American University of the Caribbean
School of Medicine

The Match Handbook for 2015

Residency Application Information for AUC Students

Version 1/ June 3, 2014
© 2014 Global Education International. All rights reserved.
Congratulations on having come this far!

Should you have any comments or questions regarding this handbook or the Match process, please contact:

AUC Office of Student and Professional Development
901 Ponce de Leon Boulevard, Suite 700
Coral Gables, Florida 33134
(305) 446-0600, Option 6 • (305) 444-6791 fax
ospd@aucmed.edu
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**INTRODUCTION: PATHS TO RESIDENCY**  

I. "THE MATCH" APPLICATION PROCESS  

II. RESOURCES FOR "THE MATCH" PROCESS  

   - Useful Links  
   - Contacts at AUC  
   - Match Terminology  
   - Types of Residency Positions  
   - Non-NRMP Details  
   - Mini Glossary  
   - Calendar of Important ERAS/NRMP Dates  

III. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS  

   - ABOUT THE ERAS/NRMP RESIDENCY MATCHING APPLICATION PROCESS  
   - About USMLE Steps I and II  
   - About Letters of Recommendation  
   - About Submitting a Photo  
   - About Transcripts  
   - About MSPE Letters  
   - About the Interview  
   - Residency Resources  
   - Recommended Reading  
   - Organization Contact Information  

IV. MAKING A SUCCESSFUL MATCH — HELPFUL TIPS & ADDITIONAL INFORMATION  

   - STATES WITH STRINGENT RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS  

V. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT MAKING A SUCCESSFUL MATCH  

VI. THE COUPLES MATCH  

VII. THE CANADIAN RESIDENCY MATCH (CARMS)  

VI. WHAT TO DO IF YOU DON’T GET A MATCH  

VIII. APPENDICES  

   - Appendix 1: Target USMLE Step Scores from NRMP
**INTRODUCTION: PATHS TO RESIDENCY**

As a student/graduate of a foreign medical school, you can:

**APPLY TO SEVERAL RESIDENCY PROGRAMS THROUGH A MATCHING SERVICE SUCH AS:**

(for most Allopathic/M.D. residency programs)

b. CaRMS (for residency programs in Canada)

**“THE MATCH” APPLICATION PROCESS**

**YOUR PURSUIT OF A RESIDENCY WILL INVOLVE SEVERAL ENTITIES**

- NRMP  
  National Resident Matching Program, or the “Match”

- ERAS  
  Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates  
  a.k.a. AUC’s “Designated Dean’s Office” (ERAS Support Services)

- ECFMG  
  Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates  
  a.k.a. AUC’s “Designated Dean’s Office” (ERAS Support Services)

**YOU WILL NEED TO**

- Research residency programs (a good place to start is Fellowship and Residency Electronic Interactive Database Access System (FREIDA) Online — see Useful Links)
- Write a Personal Statement
- Update your CV
- Request Letters of Recommendation from your attendings, preceptors, program directors
- Register with ECFMG (and upload information, including photo, through OASIS)
- Apply to ERAS
- Register with NRMP
- Submit Transcript and MSPE requests to American University of the Caribbean School of Medicine (AUC)

**THE ERAS/NRMP MATCHING SERVICE REQUIRES:**

- Application forms and payment  
  provided by student
- Personal Statement  
  provided by student
- CV (curriculum vitae a.k.a. resumé)  
  provided by student
- Picture  
  provided by student
- USMLE/Board Scores  
  provided by student/ECFMG
- Letters of Recommendation  
  provided by writers (attendings, directors)
- MSPE Letter (Dean’s Letter)  
  provided by AUC
- Transcript  
  provided by AUC

**Resources for “The Match” Process**

**Useful Links**

- ERAS  
  [https://www.aamc.org/students/medstudents/eras/](https://www.aamc.org/students/medstudents/eras/)
- ECFMG  
  [http://www.ecfmg.org](http://www.ecfmg.org)
- NRMP  
- OASIS  
  [https://oasis2.ecfmg.org/#1](https://oasis2.ecfmg.org/#1)
- FREIDA  
CONTACTS AT AUC

The following AUC staff members are involved in the residency matching application process:

Dial
305-569-8811 for Mollie King who processes Transcript requests and Licensure Forms
305-569-8860 for Renita Revere who processes MSPE requests*
305-569-8815 for Rotation Evaluations
305-569-8854 for Sophia Pino for general residency or match questions

*Note: A dean will approve and sign MSPE letters.

MATCH TERMINOLOGY

Main Match: You registered for the NRMP Match service and you will be notified in March if you obtained a residency position through their matching service.

SOAP: You registered for the NRMP Match service, but you were notified in March that you did not receive a match. You then have the opportunity to compete for unfilled residency positions in what is now known as the Supplemental Offer and Acceptance Program (SOAP).

Independent Applicants: International Medical Students/Graduates (IMGs) or Foreign Medical Students (FMGs). You will be considered an IMG even if you are a US citizen or resident. The title has to do with the fact that you attended medical school abroad.

TYPES OF RESIDENCY POSITIONS

Categorical position: Offers full residency training required for Board Certification in a particular specialty.

Preliminary position: Offers 1-2 years of training, often prior to entry into advanced specialty programs. It may also be called an internship. Surgery and internal medicine training programs can offer preliminary positions in addition to categorical positions.

