

So you want to be a
_____ogist?

*Overview of the Fellowship Application
Process*

Brian Gehlbach, MD

Objectives

1. Assess motives for fellowship training
2. Outline the process of fellowship application
3. Review previous fellowship match results
4. Identify strategies & resources

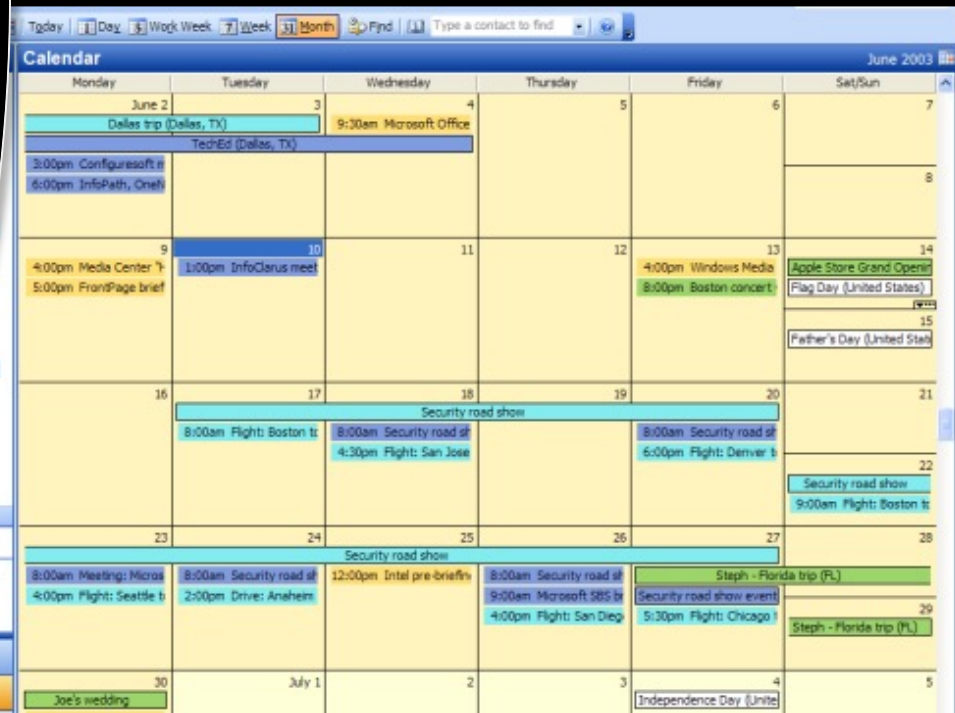
Self-assessment

- Do you have a deep love or fascination for the specialty area?
- Consultant or primary?
- Do you enjoy procedures?
- Hospital or ambulatory setting?
- Does deep mastery of a restricted content area appeal to you?
- Do you respect and admire the subspecialty faculty?
- Lifestyle or financial advantages?
- Are your current preferences being influenced by present skills/exposure?
- What are your own strengths, weaknesses, and limitations?



Selecting a Subspecialty

- UHC resources
 - Program Directors, APDs, Fellowship Directors
 - Faculty
 - Recent graduates, fellows, peers
- Explore different career paths within a field



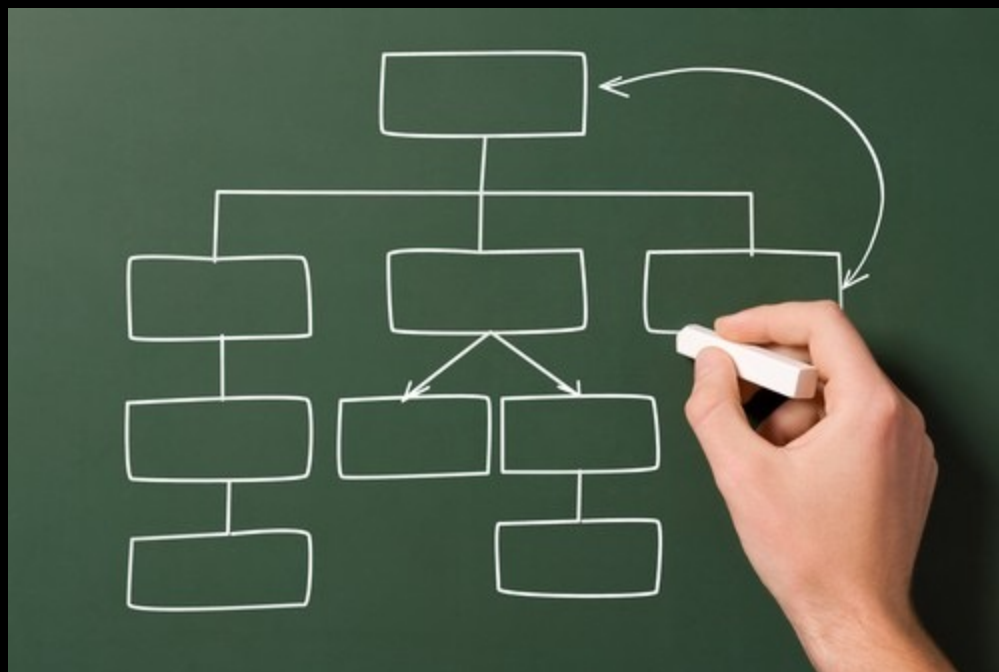
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The process

PAIR-Match

- Preparation
- Application
- Interviews
- Ranking
- Match



Preparation

- **Work on becoming a great doc!**
 - Growth mindset (“how can I improve?”)
 - Be careful not to deprioritize
- **Talk to faculty!!**
- **Get involved in projects (research, QI, MedEd, review articles, etc) with faculty!**
 - Intrinsic rewards
 - Deepen relationships with mentors
 - Build CV
 - Great material for personal statement & interview!



Why do programs care about your scholarship?



“How did you get involved in this project?”

“I **hit it off** with my ID attending on Gen Med my second month. **I always thought C. diff was interesting** and said yes” (pulm/CC applicant)

“I’m **interested in** rural health”

“Addiction is **interesting & relevant** to my future practice”

“I **wanted to try my hand** at ___”

“I **love to teach**”

Consider some research/scholarship outside your specialty interest...*especially* if you think it’s cool!

Internal Medicine Residency Program

Getting (scholarly) Stuff Done!

Taylor Becker, MD

Brian Gehlbach, MD

12/19/2023

Topics

Intentionality/timeline

Identifying projects & mentors

Curating your project portfolio

- Role of smaller vs larger items

- Diversification

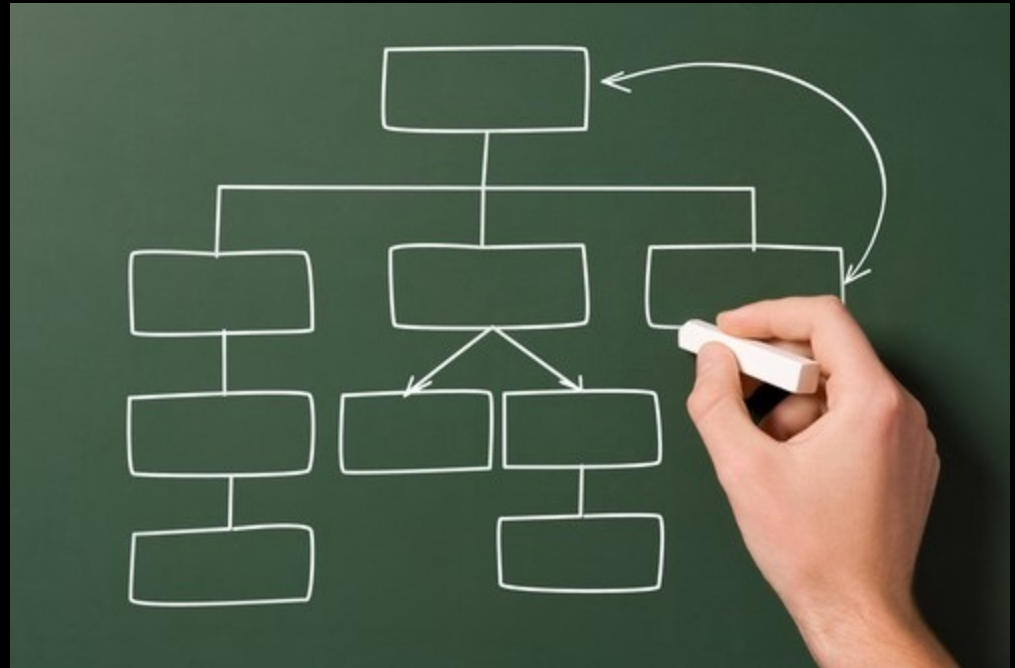
Mentoring up

Resources (medical editing, posters, etc)

