



THE MATCH[®]
NATIONAL RESIDENT MATCHING PROGRAM[®]

Charting Outcomes[™]

Applicant Survey Results
Main Residency Match[®]

2024

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Suggested Citation

National Resident Matching Program, Data Release and Research Committee: Results of the 2024 NRMP Applicant Survey. National Resident Matching Program, Washington, DC. 2024.

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Charting Outcomes™

Applicant Survey Results
Main Residency Match®

2023

Introduction

In March 2024, The National Resident Matching Program® (NRMP) conducted a survey of applicants who participated in the Main Residency Match®. First administered in 2008, the Applicant Survey was conducted biennially in odds years from 2009 until 2019. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Applicant Survey was administered annually from 2020 to 2023. In 2024, the NRMP decided to continue administering the Applicant Survey on an annual basis. Historically, the primary purpose of this survey was to characterize the factors that applicants consider in (1) selecting programs to which to apply, and (2) placing programs on their rank order list. In 2024, selection behaviors related to selecting programs to which to apply was removed while factors related to placing programs on rank order lists was retained. This was the result of qualitative work conducted in 2023 where Applicant Survey respondents were asked what they would want retained and removed from the Applicant Survey. Respondents indicated either that 1) at the selection for application stage, they were applying broadly and not focusing on specific program factors or 2) the factors considered when selecting where to apply did not differ from those considered for inclusion of a program on the rank order list.

The survey was sent to applicants who certified a rank order list (ROL) as part of the 2024 Main Residency Match. It was fielded during the 11 days between the Rank Order List Certification Deadline and the start of Match Week (i.e., February 28-March 10, 2024) to prevent match outcomes from influencing applicants' answers. Per NRMP policy, withdrawals from the Match must be completed by the Rank Order List Certification Deadline; however, between the ROL Certification Deadline and the time when the matching algorithm is processed, some applicants could still be withdrawn from the Match for reasons related to ineligibility, or participation in or matching through another national matching program. In 2024, 284 applicants with a certified ROL were subsequently withdrawn from Match participation; they were not included in either the numerator or the denominator for calculating response rates and are not included in the interactive report.

Survey

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

Program Characteristics

Program characteristics considered by applicants in selecting which programs to place on the ROL and the perceived importance of those characteristics.

Ranking Strategy

Ranking strategies (e.g., ranking programs in order of true preferences, ranking one or more less competitive programs as a "safety net" or "fallback" plan).

Recruitment Cycle

Numbers of applications submitted, interview invitations received, interviews attended, and programs ranked in preferred specialty (specialty of the first program on the ROL) and, separately, in all other specialties where applicable.

In addition to the removal of considerations for selecting which programs to apply to, two individual consideration items related to the COVID-19 pandemic (i.e., *extent to which house staff perceive their concerns about infectious diseases are taken seriously* and *COVID-19 pandemic safety policies and procedures*) were removed from the list of considerations when selecting a program for inclusion on the rank order list.

Interactive Report

Numbers of applications submitted, interview invitations received, interviews attended, and programs ranked were self-reported by respondents. For these count items, extreme outlier values were removed prior to inclusion of data in the interactive report.

Changes in 2024

- With the removal of items related to considerations for selecting programs to apply to, the *Program Selection Factors* tab does **not** include data from 2024 and beyond.
- The *Program Ranking Factors* tab **does** include data from 2024. Two COVID-19-related items (described above) were removed from the list of considerations for selecting programs to include on an applicant's ROL. These two items are included on the list of considerations when Match Year 2023 is selected as a filter (regardless of whether 2024 is selected).

Response Rates

The overall response rate across all applicant types was 27.4% (n = 12,290). As reflected in the table below, the report presents survey results by applicant type for 21 specialties where at least 50 total responses were submitted. Three applicant type-defined subgroups are included in the response rate table including:

- U.S. MD seniors
- U.S. DO seniors
- All Other Applicant Types (U.S. MD graduates, U.S. DO graduates, U.S. citizen students and graduates of international medical schools (U.S. IMGs), non-U.S. citizen students and graduates of international medical schools (non-U.S. IMGs), and students and graduates of Canadian medical schools)

The "All Other Specialties" category as reflected in the table combines 22 specialties, including 17 combined programs (e.g., Emergency Medicine/Anesthesiology, Pediatrics/Psychiatry/Child Psychiatry), where fewer than 50 total responses per specialty were submitted. Applicants who ranked Transitional Year or PGY-1 preliminary programs first on their rank order lists were considered to have "No Preferred Specialty".

Highlighted Results

Overall Program Selection Behaviors

Although there was some variability by applicant type, the considerations applicants most frequently endorsed with regard to ranking decisions were overall goodness of fit, interview day experience, desired geographic location, quality of residents in program, and work/life balance. Across all applicant types, these same five considerations for ranking were the most frequently endorsed in 2023 as well, although it is worth noting that levels of endorsement of these items increased notably in 2024. For example, in 2023, 69% of respondents endorsed overall goodness of fit while this same item was endorsed by 81% of the sample in 2024.