Transitional Year: Another kind of preliminary year training program or “internship.” The objective of the Transitional Year is to provide a well balanced and broad based clinical year program of graduate medical education in multiple clinical disciplines. A Transitional Year can be ideal training for many types of post-graduate year (PGY) 2 or advanced training programs.

***There is a difference between the Preliminary Position and the Transitional Year. The Preliminary Position is focused on a particular field, such as Internal Medicine or Surgery. The Transitional Year provides a broader exposure to different fields whereby the resident rotates through cores and electives much like he/she did in medical school.

Advanced positions: These are positions that do not begin until one to two years after the Match. They are in specialty programs that require completion of one or more years of preliminary training. You may apply for these, but you must also apply for the required years of preliminary training. Specialties in this category include, but are not limited to Urology, Ophthalmology, Dermatology, and Neurology.

NON-NRMP MATCH DETAILS

The more specialized, non-NRMP Matches are highly competitive. Most programs will only consider Step 1 scores over 230. For more detailed information on the application process, please contact AUC’s Office of Student and Professional Development.

Canadian Residency Matching Service: Also known as CaRMS. The CaRMS process is similar to the NRMP and both services utilize ERAS. For guidelines and instructions for participating in CaRMS, please consult www.carms.ca. Also, if you are applying for residency in Canada, you must sit for the Medical Council Evaluating Examination (MCCEE). Only Canadian citizens or permanent residents may apply to CaRMS.
MINI GLOSSARY

AAMC  Association of American Medical Colleges
ACGME  Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education
AMA  American Medical Association
AOA  American Osteopathic Association
AUA  American Urological Association
CV  curriculum vitae, a.k.a. resumé
ECFMG  Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates a.k.a. the “Designated Dean’s Office” for AUC students and all students/graduates of foreign medical schools
ERAS  Electronic Residency Application Service
FCVS  Federation Credentials Verification Service (created by the FSMB to verify physician credentials for licensing by state medical boards)
FMG  Foreign Medical Graduates (AUC graduate students)
FREIDA  Fellowship and Residency Electronic Interactive Database (AMA website)
FSMB  Federation of State Medical Boards (non-profit organization that represents the medical boards of the United States and its territories).
IMG  International Medical Graduates
MSPE  Medical Student Performance Evaluation, formerly known as the “Dean’s Letter”
NBME EXAM  National Board of Medical Examiners exam
NRMP  National Resident Matching Program
OASIS  Online Applicant Status and Information

CALENDAR OF IMPORTANT ERAS/NRMP DATES

June 1/2014  AUC begins accepting MSPE and Transcript requests
July 1  ECFMG begins distributing tokens
July 1  ERAS begins accepting applications for March 2014 NRMP Match
Aug. 1  AUC Deadline for submitting Transcript requests
Aug. 30  AUC Deadline for submitting MSPE requests
Sept. 15  Registration opens at 12:00 noon eastern time for applicants
Oct. 1  MSPEs are released to programs
Nov. 30  NRMP Early Registration Deadline for applications
Dec. 15  AUC’s recommended Deadline for taking USMLE Step 2 CK in order to participate in the Main Match
Dec. 31  Deadline for taking USMLE Step 2 CS in order to participate in the Main Match
Jan. 15/2015  NRMP begins accepting Rank Order Lists
Feb. 25  NRMP Deadline for Late Registration
           NRMP Deadline for Rank Order List certification
           NRMP Deadline if you need to Withdraw from the Match
March 16  Match Week

NRMP notifies applicants to let them know if they matched. Unfilled program list is released. Unmatched applicants may begin applying to unfilled programs at 12:00 pm Eastern Time.

SOAP offer rounds begin at 12:00 noon Eastern Time

NRMP Match results are released. SOAP concludes at 5:00 pm Eastern Time

Hospitals begin sending appointments to matched applicants

July 1  Residency begins

**Frequently Asked Questions**

**About the ERAS/NRMP Residency Matching Application Process**

**Q. What is a Rank Order List?**
**A.** It is a list of the residency programs that interest you, ranked in the order of your preference.

**Q. How many programs should I apply to?**
**A.** The AMA suggests a minimum of 25 programs for IMGs, but recommends applying to as many programs as possible. Do NOT apply to more than one program at the same medical center. Do NOT apply to any program that you would not want to go to. DO apply to programs in more than one state, especially if you are seeking a competitive residency. Look into places that others may not want to go to, such as rural areas or underserved populations. You will gain experience that you wouldn’t otherwise get.

**Q. Do I need to have my USMLE Step 2 scores to apply for a residency?**
**A.** No.

Most programs do not require Step 2 scores at the time of application or interview; however, they do require that the test be passed by the time the residency begins in July. Please review AUC’s Step 2 CK policy in Section 27 of the [Student Handbook](#).

**Q. Do I need to graduate before I can apply for a residency?**
**A.** Yes and No.

Most programs do not require that you graduate before applying or interviewing; however, they do require that you graduate before your residency begins in July. The latest month you can graduate is June.

Some programs do require that you graduate before applying or interviewing. You must do your research to find out.

**Q. Are AUC students/grads considered “foreign” or “international” medical students/grads?**
**A.** Yes. You will be considered an IMG/FMG.

