First Aid for the Match: The Really Short Version

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First Aid Board Series
USMLERx Test Bank Series
Overview

- Common Match Mistakes
- Overview of the Match
- Planning the 4th year
- Choosing an Adviser
- The Application
- Interviewing
- Rank Lists
FIRST AID FOR THE MATCH

Fifth Edition

Insider Advice from Students and Residency Directors

- Insider Advice for Match Success
- Application and Interview Tips for Each Specialty
- High-Impact Personal Statements and Resumes
- All-New Profiles on Medical and Surgical Sub-Specialties

Tao Le • Vikas Bhushan • Christina Shenvi
Common Mistakes

- Choosing the wrong adviser
- Applying without clear commitment to specialty choice
- Writing a bad personal statement
- Poor interview preparation
- Not interviewing at enough programs
- Ranking undesirable programs
Find Your Match

- NRMP
  - Couples
  - Shared-schedule
- SF Match
- Urology Match
- Osteopathic Match
- Armed Forces Match
- Canadian Match
Applicants and First Year Positions in the Match

- Total Applicants
- Total PGY-1 Positions

www.nrmp.org
PGY-1 Match Rate

Percent Matched

- U.S. Seniors
- Others
- U.S. IMGs
- Non-U.S. IMGs

www.nrmp.org
Percent Matches by Choice

U.S. Seniors
- First Rank: 52.7%
- Second Rank: 15.4%
- Third Rank: 9.2%
- Fourth Rank: 5.3%
- Unmatched: 11.6%

Independent Applicants
- First Rank: 23.8%
- Second Rank: 9.9%
- Third Rank: 5.6%
- Fourth Rank: 3.3%
- >Fourth Rank: 7.1%
- Unmatched: 50.4%
Jan – Mar: Get an Advisor Who Can

- Discuss trends in the field
- Point out research opportunities
- Offer clear assessment of your competitiveness
- Highlight programs appropriate for you
- Review your application
- Conduct a mock interview
- Review your rank list
- Make key calls for you
Advisory Warning

- Overload: too popular to give enough attention
- Oversight: misjudges your fit or competitiveness for the field
- Nostalgia: has not kept up with the current state of the specialty match
- Bias: Gives you the same “pet” list of programs regardless
Mar-Jun: Planning the Senior Year

- **Sub-internships**
  - Early vs. late

- **Away or audition rotations**
  - Competitive program?
  - Competitive field?

- **Electives**
  - OB/Gyn → pediatrics
  - Ortho → EM, trauma surg
Mar-Aug: Selecting a Specialty

- Multifactorial – aptitudes, personality, lifestyle, income
- Resources
  - FA Match: Chapter 4
  - AAMC Careers in Medicine
  - Pathway Evaluation Program
  - NRMP Results and Data 2011
  - NRMP Charting Outcome in the Match
  - NRMP Program Results, 2007-2011
- What if I can’t decide?
  - Take a research year/ do add’l rotations
  - Do a prelim year
Jul-Sep: Getting Info on Programs

- Consult your advisor, faculty and house staff, dean of students, MS4 students
- AMA FREIDA
  - AMA Graduate Medical Education Directory ("Green Book")
  - Specialty directories
- NRMP Program Results
- Program websites/student forums
What to Look for in a Program

- Location, location, location
- Setting
- Stability
- Reputation
- Subspecialty strengths
- Educational environment
- Work environment
- Salary
- Benefits
Application Elements

- ERAS/program application
- Dean’s letter
- Letters or recommendation
- Transcript
- CV
- Personal statement
Interview Factors

- Personal Statement: 68%
- Volunteer/extracurricular experiences: 52%
- Applicant was flagged with Match violation by the NRMP: 51%
- Other life experience: 50%
- Visa status: 40%
- Fluency in language spoken by your patient population: 30%
- Commitment:
  - Personal prior knowledge of the applicant: 55%
  - Perceived commitment to specialty: 53%
  - Audition elective/rotation within your department: 51%
  - Perceived interest in program: 47%
- Away rotation in your specialty at another institution: 22%
- Research:
  - Demonstrated involvement and interest in research: 41%
  - Interest in academic career: 28%
# Ranking Factors

## Medical School Performance
- Grades in clerkship in desired specialty: 4.2
- Honors in clerkship in desired specialty: 4.1
- Gaps in medical education: 4.1
- Grades in required clerkships: 4.0
- Class ranking/quartile: 4.0
- Honors in clinical clerkships: 4.0
- Medical Student Performance Evaluation (MSPE/Dean's Letter): 3.9
- Consistency of grades: 3.9
- Honors in basic sciences: 3.1

## Standardized Test Scores
- USMLE/COMLEX Step 1 score: 4.1
- USMLE/COMLEX Step 2 score: 4.0
- USMLE/COMLEX Step 3 score: 3.2

