

Residency match made simple: From M4 to PGY-1 in 6 steps

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As a medical student, the residency application process is an important step in charting your career as a physician. On the whole, the residency match process can seem overwhelming. Breaking it into phases—essentially, understanding what you should be doing and when—can make it more manageable.

Here's a look at the benchmarks and steps you should keep in mind as you search for the right residency program.

Step 1: The leg work

The final months of your third year of medical school and the ensuing summer should be spent making sure you have your ducks in a row. Some key tasks include:

- Finalizing letters of recommendation and providing each letter of recommendation author their letter-request form.
- Crafting a personal statement and comprehensive CV.
- Obtaining your token for the Electronic Residency Application Service (ERAS), a service that transmits students' residency program applications and key information from their designated dean's office to program directors.

Step 2: Information gathering

Narrowing down the type of program you want to work in is about researching your options and understanding your own wants and needs. You can begin gathering specialty information from FREIDA™ and exploring residency programs as early as your second year in medical school. Then, when you have more context for your career path, you begin a deeper dive.

FREIDA,[™] the AMA's comprehensive residency and fellowship database, captures more than 12,000 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)-accredited residency and fellowship programs. Now with an enhanced design.

One major benefit of FREIDA is that it includes a personalized search experience, with more than 35 filters that allow users to sort programs by location (either list or map view), program type, application information, demographics, benefits, osteopathic recognition, special tracks and more. Users can personalize and Access unlimited program views, save favorite custom searches. and nickname your favorites to re-use with a free AMA account.

AMA members can do even more—save programs, take notes, rate and download programs with an easy-to-use dashboard. Compare and analyze program attributes with a side-by-side tool. Calculate and prepare for residency application expenses with FREIDA's easy to use Residency Calculator. , compare

Step 3: Begin the application/match process

Med students can start applying to programs accredited by ACGME in early September through ERAS. Around that time, students should also register for the National Resident Matching Program (NRMP) Main Residency Match. Students interested in the?Couples Match apply as part of a supplemental process. The?San Francisco Match or the urology match open in June for applications.

Step 4: Interviewing

Interview invitations typically start coming in early October, but they can arrive well into November. If you have fewer than 10 invitations by the final days of October, the Association of American Medical Colleges recommends contacting an adviser at your institution to discuss your options. It's still possible some or all interviews this cycle will be virtual.

When you do have an interview, be sure to be ready to?ask questions. Don't forget to send thank-you notes or e-mails following each interview.

Step 5: Ranking

The interview process should give you some idea how you fit at each program. Deciding where you could see yourself is very individualized, but there are some common themes. The NRMP's match

ranking process opens in January and the deadline to certify and submit final ranking lists is going to be March 2 for the 2021-22 cycle. Remember, the match process is binding, so you shouldn't rank any program you don't intend to work in.

Step 6: Waiting

This can be the hardest part. Take solace in the numbers—as a graduate of a U.S. medical school, you'll probably match. On Monday of Match Week—the third week of March—you will find out whether you matched. By that Friday, you'll know where.

If you don't match, the Supplemental Offer and Acceptance Program can help. It is a vehicle through which eligible unmatched applicants in the Main Residency Match apply for and are offered positions that were not filled when the matching algorithm was initially processed.