**Q. What is the “Designated Dean’s Office” for AUC?**
**A.** ECFMG is the “Designated Dean’s Office” for AUC students and all students/graduates of foreign medical schools.

**Q. Where can I find information about the residency programs participating in the match service?**
**A.** There are several resources: ERAS website, NRMP website, AMA website / FREIDA Online.

**A few more things about the application process...**
Make sure your application is not just as complete as possible, but also as strong as possible. It is advantageous to show that you are well rounded and personally interested in the field for which you are applying. Have your application in as early as you can.

Be prepared to answer for any lapses in study time or deficient grades.

Customize your personal statement to each specialty that you apply to. Sending a generic statement looks just as bad as sending an internal medicine application to a pediatric program.

ABOUT USMLE STEPS I AND II

Q. Are my Step scores important?
A. Yes, VERY. Not only do program directors look at your scores, they look to see how many attempts you made in order to pass. The first attempt is the most favorable result and a score of 217 or higher on Step 1 and 224 or higher on Step 2 CK are advantageous according to NRMP’s Charting Outcomes in the Match for International Medical Graduates.

Q. When should I take USMLE Step 2 CK?
A. Students must satisfy the AUC USMLE Step 2 CK policy found in section 27 of the Student Handbook. AUC recommends students take USMLE Step 2 CK by Dec. 15 prior to the year they enter the match to be eligible to participate in the Main Match. Students must submit a passing score for USMLE Step 2 CK by the Rank Order Deadline in order to participate in the Main Match. More information about USMLE Step 2 CK score reporting can be found at http://www.usmle.org/bulletin/scores/#reporting.

Q. When should I take USMLE Step 2 CS?
A. Students are recommended to take Becker’s Clinical Exam Assessment examination before taking USMLE Step 2 CS. Register at http://falconreviews.com/AUCMedCS/. Students need to take USMLE Step 2 CK by Dec. 31 prior to the year they enter the match to be eligible to participate in the Main Match. Students should schedule the examination no later than April prior to the year they enter the match due to a limited number of sites where the USMLE Step 2 CK examination is offered. More information about USMLE Step 2 CS score reporting can be found at http://www.usmle.org/bulletin/scores/#reporting.

Q. If I fail my Step exam, can I take it again?
A. Yes. However, many programs are likely to disqualify candidates who have taken it more than twice.

Note 1: You will not be allowed to retake the exam if you pass with a low score.

Note 2: AUC will grant additional LOA’s per Student Handbook Regulations to study for the USMLE. Remember that you will have to explain to programs if you have extended gaps in your medical education.

Make sure you only take the minimum amount of leaves of absence, as you will have to answer for any gaps in your medical education.

Note 3: Most licensing boards require that you take Steps I, II and III within a seven year period.

ABOUT LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATIONS (LORS)

Q. Whom should I ask for a Letter of Recommendation?
A. You should ask clerkship attendings, preceptors, and directors — your primary source for LORs. Also, try to develop good working relationships with the staff and attendings at the hospitals where you do your rotations. Ensure that you have a LOR for the specialty to which you are applying. The best way to ask for a LOR is directly and at the end of your rotation. Receiving clear, positive feedback and feeling good about your performance in the rotation are great indicators of getting a favorable LOR. A good tip is to ask the potential letter writer in this way: “I’m going to need a strong letter or recommendation next year when I’m applying for residency. Do you feel like you know me well enough to write one?” This leaves the letter writer the option to decline and thus saves the student from getting a letter that could hurt his or her chances for matching.
Q. Should I waive my right to see a Letter of Recommendation?
A. AUC’s recommendation is to waive the right to see the LOR, but the decision is ultimately up to the student. A student not electing to waive his or her right can raise a red flag to some program directors. It can indicate that the applicant is not confident that the letter will be supportive, or rather, he or she is concerned it will reflect something negative. Students who waive their right will not be permitted to see the LOR at any time during the application process.

Q. How many Letters of Recommendation should I obtain?
A. You may upload as many as you want to your ERAS account, but ERAS will transmit a maximum of four letters of recommendation to each program.

Q. How do I submit my Letters of Recommendation?
A. You don’t—your letter writers (attendings, preceptors, directors) submit them.

For Letters Requested After July 1: Letter writers should send them directly to ECFMG. You must provide the letter writer with a Document Submission Form (DSF) to submit along with your letter. Instructions on how to generate the DSF will be found in your ERAS account. Letter writers must submit the letters electronically if they choose this option.

For Letters Requested Prior to July 1: Letter writers should send them directly to AUC, Attn: Sophia Pino (for temporary holding). After July 1, students must contact Sophia Pino and request that LORs and accompanying forms be forwarded to ECFMG.

Note 1: Letters must be on hospital letterhead and signed in blue ink. AUC must have the original hard copy in order to submit letters on your behalf.

Note 2: You will need to provide each letter writer with an ERAS Document Submission Form (DSF) and Letter of Recommendation Cover Sheet, which they will need to send to ECFMG, or AUC, along with the letter. These forms can be found on the ECFMG and ERAS websites. You will not have access to the DSF until you open your ERAS account.

Q. How long does it take for Letters of Recommendation to appear in ERAS?
A. Once ERAS receives your letters, it can take up to two weeks to scan and upload the information into its system. Receipt of documents can be tracked in the ERAS Support Services Document Tracking System, which you can access via your account in ECFMG’s OASIS. Contact ERAS for more information.

