If a position is offered outside the Match prior to program registration and activation, the program is ineligible to enroll in the Match unless
the program has been granted an exception to the All In Policy by the NRMP for the position(s) in question. See the [All In Policy](#) page for additional details.

**Can we enter the ROL and save but not submit yet?**
Yes, the rank order list can be entered and saved to be certified later. The ROL must be certified by the program director by the Rank Order List Certification Deadline of February 20, 2019 at 9:00 p.m. Eastern Time in order to be included when the matching algorithm is processed.

**Does "Pledged" and "Registered" mean the same for PD status?**
Yes, a program director who shows in the R3 system as “Pledged” has registered an individual user account and electronically signed the Match Participation Agreement.

**Please go over the Joint A-P list with a deadline on 1/14.**
Please see the [Joint Advanced-Preliminary Tracks](#) page for details on setting up a Joint A-P arrangement.

**We offer a 5-2 program. Do I need to do anything special?**
Please contact support@nrmp.org to discuss your program.

**I'm a new PC. How do I get set up on nrmp.org? Does my PD need to enter my information and then I get invited?**
Your institutional official, institutional administrator, or program director can access the “Program Director/Coordinator” tab for the program to update the coordinator information if it is not correct. Please see the [Adding & Maintaining Program Coordinators](#) Support Guide for instructions or contact support@nrmp.org.

**SOAP status can be set beginning January 15th when ranking opens. Can the PD do this under his log in?**
To participate in SOAP, program directors must set their SOAP participation status to “YES” in the R3 system. Program coordinators cannot set the SOAP Participation status; only program directors have that functionality.

**I understand there might be candidates who have violated NRMP rules? How do we check this?**
The Applicant Match History is a tool designed to assist program directors, program coordinators, and institutional officials in determining whether an applicant is eligible for appointment or has a concurrent year match commitment to another program. It also displays waiver requests and violation investigations. This information is accessible throughout the year, regardless of whether the Match in which the institution participates is open or closed. Please see the [Using Applicant Match History](#) support guide for instructions on accessing the tool.
Can we ask for a missing score?
Programs can contact applicants and request information needed to assess whether the applicant meets institution and program appointment requirements.

We have an applicant who is currently doing a Transitional Year but applying for PGY-1. Is it okay to rank this person for PGY-1 then maybe assess how many months of credit could be given when the applicant gets matched?
Yes, you can rank an applicant who is eligible for the Match and does not have a concurrent year match commitment. It is up to your program to determine the applicant’s academic progression.

You just mentioned providing all interviewed applicants our NRMP number. This is only my second Match, and I know this was not done last year. Is it a problem NOT doing this?
Applicants can search for a program using multiple criteria and do not require the NRMP program code in order to rank the program. However, it is a best practice to provide this information to ensure applicants are ranking the correct program track.

Two of our programs are participating for the first time as ACGME approved programs. We have an intern program and a Radiology program. Is it necessary for our RAD program to use the Joint program for the PGY-1s who will be linked to the Radiology program after their intern year of training?
Please contact support@nrmp.org to discuss the best option for your programs.

Do we get a confirmation if we successfully submitted the ROL and how many we ranked? If there are errors, would you let us know and give us a chance to correct?
When the rank order list is certified, the PD will be sent an email confirming the certification and the number of ranks on the rank order list. Avoid waiting until the last minute to enter and certify your rank order list. The NRMP does not enter or modify rank order lists so be sure your list reflects your preferences correctly and is entered and certified before the deadline.

Program coordinators cannot enter the rank order list and certify?
Rank order lists are created and certified electronically in the R3 system and can be entered by either the PD or the PC but only the PD can certify the list for use when the matching algorithm is processed.