The process

PAIR-Match

- Preparation
- Application
- Interviews
- Ranking
- Match



The mechanics of applying

- ERAS fellowship
- NRMP
- Application Timeline

ERAS

- **ERAS Fellowship** : This will be eerily similar to your last ERAS experience
 - **EFDO** : <https://www.erasfellowshipdocuments.org/>
 - **EFDO** is your designated Deans office (central processing office for fellowship application materials submitted via ERAS)
 - Contact the EFDO to receive an electronic token to access the ERAS system (**June 6, 2024**)
 - **My ERAS**
 - Here you will complete your fellowship application and personal statement and select programs to which you will apply

ERAS for fellowship applicants

https://www.aamc.org/students/medstudents/eras/fellowship_applicants/

Applying to Fellowships with ERAS®

The Electronic Residency Application Service® (ERAS®) streamlines the application and document delivery process for U.S. fellowship positions.



Sign In To MyERAS ▶

ERAS® Fellowship Application
Timeline ▶

ERAS® Participating Specialties And
Programs ▶

Eventual
timeline

Registering for the MyERAS® Portal

Learn how to register for the MyERAS® portal for the upcoming application season.

The MyERAS® Application and Program Signaling for 2023-24

The AAMC is updating the Electronic Residency Application Service® (ERAS®) system for 2024. In the coming season, residency applicants who are applying to participating programs can use program signals to show their interest.

Fees for ERAS® Fellowship Applications

ERAS® fellowship application fees are based on the number of programs applied to. The MyERAS® system automatically calculates your fees and you can pay online using Visa, MasterCard, American

Follow ERAS

X @ERASinfo

Need Help?

Please contact the [AAMC Support Center \(ASC\)](#).

Monday - Friday 8 a.m. - 6 p.m. ET
Closed Thursday, 3:30 - 4:45 p.m. ET

myeras@aamc.org

202-862-6264

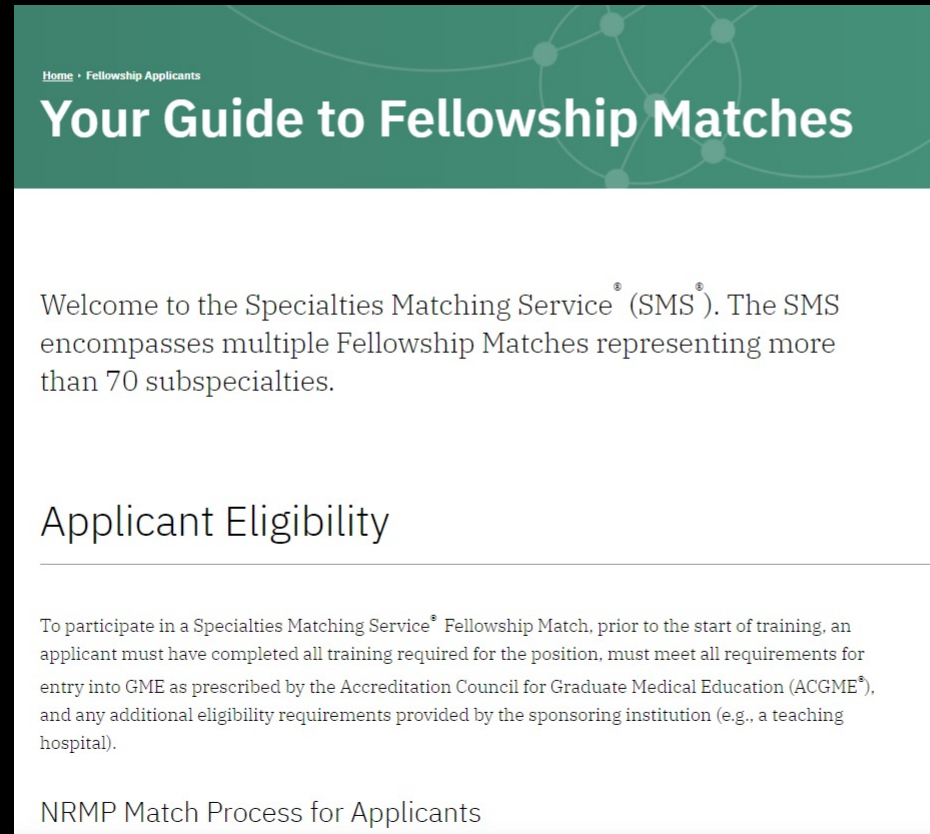
Contact ERAS Fellowship Documents Office (EFDO)

[Please visit ERAS® Fellowships Documents Office \(EFDO\) website.](#)



The NRMP (National Residency Matching Program)

- A private, not-for-profit corporation est 1952 to provide a uniform date of appointment to positions in GME
- Conducts matches for most IM fellowship positions through its **Specialties Matching Service**
<http://www.nrmp.org/intro-fellowship-matches/>



Home • Fellowship Applicants

Your Guide to Fellowship Matches

Welcome to the Specialties Matching Service[®] (SMS[®]). The SMS encompasses multiple Fellowship Matches representing more than 70 subspecialties.

Applicant Eligibility

To participate in a Specialties Matching Service[®] Fellowship Match, prior to the start of training, an applicant must have completed all training required for the position, must meet all requirements for entry into GME as prescribed by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME[®]), and any additional eligibility requirements provided by the sponsoring institution (e.g., a teaching hospital).

NRMP Match Process for Applicants

Official fellowship application timeline

- Depends on ERAS, NRMP
- Official dates not yet published

Last year's timeline

[Timeline - ERAS® Fellowships Documents Office \(erasfellowshipdocuments.org\)](http://erasfellowshipdocuments.org)



Unofficial fellowship timeline

APRIL/MAY

Update your CV & write your personal statement; ask for **3 LOR** plus residency LOR from Team APD (co-authored with Manish; pls allow 4-6 weeks for letters to be written)

JUNE

Obtain a MyERAS token (**June 6**), familiarize yourself with ERAS, & begin working on your application

Submit materials to ERAS. **Anticipate some delay (1-2 wks) for documents to become available**

Unofficial fellowship timeline (cont)

