

Introduction

In March 2024, the National Resident Matching Program (NRMP) conducted its biennial Program Director Survey, targeting directors of all programs participating in the Main Residency Match®. This survey held every even year (e.g., 2020, 2022), aims to identify the criteria program directors use to (1) select applicants for interviews, and (2) rank applicants for the Main Residency Match. In 2022, NRMP administered a special version of the Program Director Survey aimed at characterizing programs' virtual recruitment experiences due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Items pertaining to the COVID-19 pandemic and relevant virtual recruitment and interview methodologies were removed from the 2024 survey.

The survey was distributed to program directors who had submitted a rank order list for the 2024 Main Residency Match. It was conducted during the 11-day period between the Rank Order List Certification Deadline and the beginning of Match Week to ensure that match outcomes did not influence the responses.

Survey

Survey assessment items across many domains are represented in the Program Director Survey Report including:

Overall review, selection, and ranking behaviors

How many applications were received, applications rejected, applications receiving holistic review, interview invitations sent, applicants interviewed and ranked. How often applicants are invited to interview and ranked is also presented by applicant type.

Medical licensure exam results for interview selection

What medical licensure exam results are considered for interview selection presented by applicant type.

Endorsement and importance of factors considered for interview and ranking selection

Frequency of endorsement and importance ratings of factors considered for interview and ranking selection.

In addition, several modifications were made to the 2024 Program Director Survey, including the addition of new assessment items aimed at eliciting program director perspectives on 1) the use of preference signals, 2) the impact of the transition of medical licensure exams to pass/fail, and 3) interview modality preference and use of holistic review. While these new items were included in the assessment, the results will not be integrated into the 2024 Program Director Survey Report. Instead, NRMP is working on a series of deliverables on each of these topics, allowing NRMP to provide the community with a more thorough explanation of the data.

The overall response for all specialties combined was 18.0% percent ($N = 1,150$). Specialty-specific response rates for Transitional Year programs and programs in the 20 specialties with 10 or more responses are shown in the table below. The “All Others” category consolidates 23 specialties, including 17 combined programs (e.g., Emergency Medicine/Anesthesiology, Pediatrics/Psychiatry/Child Psychiatry), which submitted fewer than 10 responses. The "All Others" category was only included in analyses encompassing all specialties combined.

Specialty	Surveys Sent	Number Responding	Response Rate
Anesthesiology	288	44	15.3%
Child Neurology	101	20	19.8%
Dermatology	182	20	11.0%
Emergency Medicine	292	81	27.7%
Family Medicine	795	178	22.4%
Internal Medicine	1126	147	13.1%
Internal Medicine/Pediatrics	77	21	27.3%
Neurological Surgery	116	17	14.7%
Neurology	204	37	18.1%
Obstetrics and Gynecology	306	89	29.1%
Orthopedic Surgery	218	41	18.8%
Otolaryngology	138	27	19.6%
Pathology-Anatomic and Clinical	177	38	21.5%
Pediatrics	279	65	23.3%
Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation	131	25	19.1%
Psychiatry	382	73	19.1%
Radiation Oncology	99	14	14.1%
Radiology-Diagnostic	224	46	20.5%
Surgery-General	613	78	12.7%
Transitional Year	217	27	12.4%
Vascular Surgery	79	13	16.5%
All Others*	346	49	14.2%
Total	6,390	1,150	18.0%

Summary of Results

Applicant Selection Behaviors

- The specialties (excluding Transitional Year) with the highest mean number of applications received were Internal Medicine, Anesthesiology, General Surgery, Pediatrics, and Psychiatry.
- The specialties (excluding Transitional Year) with the highest mean number of interview invitations sent/applicants interviewed and applicants ranked were Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, Emergency Medicine, Anesthesiology, and Family Medicine.

Interview and Ranking Selection by Applicant Type

- In seven specialties (Child Neurology, Internal Medicine/Pediatrics, Neurological Surgery, Otolaryngology, Radiation Oncology, Radiology-Diagnostic, and Vascular Surgery) 100% of the program directors who responded indicated that they “often” *interview* and *rank U.S. MD seniors*.
- Program directors in Family Medicine, Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, Emergency Medicine, and Pathology-Anatomic and Clinical most frequently endorsed that they “often” *interview* and *rank U.S. DO seniors*.
- Program directors in Pathology-Anatomic and Clinical and Internal Medicine most frequently endorsed that they “often” *interview* and *rank* both **U.S. IMGs** and **Non-U.S. IMGs**. Family Medicine also had high rates of program director endorsement of “often” *interviewing U.S. IMGs*, while Radiation Oncology had high rates of endorsement for **Non-U.S. IMGs**. Neurology also had high rates of endorsement for “often” *ranking* both **U.S. IMGs** and **Non-U.S. IMGs**, while Pediatrics was tied in this category for **U.S. IMGs** only.

Selecting Applicants to Interview and Rank

Program directors were asked to select from a list of factors considered in selecting applicants for interview and for ranking. For all factors that were selected, respondents rated the importance of that factor on a scale of 1=*not important* to 5=*extremely important*. The percentages below indicate the percentage of respondents who selected a factor while means (*M*) indicate mean importance ratings for that specific factor.

- Program director key considerations for *interviewing* included USMLE Step 1 pass (90%, *M* = 4.5), MSPE/Dean’s Letter (85%, *M* = 4.1), and specialty-specific letters of recommendation (84%, *M* = 4.2).
- For *ranking*, key considerations were interpersonal skills (89%, *M* = 4.8), interactions during interviews (87%, *M* = 4.8), and feedback from current residents (76%, *M* = 4.6).
- Interestingly, while only 23% of program directors selected applicant was flagged for a Match violation as a consideration for *interview* selection and 16% for *ranking*, this item had the highest mean importance across all factors (*M* (*interview*) = 4.8, *M* (*ranking*) = 4.7).