

Impact of Length of Rank Order List on Main Residency Match Outcome: 2002-2015

Each year after the Main Residency Match concludes, the NRMP examines the relationship between the average length of the rank order lists (ROL) of matched applicants and filled programs and the average length of rank order lists of unmatched applicants and unfilled programs. Matched applicants and filled programs consistently have longer ROLs than unmatched applicants and unfilled programs.

Program Data¹

Over the period for which data are reported, the average number of ranks per position for unfilled programs consistently is 45-55% lower than that for filled programs.

Year	Filled Programs			Unfilled Programs		
	Number and % Filled	Average Length of ROL	Average Ranks per Position	Number and % Unfilled	Average Length of ROL	Average Ranks per Position
2002	2,747 (74.3%)	54.75	9.24	950 (25.7%)	26.94	5.03
2003	2,748 (74.5%)	55.04	9.32	942 (25.5%)	30.24	4.89
2004	2,936 (78.7%)	55.61	9.40	796 (21.3%)	27.93	4.85
2005	3,005 (79.4%)	55.66	9.35	779 (20.6%)	26.63	4.90
2006	3,159 (81.8%)	55.85	9.74	702 (18.2%)	25.31	4.65
2007	3,360 (84.1%)	56.80	9.96	635 (15.9%)	25.23	4.97
2008	3,410 (84.4%)	57.66	10.04	628 (15.6%)	29.50	5.37
2009	3,601 (87.3%)	58.94	10.52	526 (12.7%)	27.56	5.68
2010	3,614 (87.3%)	61.78	11.11	528 (12.7%)	27.68	5.64
2011	3,660 (87.1%)	63.35	11.33	542 (12.9%)	32.51	6.28
2012	3,767 (85.9%)	64.27	11.52	619 (14.1%)	30.52	6.63
2013	4,029 (87.9%)	68.12	11.11	555 (12.1%)	27.31	6.56
2014	4,041 (86.1%)	68.88	11.52	654 (13.9%)	32.42	7.28
2015	4,093 (86.8%)	70.72	11.64	623 (13.2%)	34.38	7.13

Data for All Applicants²

Year	Matched Applicants		Unmatched Applicants	
	Number and % Matched	Average Length of ROLs	Number and % Unmatched	Average Length of ROLs
2002	17,986 (80.4%)	7.46	4,387 (19.6%)	4.14
2003	18,382 (80.5%)	7.45	4,443 (19.5%)	4.46
2004	18,808 (78.5%)	7.44	5,156 (21.5%)	4.40
2005	19,234 (79.7%)	7.65	4,901 (20.3%)	4.48
2006	19,484 (76.4%)	7.81	6,011 (23.6%)	4.51
2007	20,042 (75.1%)	8.23	6,660 (24.9%)	4.64
2008	20,167 (74.0%)	8.52	7,094 (26.0%)	4.32
2009	20,458 (72.3%)	8.74	7,854 (27.7%)	4.46
2010	20,797 (71.9%)	9.25	8,130 (28.1%)	4.50
2011	21,363 (73.7%)	9.53	7,608 (26.3%)	4.38
2012	21,745 (73.5%)	9.75	7,855 (26.5%)	4.69
2013	24,186 (74.5%)	9.81	8,299 (25.5%)	4.58
2014	24,660 (76.1%)	10.30	7,760 (23.9%)	4.71
2015	24,918 (75.9%)	10.41	7,913 (24.1%)	4.78

Data for U.S. Seniors²

Year	Matched Applicants		Unmatched Applicants	
	Number and % Matched	Average Length of ROLs	Number and % Matched	Average Length of ROLs
2002	12,281 (95.6%)	7.96	587 (4.4%)	4.62
2003	12,692 (94.7%)	7.97	710 (5.3%)	5.02
2004	12,731 (93.8%)	7.99	843 (6.2%)	5.34
2005	12,975 (94.7%)	8.25	726 (5.3%)	5.29
2006	13,285 (94.7%)	8.40	748 (5.3%)	5.26
2007	13,486 (94.7%)	8.90	756 (5.3%)	5.62
2008	13,406 (95.0%)	9.26	699 (5.0%)	5.63
2009	13,560 (94.0%)	9.59	858 (6.0%)	6.27
2010	13,920 (94.0%)	10.17	896 (6.0%)	6.83
2011	14,466 (94.7%)	10.55	817 (5.3%)	6.36
2012	14,477 (95.6%)	10.93	670 (4.4%)	6.52
2013	15,099 (94.2%)	11.04	929 (5.8%)	6.58
2014	15,117 (95.0%)	11.68	796 (5.0%)	6.80
2015	15,512 (94.3%)	11.72	940 (5.7%)	7.15

U.S. seniors consistently have the highest match rate and the longest average ROLs. Although there are small year-to-year variations, each year about 94 percent of U.S. seniors match to first-year positions.

The data do not take into account a number of other factors that influence the match rate of applicants and the fill rate of programs including competitiveness of the applicant, competitiveness of the program, competitiveness of the specialty, and the number of interviews completed.

Both applicants and program directors are well advised to include all acceptable choices on their rank order lists. A longer ROL in no way affects the chances of being matched to choices higher on the ROL.

¹ Data on programs are based on the number of positions offered. Any program with one or more positions unfilled after the matching algorithm has been processed, regardless of the number of positions filled, is included in the unfilled program data. Programs that donated unfilled positions to other programs through reversions are considered unfilled, and the fill status of programs that received reverted positions in the Match is based on the original quota.

² The data are based only on applicants' primary rank order lists and do not include couples.

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