JULY

Select fellowship programs to receive your application & SUBMIT

Fellowship programs begin downloading applications

SUMMER

Register for match at NRMP website

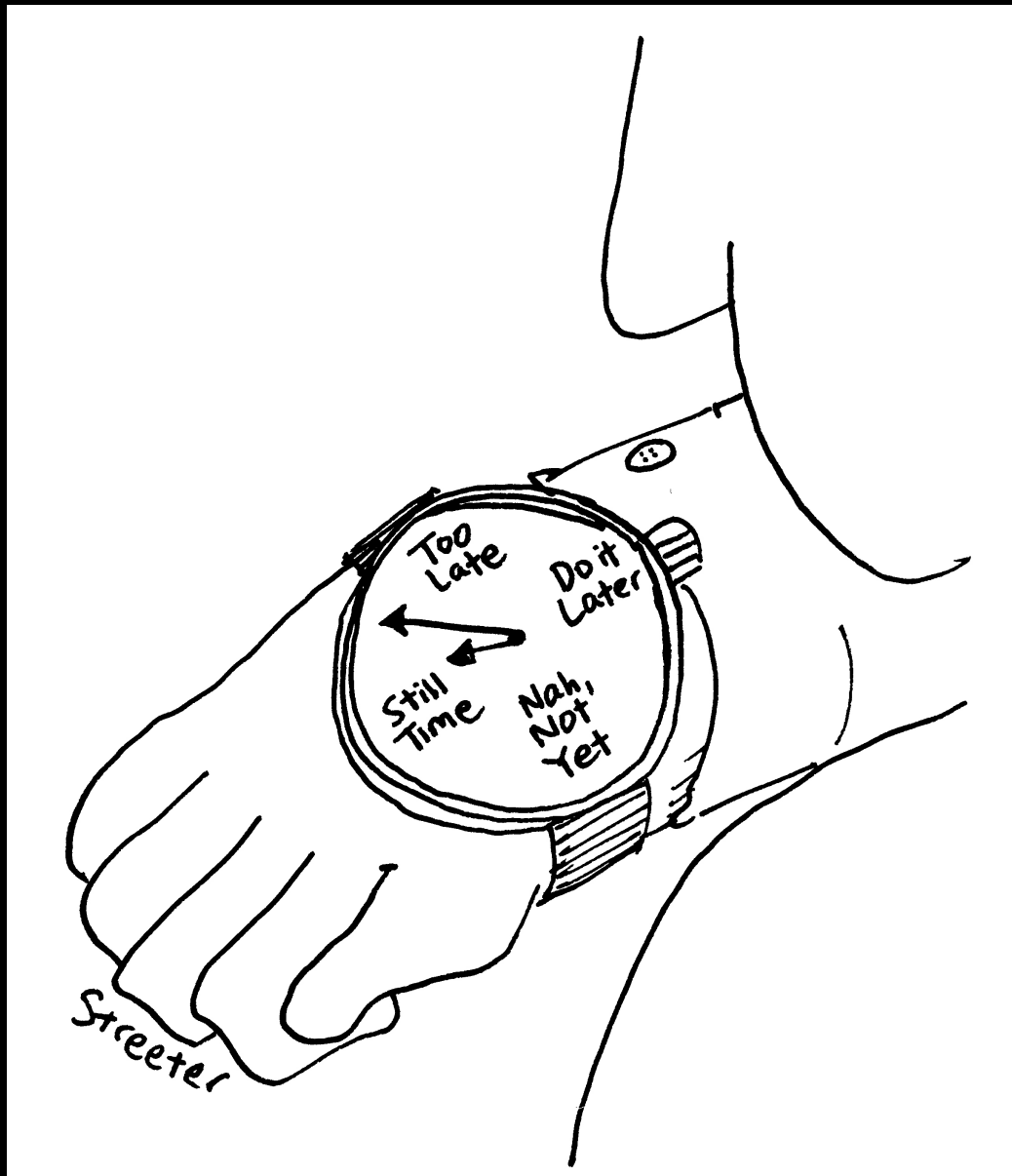
SUMMER/FALL

Prepare for and arrange interviews. Meet with BG to discuss interviewing strategies & conduct mock interview if desired. Submit rank order list to NRMP

Example: last year

July Application Cycle Timeline (for positions starting July 2024)

Year	Date	Description
2023	Jun 8	<p>You may submit your ERAS Fellowships token request. Tokens will be sent via email at the time you request your token and the transaction has been completed.</p> <p>Once you have purchased your token, register at MyERAS. Go to the MyERAS homepage. Use your token to register, log in and start working on your application.</p> <p>You may start submitting documents to the EFDO for processing and selecting the fellowship programs to which you plan to apply.</p>
	Jul 5	<p>Fellowship applicants may begin applying to July application cycle programs only. Programs will not have access to review application materials until July 19.</p>
	Jul 19	<p>ERAS opens for July application cycle fellowship programs. The MyERAS application and supporting documents are made available to programs you have designated. Applications submitted on or before July 19 at 9 a.m. ET will display an application date of "July 19." Applications submitted after July 19 at 9 a.m. ET will display the actual application date.</p> <p>ERAS transmits documents every business day until May 31, 2024.</p>
2024	May 31	<p>ERAS closes, ending current ERAS season.</p>
	Jul 1	<p>Fellowship training begins.</p>



Work ahead!

MyERAS components

- Application form
- CV
- LOR
- Personal statement
- Other docs (board scores, MSPE, med school transcript, etc)

Preparing your CV

- There is a difference between *padding* a CV and BEING COMPLETE!
 - Salamander study in college: yes
 - QI project, chart review in med school with no pubs: yes
 - Distinction between EXPERIENCES & PRODUCTS
 - Getting TO the holistic review and the interview
- Suggested review
 - Kris Greiner 1st review
kristina-greiner@uiowa.edu
 - Brian Gehlbach 2nd review
brian-gehlbach@uiowa.edu

CV vs ERAS application formatting

- CV as a tool for
 - Helping your letter writers advocate for you
 - Preparing for the ERAS application
- ERAS application now focused on *experiences*
 - Quality > quantity (10, with 3 identified as most meaningful)
 - Impactful experiences (typically for major challenges or obstacles)

Experiences

MyERAS® Application Updates and Program Signaling



CONSIDER THESE DATA FROM THE ERAS 2023 CYCLE*

- Seventy percent of respondents to the 2023 Program Director Survey reported that meaningful experience responses helped them get a better picture of each applicant.
- More than 80% of respondents to the 2023 Program Director Survey used the key characteristics and primary focus areas.

characteristic. As a set, your experiences should communicate what is most important or has most impacted you and the qualities you will bring to a residency or fellowship program. For instance, if you have a hobby or an extracurricular activity that you have dedicated significant time and effort to, you may want to include it as one of your experiences.

- **Focus your three most meaningful experiences descriptions on *why* the experiences were meaningful and *how* they affected you.** Programs are looking for you to show introspection in your most meaningful experiences descriptions. If you tag a characteristic and/or focus area to a most meaningful experience, your description should explain *why* you chose the characteristic and/or focus area. For each experience, programs will see the most meaningful experiences descriptions alongside all the information in the selected experiences section, so you should describe *what* you did as part of the roles, responsibilities, and context in your description.
- **Use the experiences section to complement the other parts of your application.** Ideally, your most meaningful experiences descriptions should not repeat the same information from your MSPE Noteworthy Characteristics and/or personal statement. While there may be overlap in the experiences mentioned across the application, consider how to provide additional insight or emphasize how these experiences have shaped who you are and what is important to you.

Tips for completing the Experiences section

- **Reflect and identify experiences that communicate who you are, what you are passionate about, and what is most important to you.** Programs are not interested in one type of applicant. Most programs are seeking a diverse group of applicants who have varied experiences, are passionate about different areas, and have complementary characteristics to create a well-rounded team.
- **Consider your experiences as a complete set. Use them to paint a picture of yourself.** You may tag an experience type, primary focus area, and key characteristic to each experience. You do not need to tag every experience to a primary focus area and key

Selected strategies

- Consider combining some experiences
- But don't dilute your most impactful experiences
- "Use them to paint a picture of yourself". This may include hobbies, interests, service, etc

This is an opportunity for the evaluator to hear your voice.