Program Selection Behaviors by Preferred Specialty

Findings indicate that applicants' consideration of program characteristics in decision making about ranking is likely related to preferred specialty and what applicants perceive as important to those specialties. For example, consider these comparisons of program characteristics considered in ranking decisions between applicants who preferred Psychiatry versus Orthopaedic Surgery:

- Among U.S. MD seniors who preferred Psychiatry, 90 percent said they considered work/life balance, compared with 72 percent of U.S. MD seniors who preferred Orthopaedic Surgery.
- Of U.S. DO seniors who preferred Psychiatry, 59 percent said they considered vacation, personal, and family leave policies, compared with 30 percent of U.S. DO seniors who preferred Orthopaedic Surgery.
- Of applicants other than U.S. MD seniors and U.S. DO seniors who preferred Psychiatry, 31 percent said they considered size of patient caseload, compared with 50 percent who preferred Orthopaedic Surgery.

Distribution and Response Rates by Preferred Specialty and Applicant Type¹

Specialty	U.S. MD Seniors			U.S. DO Seniors			All Other Applicant Types ²		
	Surveys Sent	Number Responding	Response Rate (%)	Surveys Sent	Number Responding	Response Rate (%)	Surveys Sent	Number Responding	Response Rate (%)
Anesthesiology	1,626	377	23.2%	527	129	24.5%	776	156	20.1%
Child Neurology	138	40	29.0%	29	9	31.0%	44	18	40.9%
Dermatology	601	129	21.5%	85	14	16.5%	230	21	9.1%
Emergency Medicine	1,272	268	21.1%	1,017	210	20.6%	690	178	25.8%
Family Medicine	1,443	317	22.0%	1,352	314	23.2%	1,902	588	30.9%
Internal Medicine	3,778	878	23.2%	1,727	373	21.6%	7,626	3173	41.6%
Internal Medicine/Pediatrics	391	99	25.3%	45	10	22.2%	51	27	52.9%
Interventional Radiology	174	43	24.7%	36	10	27.8%	46	13	28.3%
Neurological Surgery	297	61	20.5%	14	3	21.4%	101	18	17.8%
Neurology	640	151	23.6%	196	45	23.0%	640	254	39.7%
Obstetrics and Gynecology	1,283	342	26.7%	429	127	29.6%	320	70	21.9%
Orthopedic Surgery	993	239	24.1%	246	52	21.1%	208	23	11.1%
Otolaryngology	413	120	29.1%	41	2	4.9%	41	15	36.6%
Pathology-Anatomic and Clinical	275	67	24.4%	103	24	23.3%	564	213	37.8%
Pediatrics	1,442	384	26.6%	572	168	29.4%	888	364	41.0%
Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation	343	63	18.4%	266	76	28.6%	131	33	25.2%
Plastic Surgery (Integrated)	253	44	17.4%	16	4	25.0%	80	8	10.0%
Psychiatry	1,461	319	21.8%	600	108	18.0%	791	222	28.1%
Radiation Oncology	122	29	23.8%	16	5	31.3%	63	20	31.7%
Radiology-Diagnostic	898	244	27.2%	229	71	31.0%	437	101	23.1%
Surgery-General	1,257	318	25.3%	379	99	26.1%	893	139	15.6%
All other specialties ³	339	90	26.5%	73	16	21.9%	148	47	31.8%
No preferred specialty ⁴	303	14	4.6%	28	0	0.0%	372	84	22.6%
Total	19,742	4,636	23.5%	8,026	1,869	23.3%	17,042	5,785	33.9%

¹ Excludes a total of 284 applicants withdrawn from the Match after the ROL Certification Deadline for reasons related to ineligibility or participation in an early Match.

² U.S. citizen students and graduates of international medical schools (U.S. IMG), non-US citizen students and graduates of international medical schools (non-U.S. IMGs), U.S. MD graduates, U.S. DO graduates, and students and graduates of Canadian medical schools.

³ Diagnostic Radiology/Nuclear Medicine, Emergency Medicine/Anesthesiology, Emergency Medicine/Family Medicine, Family Medicine/Preventive Medicine, Internal Medicine/Anesthesiology, Internal Medicine/Dermatology, Internal Medicine/Emergency Medicine, Internal Medicine/Medical Genetics, Internal Medicine/Preventive Medicine, Internal Medicine/Psychiatry, Neurodevelopmental Disabilities, Osteopathic Neuromusculoskeletal Medicine, Pediatrics/Anesthesiology, Pediatrics/Emergency Medicine, Pediatrics/Medical Genetics, Pediatrics/Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, Pediatrics/Psychiatry/Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Psychiatry/Family Medicine, Psychiatry/Neurology, Thoracic Surgery, Vascular Surgery.

⁴ Applicants who listed Transitional Year or PGY-1 preliminary programs first on their rank order lists.

Application, Interview, and Ranking Behaviors

- The largest numbers of applications were submitted by applicants preferring Internal Medicine, General Surgery, Plastic Surgery, and Psychiatry. By contrast, the largest numbers of interviews offered, interviews attended, and programs ranked were among applicants preferring Emergency Medicine, Radiation Oncology, and Interventional Radiology.
- Broadly consistent with findings from previous years' Applicant Surveys, the median numbers of applications submitted by U.S. DO seniors and Other Applicant Types were higher than those submitted by U.S. MD seniors, regardless of match status. Across applicant types, unmatched applicants reported that they applied to more programs than matched applicants.
- Both matched and unmatched U.S. MD and U.S. DO seniors reported that they were offered and attended considerably more interviews than their counterparts of Other Applicant Types.
- Consistent with results observed in the past few Applicant Surveys, matched U.S. MD and U.S. DO seniors reported that they obtained similar numbers of interviews.
- Consistent with 2022 and 2023 results, unmatched U.S. MD and U.S. DO seniors also reported that they obtained similar numbers of interviews.