Q. Where can I get ERAS Document Submission Forms and LOR Cover Sheets?
A. From the ECFMG or ERAS websites. Please remember that you will not have a DSF until you have an ERAS account. Please contact OSPD for a temporary cover sheet if necessary.

ABOUT SUBMITTING A PHOTO

Q. How do I submit my photo?
A. Digital Photos should be uploaded to ECFMG via OASIS

ABOUT TRANSCRIPTS

Q. How can I obtain my transcript?
A. Complete the form at http://www.aucmed.edu/forms/transcript_request.html

Q. How long will it take for the transcript to appear in ERAS?
A. Once ERAS receives your transcript, it can take a few weeks to scan and upload the information into its system. Receipt of documents can be tracked in the ERAS Support Services Document Tracking System, which you can access via your account in ECFMG’s OASIS. Contact ECFMG for more information.
Q. What is an MSPE Letter?
A. The MSPE Letter, formerly known as the “Dean’s Letter”, is the Medical Student Performance Evaluation.

Q. Does the MSPE Letter count as a Letter of Recommendation?
A. No, it is a letter of evaluation.

Q. What is included in the MSPE Letter?
A. The MSPE Letter includes the following information: Student name and location of university
   Unique Characteristics (a summary of your performance, accomplishments, awards, research, publications, memberships, activities and distinguishing features)
   Dates of attendance at AUC
   Notice of any LOAs, Dismissals, Probationary Periods, and Disciplinary Action
   Graduation date or anticipated graduation date
   Non-course specific summary for Basic Sciences (Time taken to complete Basic Sciences and GPA Class Rank at the end of Basic Sciences)
   USMLE Step I score and USMLE Step II score (if completed at time of MSPE request)
   ECFMG certification status (you are eligible for certification once you pass Step II and graduate)
   Clinical rotation locations and overall evaluations along with preceptor’s comments Signature of the Clinical Dean or Chief Academic Officer
   Comparison performance graphs for Basic Sciences courses and Core Clinical Clerkships
   Summary Statement

Q. When is the best time to request an MSPE letter?
A. 1. Beginning June 1 and no later than August 30, AND
   2. When you have received all the scores that you would like included on the letter, AND
   3. When you have completed all the rotations and received all the evaluations that you would like included on the letter—a minimum of five rotation evaluations is required for an MSPE.
   4. Students are permitted one update to their MSPE letter June 1 – Aug. 30.

Q. How long does it take to process an MSPE letter?
A. It can take up to 3-4 weeks to process an MSPE request received during the Match registration season (July–Sept.). The letters are then electronically sent to ECFMG and are uploaded to ERAS within days of their receipt.
   Note: MSPE letters are sometimes needed for reasons other than the main match. Requests made in the off season usually take about a week to process.

Q. How do I get an MSPE letter?
A. Submit your request via the online form http://www.aucmed.edu/student-services/forms-and-resources/mspe-letter-request.aspx
   Note: A Document Submission Form is no longer required for MSPE letters.

Q. What is a UC Questionnaire?
A. AUC has crafted a “unique characteristics” questionnaire to “interview” students and help them share additional, pertinent details of their goals and medical school experience.

Q. Where can I get a UC Questionnaire?
A. It is a part of the MSPE request form and can be accessed here: http://www.aucmed.edu/student-services/forms-and-resources/mspe-letter-request.aspx.

Q. What type of information will I need to include on the MSPE request form?
A. The request form will ask you for the following:
Contact Information
Status (student or graduate)
Attendance and Graduation Dates
Name and Address of Recipients, if other than ERAS

Q. How can I know if AUC has received my MSPE request?
A. Students will receive an automated email confirmation after the request form has been successfully submitted.

Q. Can I see the MSPE letter before it is sent to ERAS?
A. Yes. A complimentary PDF copy of the letter will automatically be emailed to you for verification, before it goes to ERAS.

Q. Can I make changes to the Unique Characteristics section of the MSPE letter before it is sent to ERAS?
A. Yes and no.
The information included in the unique characteristics section of the letter is derived from several sources: your scores/grades, performance evaluations, CV, and the questionnaire that you submit to AUC. Although you do not get to change the letter to suit your personal taste, spelling mistakes and factual errors should be brought to our attention for correction.

Q. I don’t like some of the clinical evaluation comments on my MSPE Letter—can they be changed/removed?
A. No. Your MSPE is like a report card—none of your evaluations can be omitted. However, we urge you to review your evaluation comments as you receive them at the end of each of your clinical rotations. If you do not receive your evaluations at the end of each rotation, please make sure that you ask to see them and address any issues you may have at that time.

