

Professionalism and The Match: Important Considerations

This message highlights the importance the NRMP places on the professional behavior of all Match participants because strict adherence to the terms and conditions of the Match Agreement is essential to establishing a fair and transparent process.

During the registration process, Match participants electronically affix their passwords to and agree to comply with the terms and conditions of the applicable Match Participation Agreement ("Match Agreement"). The NRMP maintains the highest professional standards in the conduct of its Matches and in its interactions with all participants. Similarly, the NRMP expects all Match participants to conduct their affairs in an ethical and professionally responsible manner.

Demonstrating Professional Behavior

Participants must demonstrate professional behavior throughout the application, interview, and matching processes by observing practices that protect the right of applicants and programs to determine their selections in the absence of unwarranted pressure and by respecting the binding nature of a match commitment. **Failure to demonstrate professional behavior could result in a Match violation and sanctions.** The [Policies and Procedures for Waiver Requests](#) and the [Policies and Procedures for Reporting, Investigation, and Disposition of Violations of NRMP Agreements](#) are incorporated by reference into the Match Participation Agreement and are available for review.

Resources available in the Registration, Ranking, and Results® (R3®) system can help guide Match participants through the interviewing and matching processes. The Applicant Match History, available throughout the year in the R3 system, must be used by program directors and NRMP institutional officials to determine whether an applicant has a binding concurrent-year match commitment to another program, has requested a waiver of a match commitment, and/or has been involved in an NRMP violation investigation. An Institution and Program Violations Report also is available in the R3 system to allow applicants and medical school officials to determine whether an institution or program has been involved in an NRMP violation investigation.

Consequences of Engaging in Unprofessional Behavior

Failure to comply with all the terms and conditions of the Agreement, whether intentionally or not, may result in an investigation and the imposition of sanctions. The violations most commonly reported to the NRMP include:

1. After a Match, an applicant who obtained a position does not accept that position. The Match Participation Agreement states that the listing of a program on the applicant's certified rank order list and the listing of an applicant on a program's certified rank order list establishes a binding commitment to accept/offer an appointment if a match occurs and to start training in good faith on the date specified in the appointment contract. The same binding commitment is established when positions are obtained through the Match Week Supplemental Offer and Acceptance Program® (SOAP®).
2. A program director asks an applicant about ranking preferences or for information about other programs where the applicant has applied or interviewed. Although applicants may volunteer such information, it is a violation of the Agreement if program staff requests that information.

3. An applicant with a binding commitment applies for, discusses, interviews for, or accepts a concurrent-year position in another program prior to receiving a waiver from the NRMP. Similarly, a program director discusses, interviews for, or offers a position to an applicant prior to receiving a waiver from the NRMP. The Match Participation Agreement prohibits applicants and programs from releasing each other from a match commitment. Once parties have matched or a position has been accepted during SOAP, a waiver of the binding commitment may be obtained only from the NRMP.

4. During the application, interview, and/or matching processes, an applicant fails to provide complete, timely, and accurate information to programs. Similarly, a program fails to provide complete, timely, and accurate information to applicants, including a copy of the contract they will be expected to sign if matched to the program and all pertinent information about institutional policies and eligibility requirements for appointment. Programs must provide all such information prior to the Rank Order List Certification Deadline.

5. During SOAP, a medical school official contacts a program director at the same or another institution on behalf of one of the school's unmatched applicants. The Match Participation Agreement prohibits applicants and any individual acting on the applicants' behalf from contacting programs about unfilled positions prior to the program contacting the applicant after receiving an ERAS application.

NOTE: The foregoing examples are illustrative only. They are not meant to be an exhaustive list of the types of activities that violate the NRMP's Match Participation Agreement.

Professionalism and Communication

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 Agreement, Restrictions on Persuasion, permits program directors and applicants to express interest in each other but prohibits the solicitation of statements implying a commitment. However, 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 and Applicant Match Tips for information on acceptable methods of interaction during the interview and matching processes.

GETTING STARTED

Visit the [NRMP Public Website](#) for additional resources and information.

"Like" us on [Facebook](#) and "Follow" us on [Twitter](#) to obtain important updates, tips, and reminders throughout the residency and fellowship selection process.