Helpful guides

- R3s, fellows
- Faculty who know you well
- Team leader, Gehlbach
- Family & friends—can they see the best and/or most unique parts of you?
- ERAS website!



The screenshot shows the AAMC website's 'Students & Residents' section. The main heading is 'The MyERAS® Application and Program Signaling for 2023-24'. Below the heading, there is a navigation menu with options like 'Choosing a Medical Career', 'Applying to Medical School', 'Attending Medical School', 'Applying to Residency', and 'Training in a Residency or Fellowship'. The 'Applying to Residency' option is selected. The page content includes a search bar, a 'SHARE' button with social media icons, and several sections: 'On This Page' with links to application events and resources, '2024 ERAS® Application Events and Resources', 'Webinars and Videos' with a list of recordings and new videos, and 'Guides and Worksheets' with links to application updates and a worksheet. On the right side, there are three blue buttons: 'Sign In To The MyERAS® Portal', 'ERAS® Timelines For Residency Applicants', and 'ERAS Participating Specialties And Programs'. Below these are sections for 'Follow ERAS' (with a Twitter handle @ERASinfo and a link to ERAS 2024 Webinars), 'Need Help?' (with contact information for the AAMC Support Center), and 'Contact ECFMG (IMGs Only)'.

Editing services

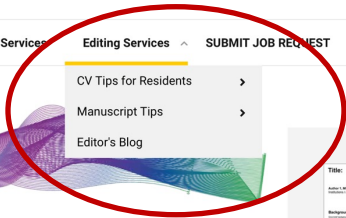
- <https://designcenter.uiowa.edu>

Design Center

SEARCH

Invitation from Bowmaster, Sydney M Accept

Design & Illustration Posters & Printing Digital Media Services **Editing Services** SUBMIT JOB REQUEST

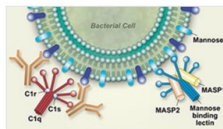


Being updated...but Kris and I are coordinating our efforts

Welcome to the Design Center

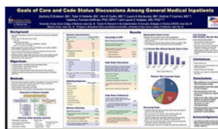
The Design Center provides campus-wide graphic design, poster printing, professional editing, and digital media services. Our design staff offers a comprehensive array of graphic design and visuals for print, web, and presentation. We provide editing for all types of written materials, with a specialty in technical and scientific editing. Our digital media services include scripting, filming, editing, audio, and social media.

Click to [submit a job request](#), or learn more about our services below:



Design & Illustration

Complex illustrations, annual reports, posters, booklets, brochures, patient materials, newsletters, and more



Posters & Printing

Large format printing (conference posters, banners, signs); photo printing



Digital Media Services

Video, live streaming, podcasts, audio production, and more



Editing Services

Manuscripts, grants, abstracts, correspondence, web text, patient materials

Letters of Recommendation

- Residency letter of reference (ask Team leader; is signed by both Manish & APD)
- Other LOR
 - 2+ letters from specialists in field
 - Other letters (3 total!)

LOR tips

- **How do you pick someone who will write a good letter?**
 - First-hand knowledge of your abilities and potential
 - Review of written evaluations
 - Someone who spontaneously offers to write a letter or to “help in any way”
 - If the signals are unclear : “Dr X, do you think you could write a supportive LOR for my fellowship position?”
 - Role of seniority
 - Complementary nature of letters

LOR tips

- **Make an appointment to discuss your letter (don't trust anything so important to a hallway conversation or email)**
 - Send a copy of your CV
 - Update your letter writers on recent or ongoing projects
 - Highlight in your CV any special attributes or qualifications you think might be emphasized in the LOR
- In general, give plenty of advance notice (4-6 weeks)
- Waive rights to review your letter

Processing LOR

MC

Search

Resources & Services News Data & Reports Advocacy & Policy Career Development About

Services / ERAS for Institutions / ERAS® for Letter of Recommendation Authors

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

ERAS® for Letter of Recommendation Authors

The Letter of Recommendation Portal (LoRP) enables LoR Authors and/or their designees to upload letters of recommendation (LoRs) to the ERAS® platform for distribution to training programs, at the request of applicants. In the MyERAS® application, applicants generate a Letter Request Form (LRF) for each LoR they are requesting, and they provide the relevant author with the form. Authors and/or their designees use the unique Letter ID on each form to upload LoRs for applicants. A designee may not be a member of the hospital in an advising role or medical school staff supporting in the application process.

SIGN IN: LoRP

Accessing LoRP

To access the Letter of Recommendation Portal (LoRP), you will need an AAMC account. If you already have an account, you may use your existing username and password to access the [Letter of Recommendation Portal \(LoRP\)](#).

Letter of Recommendation Portal (LoRP) Guidelines

In order for a letter to be uploaded to the Portal, the letter must meet the following system requirements:

- File must be in a PDF format.
- File size cannot exceed 1 MB.
- File cannot be encrypted or password protected.
- Filename cannot contain the following special characters: | * ? :
- Page size must be 8.5 x 11 inches.

It is recommended that letters are written on a professional letterhead and signed by the author. Before uploading a letter, carefully review the letter for accuracy and grammatical errors. LoR(s) should be signed by the LoR Author and include a date.



Denise Floerchinger
IM Fellowship Program
Administrator
denise-floerchinger@uiowa.edu

https://www.aamc.org/services/eras/282520/lor_portal.html

Personal Statement

One page document to convey key topics.

- 1) Why are you interested in this field?
- 2) What are your goals?* How have your experiences to date supported these goals?
- 3) Anything you need to discuss?
- 4) **Where is your passion? What makes you tick? How do these qualities relate to your future career?**
 - Connecting the dots between the PS, application, LOR, & career goals

*what if I don't know my goals?

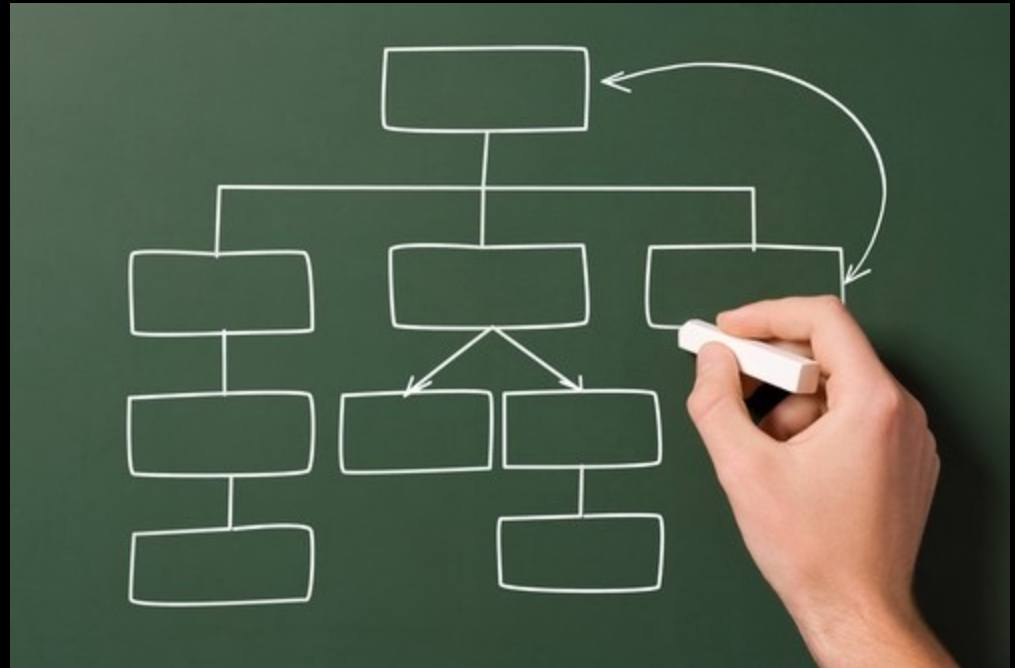
Work ahead!