Q. How can I make sure that my MSPE letter is the best it can be?
A. 1. Send all the required documents together, not piecemeal.
2. Make certain at the time of your request that you have completed the rotations (and received the evaluations) that you would like included in your letter—there is a 5 rotation minimum.
3. Make certain that you have received and read the evaluations for each of your rotations as soon as they are available (within 30 days of rotation completion) so that you are not surprised by what appears on the MSPE. Your contact at AUC for evaluations is the University Registrar at aucregistrar@aucmed.edu. Remember, comments cannot be changed or amended by anyone other than the preceptor who wrote them. It is imperative that you review the comments and make sure they are correct. It is up to you to contact the preceptor if there is a dispute with the comments.
4. Make certain that the CV you send to AUC (and ERAS) is updated, clear/easy to read, complete with dates and details, and well organized (with most recent activities at the top of each section). It should not have any typographical errors, and should include the following:
   • Degree information (including institution, location and graduation date)
   • Employment experience (for which you get paid)
   • Honors/awards/distinctions
   • Research experience
   • Abstract/presentation/publication information (name, dates, brief description of your involvement)
   • Certifications, internships/study abroad programs
   • Volunteer/community service activities/medical missions (voluntary)
   • Leadership experience memberships/affiliations
   • Miscellaneous (for example, fluent in several languages)
5. Submit a Unique Characteristics (UC) Questionnaire, which helps AUC to gather information about your medical school achievements. These can include community service, awards won, research
performed/published, and other distinctions.

ABOUT THE INTERVIEW

Q. What are some tips for doing well in the interview?
A. 1. Be on time. If you can’t be on time, or can’t make the appointment at all, contact your interviewer to let them know as quickly as possible. You should apologize and have a VERY GOOD REASON for being late or canceling.

2. Look the part. Your appearance does count. Be neat, well groomed, modest/conservative, and professional.

3. Act the part. Be positive, friendly, and most importantly, enthusiastic. Criticism and a negative demeanor/attitude/tone will not get you the job.

a. Learn how to shake hands in a professional manner. Limp or overly firm handshakes are off-putting. Make sure you smile and make eye contact.

b. Listen carefully, don’t interrupt when the interviewer is speaking and avoid these two extremes 1) one word answers; and 2) overly long, rambling and tangential responses. Remember to smile.

c. Be appropriately confident. If you are a little nervous, it’s okay to admit it. If you are very nervous, get it under control or you risk showing that you lack confidence in your abilities.

d. Be gracious. Mind your manners and show respect for the interviewers. Make them feel that you are appreciative of the time they are taking with you.

e. After the interview, send a short handwritten thank you letter to the committee or Program Director via US Mail.

4. Be prepared. Plan A is to be early, Plan B is to be on time. Practice answering interview questions. Practice “looking” and “acting” the part.

5. Do your homework. Research the program you are being interviewed for. Come prepared with two or three well thought out questions about the program that cannot be easily found on the website.

If possible, research the person who will be interviewing you.

Below is list of common interview questions taken from the American Medical Association’s website:

1. Why did you choose this specialty?
2. Why are you interested in this program?
3. What are your goals?
4. Tell me about yourself?
5. What did you do before medicine? (To an older student)
6. Why should we pick you?
7. What are your strengths?
8. What are your weaknesses?
9. Are you interested in academic or in clinical medicine?
10. Do you want to do research?
11. What was the most interesting case that you have been involved in?
12. Present a case that you handled during medical school.
13. Do you plan to do a fellowship?
14. What could you offer this program?
15. How do you rank in your class?
16. Do you see any problems managing a professional and a personal life?
17. Are you prepared for the rigors of residency?
18. Where do you see yourself in 5 years?
19. What questions do you have?

RESIDENCY RESOURCES

Websites
FREIDA: http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/education-careers/graduate-medical-education/freida-online.page
ECFMG: www.ecfmg.org
NRMP: www.nrmp.org
AUC OSPD Resources: http://www.aucmed.edu/student-services/forms-and-resources.aspx
ERAS Resources for IMG Applicants: https://www.aamc.org/students/medstudents/eras/international/344044/resources-info.html
ECFMG Certificate Holders Office (ECHO) Resources: http://www.ecfmg.org/echo/resources.html
AAMC: www.aamc.org
ERAS Website: https://www.aamc.org/students/medstudents/eras/
CARMS: www.carms.ca
Website with resources for medical students: www.studentdoc.com
Website for the Student Doctor Network, an educational organization: www.studentdoctor.net
Website with reviews of programs and interviews written by medical residents: www.scutwork.com

RECOMMENDED READING
Iserson, Kenneth, Getting Into a Residency: A Guide for Medical Students
Le, Tao, Bhushan, V., and Amin, C. First Aid for the Match: Insider Advice from Students and Residency Directors

ORGANIZATION CONTACT INFORMATION
American Hospital Association: www.aha.org
One North Franklin
Chicago, IL 60606-3421
312-422-3000

American Academy of Family Physicians: www.aafp.org
11400 Tomahawk Creek Pkwy
Leawood, KS 66211-2672
913-906-6000

American Medical Association: www.ama-assn.org
515 N. State St.
Chicago, IL 60610

American Academy of Pediatrics: www.aap.org
141 Northwest Point Blvd.
Elk Grove Village, IL 60007-1098
847-434-4000; FAX: 847-434-8000

American College of Emergency Physicians: www.acep.org
1125 Executive Circle
Dallas, TX 75038-2522
800-798-1822; FAX: 972-580-2816

American College of Obstetricians & Gynecologists: www.acog.org
409 12th St. S.W.
P.O. Box 96920
Washington, DC 20090-6920
202-638-5577

American College of Physicians/American Society of Internal Medicine: www.acponline.org
190 N. Independence Mall West
Philadelphia, PA 19106-1572

American College of Radiology: www.acr.org
1891 Preston White Dr.
Reston, VA 22091-4397
703-648-8900