## U.S. Allopathic Graduates
- Graduate of U.S. allopathic medical school: 4.1
- Graduate of highly regarded U.S. medical school: 3.6
- Alpha Omega Alpha (AOA) membership: 3.6
- Gold Society membership: 2.8
Ranking Factors

- Residency Interview
  - Interactions with faculty during interview and visit: 4.7
  - Interpersonal skills: 4.7
  - Interactions with housestaff during interview and visit: 4.6
  - Feedback from current residents: 4.5
  - Evidence of professionalism and ethics: 4.5
  - Perceived commitment to specialty: 4.2
  - Leadership qualities: 4.0
  - Perceived interest in program: 3.8

- Miscellaneous Applicant Considerations
  - Applicant was flagged with Match violation by the NRMP: 4.8
  - Visa status: 3.8
  - Fluency in language spoken by your patient population: 3.3
  - Personal Knowledge of Applicant
    - Personal prior knowledge of the applicant: 3.9
  - Audition elective/rotation within your department: 3.7
  - Away rotation in your specialty at another institution: 2.6

- Personal Statement
  - Personal Statement: 3.4
  - Other life experience: 3.2
  - Volunteer/extracurricular experiences: 3.1

- Research
  - Demonstrated involvement and interest in research: 3.1
  - Interest in academic career: 2.9

- Post Interview Contact
  - Post Interview Contact: 2.9

- Other post-interview contact: 2.9
- Second interview/visit: 2.7

2010 NRMP Program Director Survey
www.nrmp.org
NRMP: Charting Outcomes in the Match

Chart 10
USMLE Step 1 Scores of Matched Applicants by Preferred Specialty
U.S. Seniors and Independent Applicants

U.S. Seniors who Matched

Plastic Surgery
Dermatology
Otolaryngology
Radiation Oncology
Radiology-Diagnostic
Orthopaedic Surgery
Transitional Year
Internal Medicine
Pathology-Anatomic and Surgical
Surgery-General
Emergency Medicine
Internal Medicine/Pediatrics
Anesthesiology
Neurology
Pediatrics
Obstetrics and Gynecology
Family Medicine
Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
Psychiatry

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NRMP: Charting Outcomes in the Match

Chart 15

USMLE Step 1 Scores

Median Probability of Matching to Preferred Specialty by USMLE Step 1 Scores

- U.S. Seniors, Other Specialties
- U.S. Seniors, Highly Competitive Specialties
- Independent Applicants, Other Specialties

Note: Not significant for independent applicants who preferred the highly competitive specialties

www.nrmp.org
Aug-Sep: Electronic Residency Application Service (ERAS)

- Web-based application program from the AAMC
  - Fill out common application form
  - Create personal statement
  - Request letters of recommendations
  - Release USMLE transcript

- Application transmitted to designated residency programs
  - Up to 10 programs included
  - Escalating fees for add’l programs
Jul-Aug: Dean’s Letter

- Contains
  - Personal background information
  - Preclinical evaluations
  - Clinical evaluations
  - Special activities
  - Summary paragraph --Class rank, “adjective”

- Tips – meet with dean to review letter, edit if possible
Jun-Jul: Letters or Recommendation Tips

- Target letter writers who know you well, have worked with you clinically, are well-established in the field or are known at your top choices
- Review evaluations before asking letter writer
- “Do you know me well enough to write a strong letter?”
- Meet letter writer to give rationale, background
- Give letter writer 4 weeks
Apr-Jun: CV Tips

- Create CV for letter writers and to input into ERAS
- Organize categories to highlight strengths
- Use terse, precise, and vivid language
- Create parallel structure in lists
- Follow consistent punctuation, capitalizations rules
- Consider showing to a professional editor
Apr-Jun: Personal Statement Tips

- Start early
- Study multiple examples – FA Match
- Have an advanced draft for letter writers
- Address your motivations and professional aspirations
- Craft strong beginnings/endings
- Have smooth transitions
- Have it critiqued by adviser, others
- Consider a professional editor
Nov-Feb: Interview Tips

- Schedule top interviews in the middle of the season
- Do your homework on the program
- Rehearse interviews and tough/inappropriate questions
- Maintain high level of energy/focus throughout day
- Have list of questions for interviewer
- Send follow-up letters
Feb: Rank List Tips

- Rule # 1 – Rank programs in order of their desirability
- Rule # 2 – Rank all acceptable programs
- Do not let flattery affect your rank list
- Beware of under-the-table deals
Chart 14

Number of Contiguous Ranks

Median Probability of Matching to Preferred Specialty by Number of Contiguous Ranks

Legend:
- Green square: U.S. Seniors, Other Specialties
- Light blue triangle: U.S. Seniors, Highly Competitive Specialties
- Dark blue circle: Independent Applicants, Other Specialties
- Red diamond: Independent Applicants, Highly Competitive Specialties
Improving Your Chances of a Successful Match

- Realistically assess your competitiveness and that of the programs/field
- Interview at a sufficient number of programs
- Rank all programs acceptable to you
- If you aim for a very competitive specialty, have a backup