The process

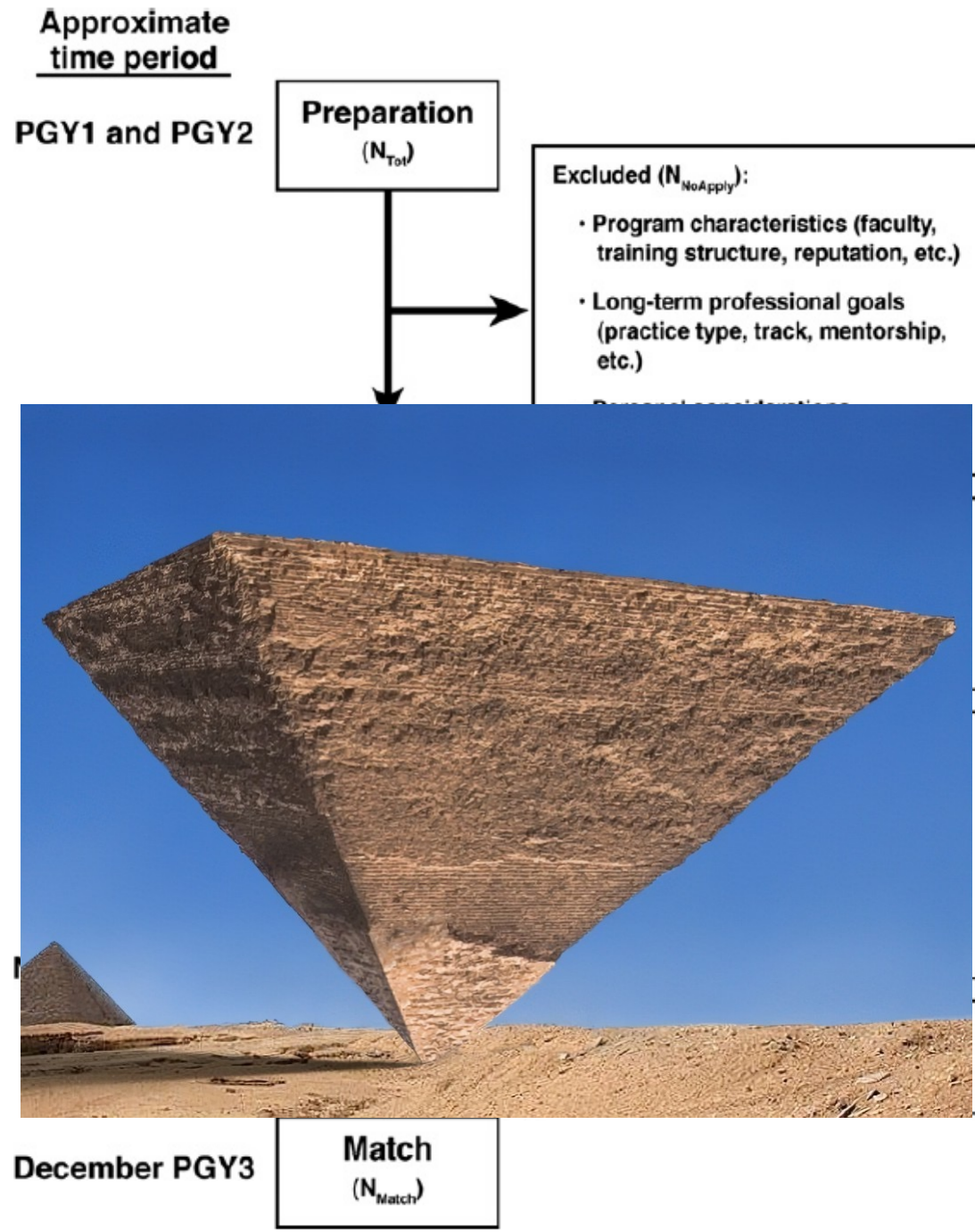
PAIR-Match

- Preparation
- Application
- Interviews
- Ranking
- Match



PAIR-Match flow diagram of a successful fellowship selection process by an individual applicant.

Make sure you apply to enough programs of variable competitiveness! Get your mentors' advice



Investing in your future

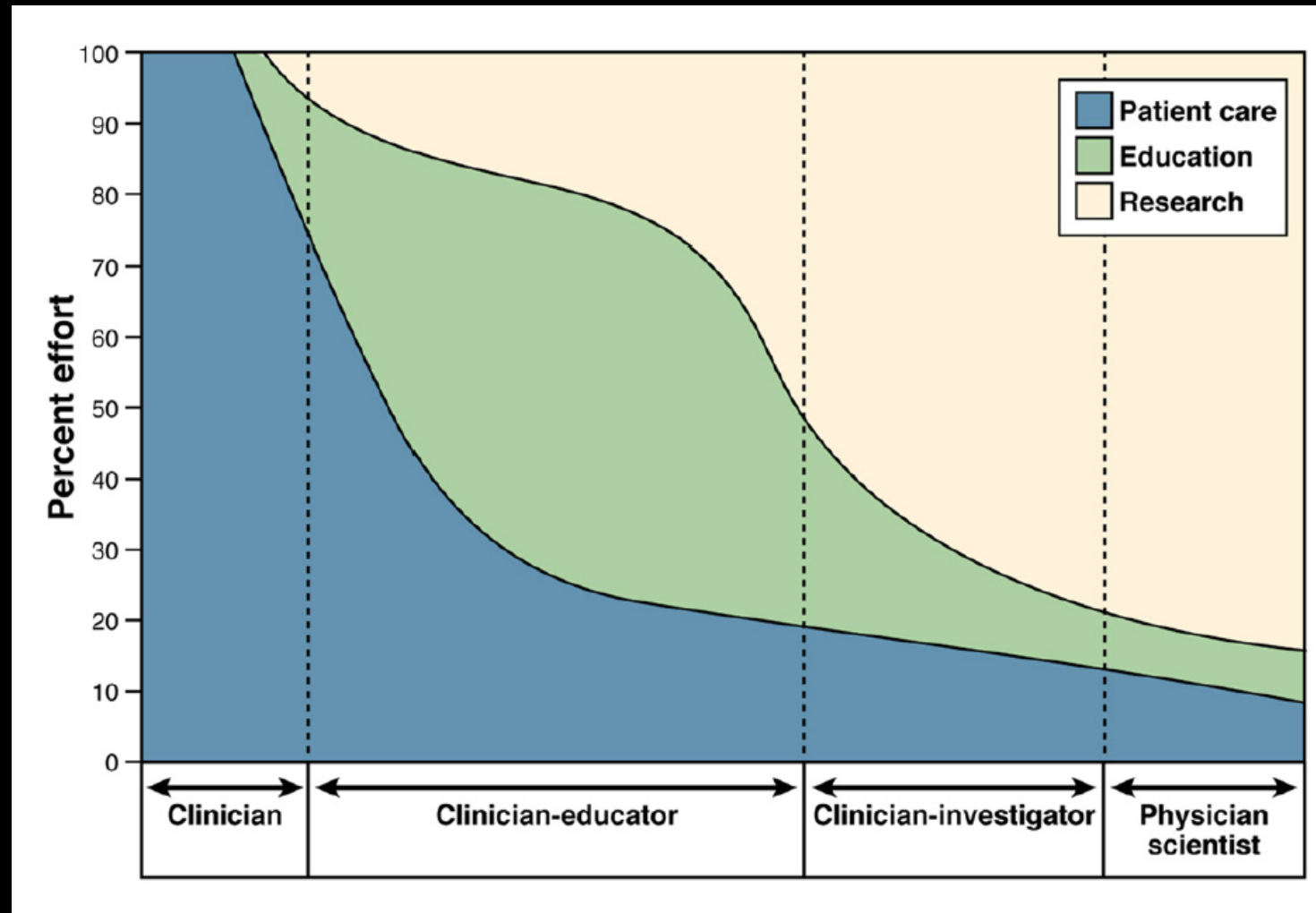


- Application to a small number of highly competitive programs
- Application documents not supportive of the mission of these programs
- Short rank list