American Neurological Association: www.ananeuroa.org
5841 Cedar Lake Rd., Suite 204
Minneapolis, MN 55416
952-545-6284; FAX: 952-545-6073

American Psychiatric Association: www.psych.org
1000 Wilson Blvd., Suite 1825
Arlington, VA 22209-3901
703-907-7300

Association of American Medical Colleges: www.aamc.org
2450 N Street, NW Washington, DC 20037-1127
202-828-0400; FAX: 202-828-1125

College of American Pathologists: www.cap.org
325 Waukegan Road
Northfield, IL 60093
800-323-4040 or 847-832-7000; FAX: 847-832-8000

Federation of State Medical Boards of the U.S.: www.fsmb.org
PO Box 619850
Dallas, TX 75261-9850
817-868-4000; FAX: 817-868-4099

National Resident Matching Program: www.nrmp.org
2450 N Street, NW
Washington, DC 20037-1127
202-828-0566 or 866-617-5838; FAX: 202-828-4797
**MAKING A SUCCESSFUL MATCH — HELPFUL TIPS & ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

**HELPFUL TIPS**

**BE PREPARED AND PLAN AHEAD**
Research the residency programs that interest you. Familiarize yourself with the websites of the parties involved in the Match process, and read the information provided by AUC. Look up information about the process online. Talk to someone who has participated in the past. Students can also sign up for the Physician Match Advisor program by using the following request form: [http://www.aucmed.edu/student-services/forms-and-resources/physician-match-advisor-request.aspx](http://www.aucmed.edu/student-services/forms-and-resources/physician-match-advisor-request.aspx)

**PREPARE ALL NECESSARY DOCUMENTS SOONER RATHER THAN LATER**
Have someone with writing skills proofread your personal statement, CV and application. Don’t miss any deadlines and keep a Match calendar handy. Be ready to participate in the SOAP in case you don’t obtain a residency during the Main Match.

**A WORD ABOUT SOCIAL MEDIA**
Your residency program will be your employer for the next few years of your life. Be aware that, like many employers today, they may look up your social media pages, blogs and so forth during the screening process. Make sure that there is nothing visible on those pages that can be called into question. Use good judgment when posting photographs, videos, status updates, comments, and blog posts. Make the most of your privacy settings; make items you are unsure of as invisible as possible. Better yet, don’t post anything in questionable taste.

**STATES WITH STRINGENT RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS**

**California—Complete Forms L1A-L1E to obtain a PTAL a.k.a. “California Letter”**
To apply to a residency program in California, FMGs must first apply for a Postgraduate Training Authorization Letter (PTAL) from California’s medical board—a process that can take approximately 6 months. The PTAL itself can only be obtained post graduation because the medical board requires a certified copy of your medical degree. Remember to replace the temporary receipt you submitted to ERAS with the actual PTAL.

In summary, if you want to obtain a residency in California, you will need to plan ahead: 1) Apply for the PTAL 6 months before your graduation date; and 2) Plan to graduate at least 2 months before the residency’s start date so that California’s medical board has time to process your transcript, diploma, L2, L5 and L6 (documents you could not provide at the time of your initial application). L6 forms must be sent directly to the California Medical Board by the hospital. You must have an L6 form signed by the hospital for every rotation, both core and elective that you complete.

For more information about PTAL, go to:

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT MAKING A SUCCESSFUL MATCH**

**Q. What qualifications do the residency program directors look at?**
**A.** AUC professionals will say they look at everything:
- Board scores (USMLE Steps I, II, and III, when applicable)
- Curriculum vitae, a.k.a. resume
- Education (degrees earned, institutions and dates attended)
- Work experience
• Honors/awards/distinctions
• Research experience as well as abstracts/presentations/publications
• Community service/medical mission experience
• Student government/leadership experience
• MSPE (Dean’s Letter)
• Transcript
• Personal statement
• LoRs


**THE COUPLES MATCH**

The Couples Match was intended for married couples and committed pairs. It allows for the couple to match in the same area, so that they may live together during residency. Going through the match as a couple has a similar success rate to going through the match as an individual.

**HOW IT WORKS**

Each partner signs up for the Match individually and goes on interviews individually, indicating to the program(s) that he/she is applying to the Match as a couple. Once interviews are completed, the couple then compiles a combined rank order list (ROL) with every possible combination of program and location, including the scenarios where one matches and the other does not. Once the list is certified, the NRMP will match the pair to the most preferred pair of programs to which each has been offered a position. For a more detailed explanation from the NRMP, visit:


**THINGS TO CONSIDER**

There are compromises to be made. To match in the same area, one partner (or both) may not get his or her first choice program.

The possibility exists that one partner may not match. While it does not affect the matched partner’s matched status, the unmatched partner will have to go through the scramble.

If one or both partner does not match, his or her application will not be run by NRMP individually.

It becomes more difficult if one or both partners have chosen competitive specialties.