- Realistic self-assessment guided by advice from subspecialty mentors
- Diversified “application portfolio”
- Longer rank list

Program and applicant fit



Interview: be prepared

- **Mock Interview**
- **Generate a list of questions to anticipate**
- **Actively research the programs you are visiting**
- **Be prepared to discuss your projects!** Developing an “elevator talk” is good practice. Be prepared to discuss what you learned from the experience.
- **Responding to questions about one’s weaknesses is tricky!!!**
“I am never satisfied with my medical knowledge, so I am constantly reading”...unlikely to get you into trouble but is also unimaginative and is often perceived as not really answering the question
Your reply should be more insightful and interesting

Interview formats

- Unstructured, one-on-one
- Group, typically structured

- A recent example: 4 themed interviews at a GI program
 - Strengths/weaknesses/program fit
 - Research
 - Career aspirations
 - Questions/recruitment

The Process of Applying for Gastroenterology Fellowship

ARTHUR J. DECROSS* and DEBORAH D. PROCTOR†

*GI Fellowship Training Program, University of Rochester Medical Center, Rochester, New York; †Section of Digestive Diseases, Yale University School of Medicine, New Haven, Connecticut



In the United States, with rare exception, the credentials required for the allopathic clinical practice of gastroenterology (GI) include the successful completion of a GI fellowship training program (GI fellowship) accredited by the Accreditation Council for Graduate

Medical Education (ACGME). The successful comple-

Matching Services (NRMP/SMS), also referred to as the “Match.” The Match is a highly organized system that allows programs to interview as many applicants as they wish, and allows applicants to carefully consider all the programs at which they have interviewed before making a decision. Subsequently, both applicants and programs submit a confidential rank order list of their choices on a predetermined deadline schedule established by the NRMP, and a computerized algorithm² “matches” the applicant to the highest program on their rank order list that has an available position. The system allows for additional complexity, in that the GI program positions are sorted into 4 tracks—(1) basic science research, (2) clinical investigator, (3) research (for those programs which do not distinguish between categories 1 and 2), and (4) clinical. Furthermore, applicants and programs

“The successfully interviewing applicant conveys energy, confidence, enthusiasm, and a demeanor that is professional, **but not somber.**”

What is YOUR Passion?



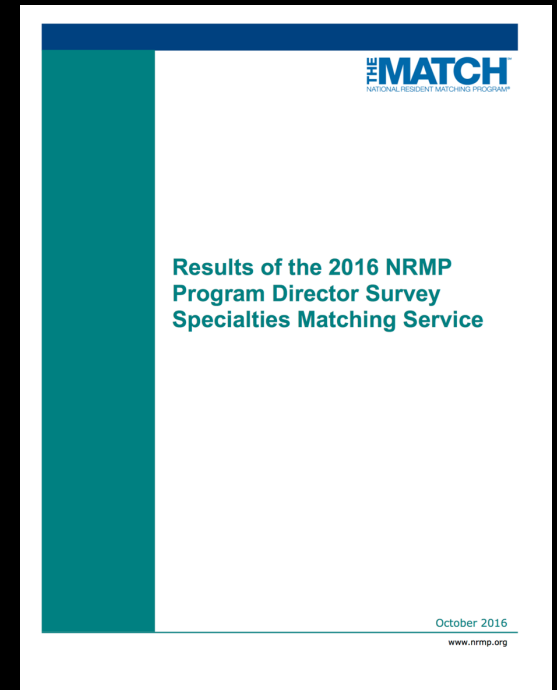
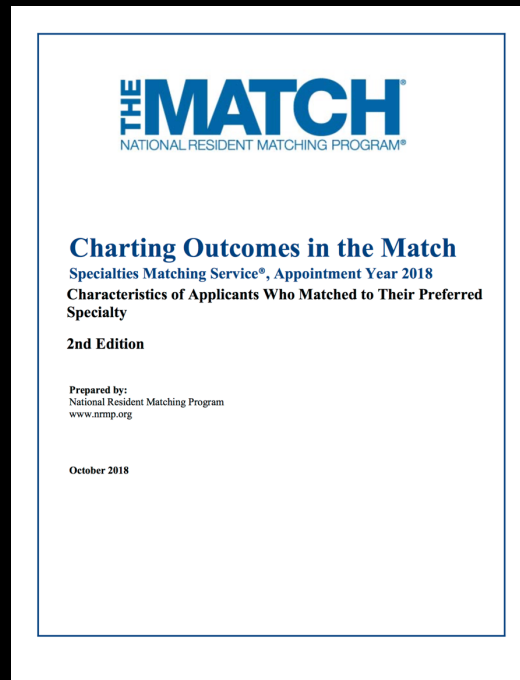
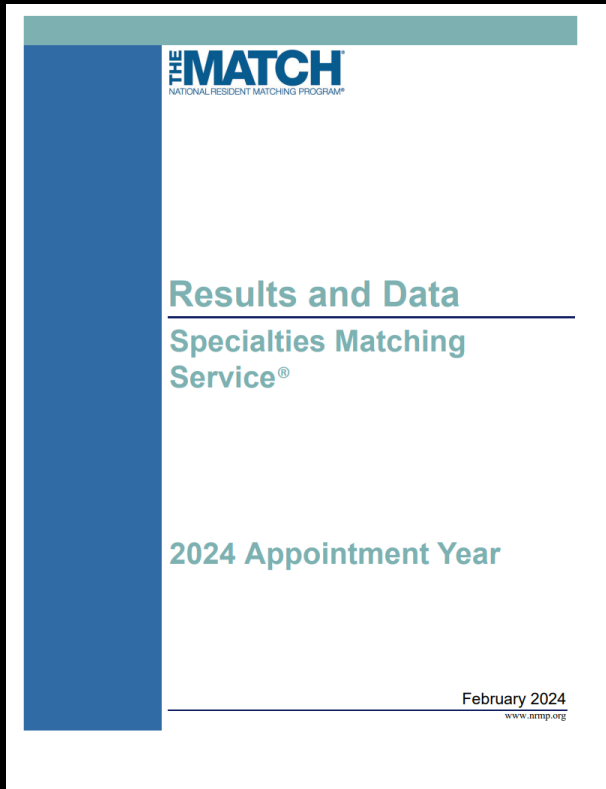
Post-Interview Advice

- Thank-you notes...probably good manners but not consequential in most cases
- Keep ERAS personal information up to date, but recognize that program reviewers may not see last minute changes
- In general, limit direct phone calls to the program. Instead, let others in the UI Department of Medicine call on your behalf