**TIPS FOR NAVIGATING THE COUPLES MATCH**

• Start researching programs early.
• Let the programs know that you plan on going through the couples match. They may be able to schedule you and your partner on the same day for interviews, saving you time and money. Be specific about who your partner is and the department in which he or she is interviewing.
• Apply to programs in the same hospital (if in different specialties) or to hospitals within 50 miles of each other.
• Rank programs in the order of your personal preference. Remember this is the next 3 to 7 years of your life, the majority of which will be spent within the confines of a particular hospital. Rank thoughtfully.
• When creating the matched/unmatched section of the ROL, try to favor the partner with the more competitive specialty. That is, the partner with the less competitive specialty will have an easier time if he or she needs to scramble, as there will probably be more options (i.e. Anesthesiology versus Family Medicine).
• COMMUNICATE! Make sure each one knows what the other is looking for in a program, what they are willing to endure, what they will not tolerate, and so forth.
• Remember, the San Francisco and other specialty matches DO NOT have a couples match.
• Contact the Office of Student and Professional Development if you require additional guidance.

**THE CANADIAN RESIDENCY MATCH (CaRMS)**

**KEY TERMS FOR CaRMS**

**CMG**: Canadian Medical Graduate; a Canadian citizen or permanent resident who has graduated from a Canadian medical school.

**First Iteration**: The first “round” of CaRMS. It is comparable to the Main Match in the US.

**Second Iteration**: The second “round” of CaRMS. Takes place in a shorter time frame than the first iteration, fewer positions are available, but all positions are open to all applicants.

**Parallel Positions**: Residency positions available to IMGs in a separate stream from CMGs, in one or more disciplines.

**Competitive Positions**: Residency positions in all disciplines available to both IMGs and CMGs.

**Return of Service**: An agreement to serve as a physician in an underserved community for a specified amount of time. Conditions for return of service agreements vary by province.

**TO QUALIFY FOR THE MAIN CaRMS MATCH YOU MUST:**

• Be a Canadian citizen or permanent resident
• Take the Medical Council of Canada Evaluating Examination (MCCEE) OR be scheduled to take the September or November test dates.

Remember that CaRMS has a different schedule of dates and deadlines than NRMP, so make sure that you check their website often to make sure you have everything in on time.

You may use ERAS to apply for CaRMS and NRMP.

Useful links for CaRMS applicants:

- [www.carms.ca](http://www.carms.ca): CaRMS website
- [www.cpsnl.ca](http://www.cpsnl.ca): College of Physicians and Surgeons of Newfoundland and Labrador
- [www.mcc.ca](http://www.mcc.ca): Medical Council of Canada
- [www.healthforceontario.ca](http://www.healthforceontario.ca): HealthForce Ontario
- [www.pcrc.org](http://www.pcrc.org): Physician Credentials Registry of Canada
- [www.capprogram.ca](http://www.capprogram.ca): Clinical Assessment for Practice Program
Each province has different restrictions, see below for an outline. For detailed information for each province, please see [https://www.carms.ca/en/returning-to-canada](https://www.carms.ca/en/returning-to-canada)

**Newfoundland**

IMGs may participate in the first and second iterations.

In the first iteration, applicants will apply to a separate stream of positions then CMGs. In the second iteration, they will apply to the same stream of positions as CMGs.

IMGs must complete a Return of Service.

IMGs matched through the first or second iterations are not eligible to transfer to another training program.

IMGs must demonstrate English language proficiency.

IMGs must pass MCCEE.

**Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island**

IMGs may participate in the first and second iterations.

In the first iteration, applicants will apply to a separate stream of positions then CMGs. In the second iteration, they will apply to the same stream of positions as CMGs.

IMGs must complete a Return of Service.

IMGs must demonstrate English language proficiency.

IMGs must pass MCCEE.

**Québec**

IMGs must be approved by la Conférence des vice-doyens aux études postdoctorales des facultés de médecine du Québec, for both iterations.

IMGs may participate in both the first and second iterations. IMGs do not have to complete a Return of Service.
IMGs interested in applying for residency in Quebec should contact the College des medecins du Quebec for detailed instructions. [www.cmq.org](http://www.cmq.org)

**Ontario**

IMGs may participate in the first and second iterations.

In the first iteration, applicants will apply to a separate stream of positions then CMGs. In the second iteration, they will apply to the same stream of positions as CMGs.

IMGs must complete a Return of Service.

IMGs must pass MCCEE.

IMGs must demonstrate English and/or French proficiency.

All IMGs accepted into a residency program in Ontario must complete a pre-residency orientation and are required to undergo an Assessment Verification Period.

**Manitoba**

IMGs may participate in the first and second iterations.

IMGs must complete a Return of Service.

IMGs must pass MCCEE by the Rank Order List deadline. Preference may be given to those who have completed MCCQE parts I and II and/or the NAC OCSE.

IMGs must demonstrate English language proficiency.

All accepted IMGs are required to complete a pre-residency orientation program.

**Saskatchewan**

IMGs may participate in the first and second iterations.

In the first iteration, applicants will apply to a separate stream of positions then CMGs. In the second iteration, they will apply to the same stream of positions as CMGs.

With the exception of Family Medicine programs, Vacant Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada specialty program positions in the IMG Stream in Second Iteration are open only to International Medical Graduates who did not apply to these programs in the first iteration. Applicants must meet the eligibility criteria as outlined in the individual program description(s).

IMG designated family medicine positions from first iteration are open for application to both CMGs and IMGs in second iteration.

IMGs matched through the IMG Stream in second iteration will be required to sign a Return of Service contract with the Ministry of Health for the Province of Saskatchewan.

IMGs matched through the IMG Stream in second iteration will be required to successfully complete a mandatory assessment/orientation program prior to commencing their residency training program.
Programs may have their own specific application criteria, so please inquire with the individual programs.

IMGs must complete a return of service.

IMGs must have MCCEE passed at time of application. Priority may be given to IMGs who have completed MCQUE Part I.

IMGs must provide proof of English language proficiency.

**ALBERTA**

IMGs may participate in the first and second iterations, but must be completely assessed by the Alberta International Medical Graduate Program: [www.aimg.ca](http://www.aimg.ca)

In the second iteration, IMGs apply to the same stream of positions as CMGs.

All IMGs must provide proof of English language proficiency.

All IMGs must provide proof of Alberta residency.

All IMGs must write MCCEE and the Alberta OSCE or the NAC OCSE.

All IMGs accepted into residency programs in Alberta must successfully complete the AIMG program externship prior to the start of their residency.

**BRITISH COLUMBIA**

All IMGs must present passing scores on MCCEE and the NAC OCSE.

IMGs may participate in the first iteration, but must be assessed by the British Columbia IMG Assessment Program in order to be eligible.

In the first iteration, applicants will apply to a separate stream of positions then CMGs. In the second iteration, they will apply to the same stream of positions as CMGs.

IMGs must complete a Return of Service.

All IMGs must provide proof of English language proficiency.

**This information is subject to change, please visit the CaRMS website for detailed information on the specific requirements for each province**

**WHAT TO DO IF YOU DON’T RECEIVE A MATCH**

Don’t panic—it can and does happen on occasion, even if you do everything right. Seek objective advice about why this may have happened and make the necessary changes to improve your chances with the next match. You may reach out to our team of Physician Match Advisors who can help provide insight on how to improve your application. Complete the request form here - [http://aucmed.edu/student-services/forms-and-resources/physician-match-advisor-request.aspx](http://aucmed.edu/student-services/forms-and-resources/physician-match-advisor-request.aspx).

You may also contact OSPD to learn about ways to strengthen your residency application for the following year and to receive news of any open residency positions that become available.

Stay medically active. Here are some options:
• Apply for the Clinical Teaching Research Fellow position at the AUC basic medical sciences campus: https://aucmed-devry.icims.com/jobs/34611/behavior-clinical-medicine-faculty-research-fellow/job

• Pursue a masters or doctoral degree
• Get involved in a research study
• Volunteer for a medical mission
• Apply for an observership or externship.
• Seek out in-hospital jobs, such as surgical assisting, research assisting, chart reviewing, or even volunteer work. The important thing is for you to develop relationships with the hospital staff and have the administration see that you are a dedicated, hard worker.
• You can also consider non-clinical work. MDs are still in demand at pharmaceutical companies, in hospital administrations, managed care companies, government agencies, and insurance companies. Universities also hire MDs as adjunct faculty and lecturers. For information, news, and job boards for nonclinical jobs, look at www.nonclinicaljobs.com. Network. Stay in touch with matched grads and have them keep an eye out for openings in their programs.
• Many specialty organizations, such as the AAFP will post residency vacancies, so check their websites often.
• Enroll with Find A Resident, service that matches unmatched residents with unfilled positions. https://www.aamc.org/students/residents/findaresident/

• Take time out to carefully examine your application materials. Look at your CV and personal statement. Were they as strong as they could have been? What about your letters of recommendation? Is it possible to collect stronger ones?
• Get in touch with your financial aid advisor to find out how these options will affect the terms of your student loan repayment agreement.
### APPENDIX 1

**Average Target USMLE Step 1 Scores Programs Consider When Granting Interviews**

From the 2012 NRMP Program Director Survey (http://www.nrmp.org/data/programresultsbyspecialty2012.pdf)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specialty</th>
<th>Average Scores Below Which Programs Generally Do Not Grant Interviews</th>
<th>Average Scores Above Which Programs Almost Always Grant Interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anesthesiology</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Neurology (Neurology)</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dermatology</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Medicine</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Medicine</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Surgery</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal Medicine</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal Medicine/Pediatrics</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neurological Surgery</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neurology</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obstetrics and Gynecology</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthopaedic Surgery</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Otolaryngology</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pathology</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pediatrics</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PM&amp;R</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plastic Surgery</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>N/A*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychiatry</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radiation Oncology</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radiology</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vascular Surgery</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitional Year</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Scores not reported because of low response rate

---

**Average Target USMLE Step 2 CK Scores Programs Consider When Granting Interviews**

From the 2012 NRMP Program Director Survey (http://www.nrmp.org/data/programresultsbyspecialty2012.pdf)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specialty</th>
<th>Average Scores Below Which Programs Generally Do Not Grant Interviews</th>
<th>Average Scores Above Which Programs Almost Always Grant Interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anesthesiology</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Neurology (Neurology)</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dermatology</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Medicine</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Medicine</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Surgery</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal Medicine</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal Medicine/Pediatrics</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neurological Surgery</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neurology</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obstetrics and Gynecology</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthopaedic Surgery</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Otolaryngology</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pathology</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pediatrics</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PM&amp;R</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plastic Surgery</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>N/A*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychiatry</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radiation Oncology</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radiology</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vascular Surgery</td>
<td>N/A*</td>
<td>N/A*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitional Year</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Scores not reported because of low response rate