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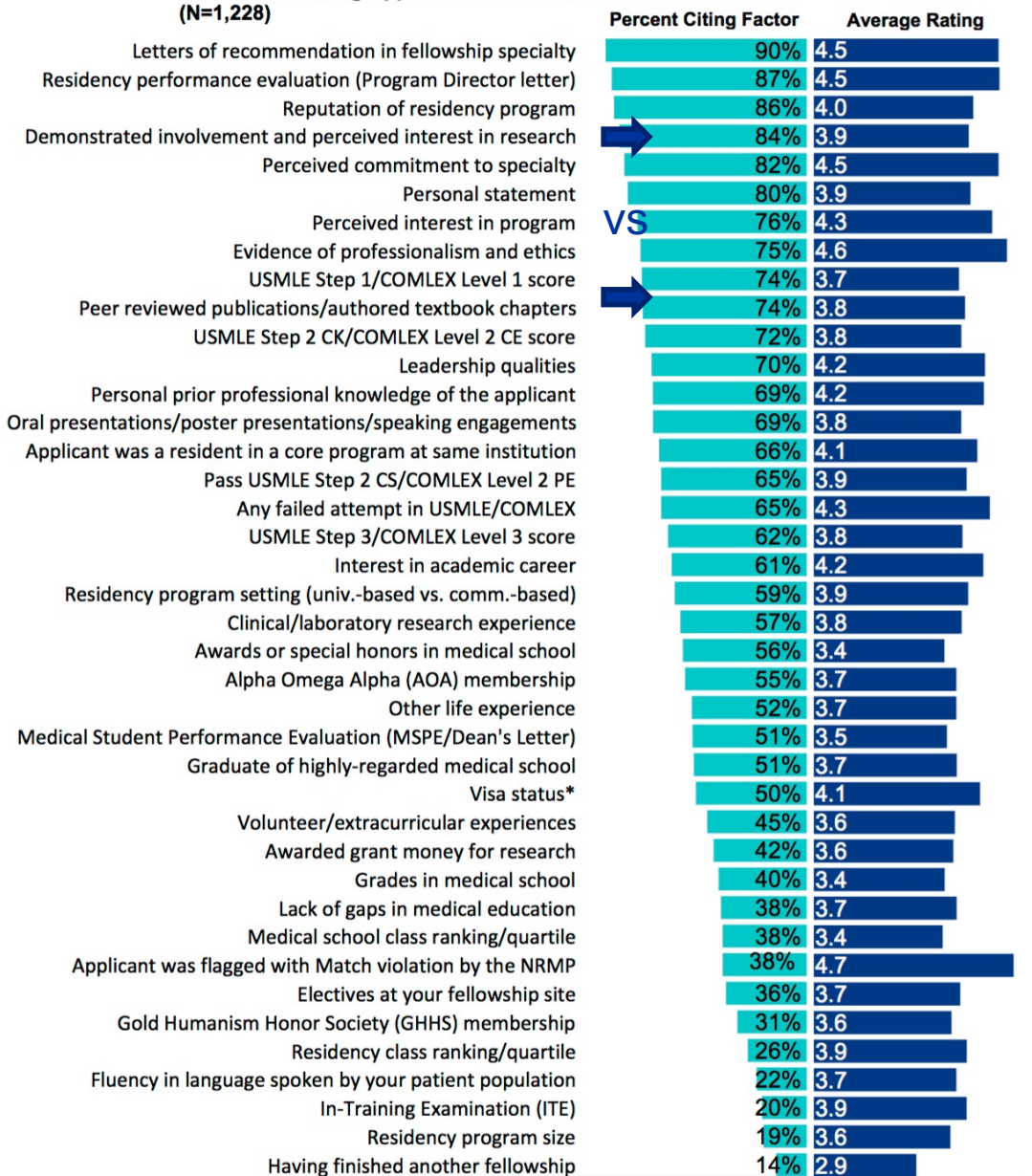
Resources



<http://www.nrmp.org/fellowship-match-data/>

Figure 1

**All Specialties
Percentage of Programs Citing Each Factor and Mean Importance Rating¹ for Each
Factor in Selecting Applicants to Interview
(N=1,228)**



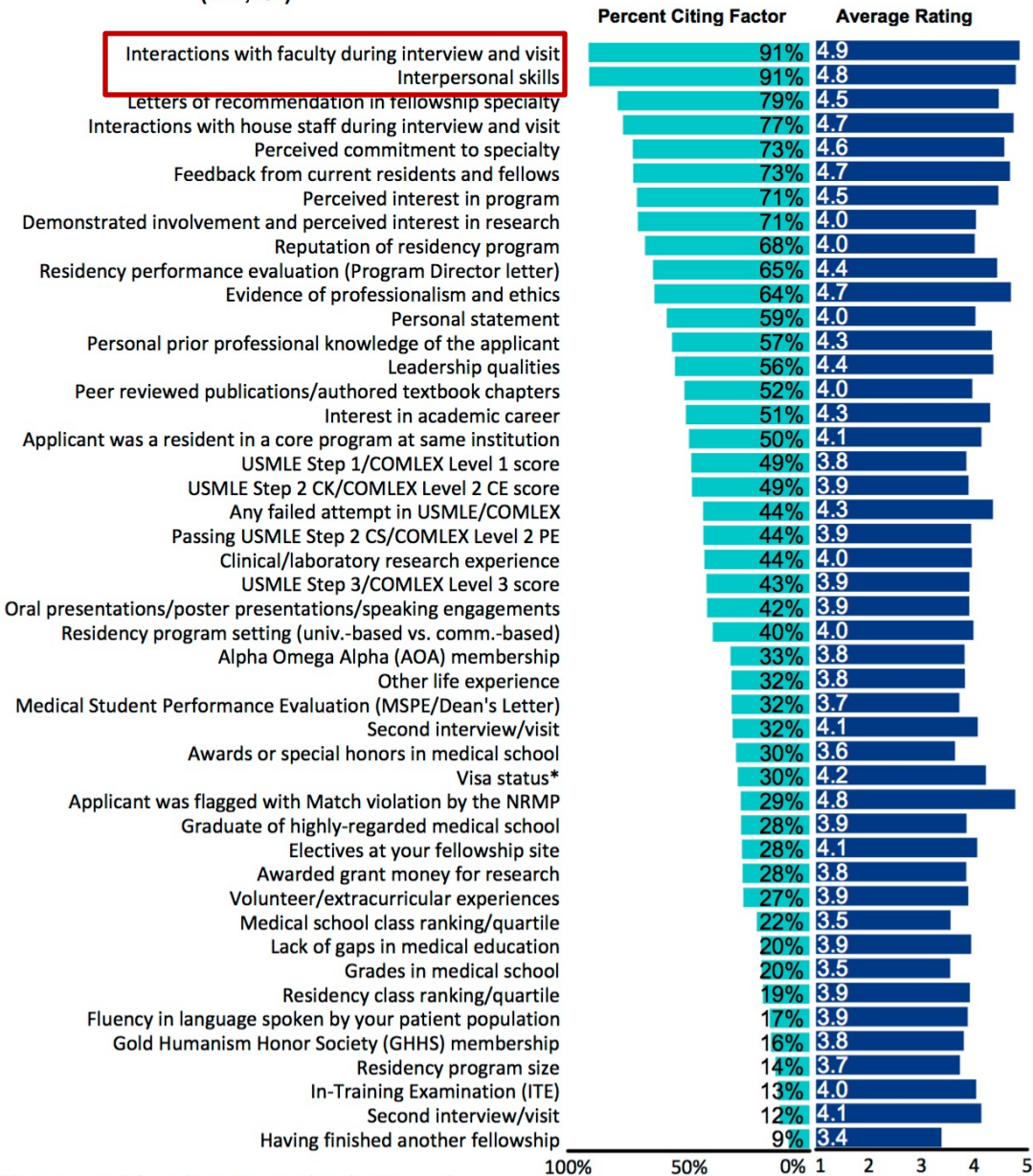
What do program directors say?

¹ Ratings on a scale from 1 (not at all important) to 5 (very important).

* International Medical Graduates only

Figure 2

**All Specialties
Percentage of Programs Citing Each Factor and Mean Importance Rating¹ for Each
Factor in Ranking Applicants
(N=1,164)**

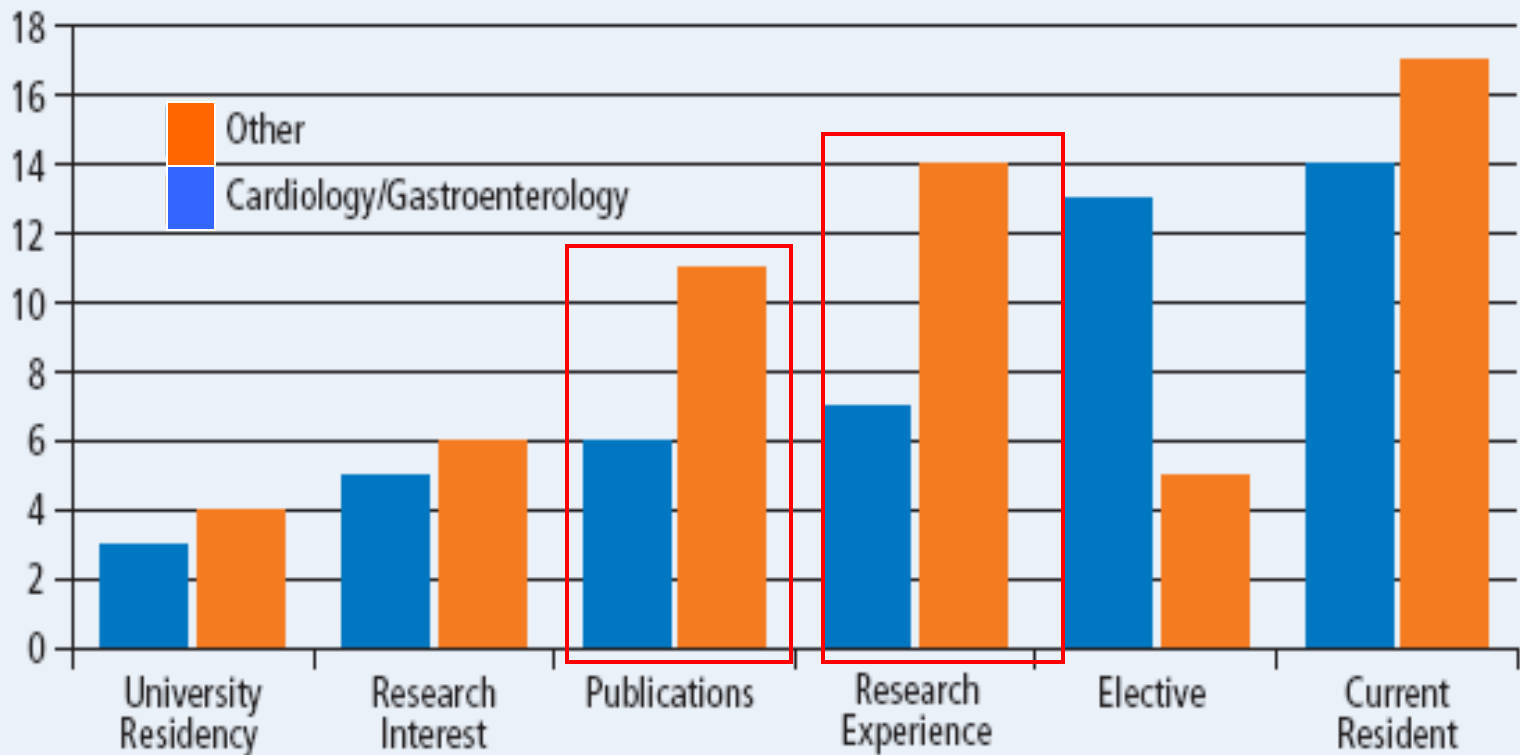


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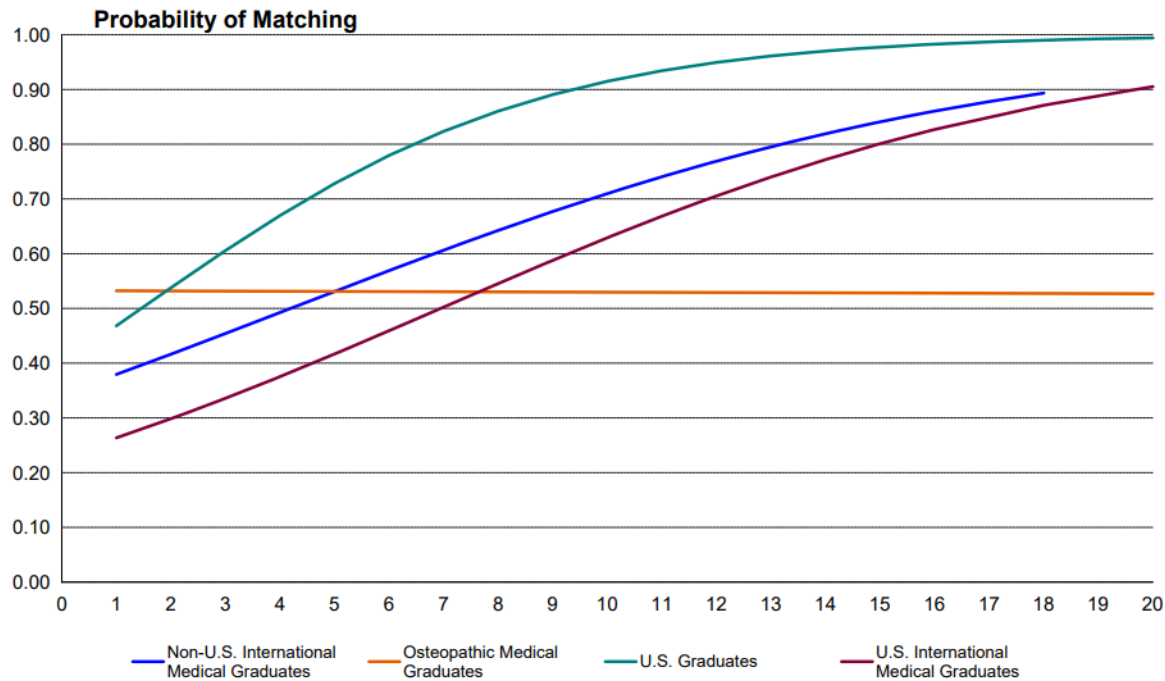
Ranked selection criteria By subspecialty:



Rank of selection criteria. A rank value of one is most important.

The importance of a well-populated rank list

Graph-1 Probability of Matching to Preferred Specialty by Number of Contiguous Ranks
Gastroenterology



Timeline for application



VS



Recommendations !!!

- Do well in your residency program (be a great doc and colleague)
- Identify mentors & get involved in scholarship!
- Interview well. Show your interest and passion!

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Departmental Support

- Meet with me early
- Meet with subspecialty faculty (including PDs) for guidance
- Send me copies of materials for suggestions
- Start an idea bank for your PS
- As match day nears, a Departmental phone call can support your application



Contact me with questions

Brian Gehlbach

brian-gehlbach@uiowa.edu

Office: (319) 356-3603