

Strolling Through the Match www.aafp.org/strolling

Strolling Through the Match was developed to help you make appropriate decisions about your professional career and to learn more about the process of getting post-graduate training. This comprehensive guide is a one-stop resource for anyone seeking a U.S. graduate medical education position. The guide includes basic information about all specialties and thought-provoking questions to help you to discern which specialty is best for you. *Strolling Through the Match* helps the reader to prepare their credentials, select a program, prepare for the interview process, and understand the Match® and SOAP processes. It is a must-read for students from U.S. and international medical schools.

AAFP Residency Directory <https://nf.aafp.org/residencydirectory>

Use the AAFP's comprehensive residency directory to find information about all allopathic family medicine residency programs. It is searchable by location, program size, community setting, program type, benefits, and more, including links to individual residency programs. Residencies establish their own criteria on number of USMLE attempts, scores, visa status, number of years since medical school graduation, etc., so be sure to check residency websites for applicant criteria prior to applying to make sure you qualify.

Electronic Residency Application Service (ERAS) www.aamc.org/students/medstudents/eras

ERAS is a comprehensive, automated residency application tool that benefits applicants and residency programs by organizing, coordinating, and distributing those materials required by most programs. Most, if not all, family medicine residency programs require applicants to use ERAS to transmit their applications. There are important differences in the process of accessing ERAS for U.S. and internationally trained students.

National Resident Matching Program (NRMP) "the Match" www.nrmp.org

This is an important site to explore, as it contains information about registration and deadlines, and describes, in brief, the process through which the Match is conducted. The Match is a legally binding process, so it is important for all applicants to understand the do's and don'ts to avoid being declared ineligible. Nearly all U.S. allopathic family medicine residency programs require applicants to use the NRMP matching process. The only exceptions allowed include rural scholars programs, family medicine accelerated programs, off-cycle appointments, and preliminary positions created by programs at the conclusion of the Supplemental Offer and Acceptance Program® (SOAP). Applicants need to be aware that data produced by the NRMP indicates that those applicants who chose not to participate in the traditional Match and apply only through the SOAP process have an extremely poor chance of obtaining a residency position. Each year the NRMP publishes a number of useful documents summarizing the results of the Match and SOAP process. These reports include:

- *2014 Main Match Results and Data*—Match rates by specialty and state and types of applicants (U.S. allopathic, osteopathic, and international medical graduate)
<http://www.nrmp.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Main-Match-Results-and-Data-2014.pdf>
- *Charting Outcomes in the Match: Characteristics of Applicants Who Matched to Their Preferred Specialty in the 2014 Main Residency Match*—Includes likelihood of matching into family medicine based upon a variety of characteristics, including scores on the U.S. Medical Licensing Exam (USMLE)
<http://www.nrmp.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Charting-Outcomes-2014-Final.pdf>
- *Charting Outcomes in the Match (International Medical Graduates): Characteristics of Applicants Who Matched to Their Preferred Specialty in the 2013 Main Residency Match*—Can be used to understand the probability of success in the Match process for International Medical Graduates with subgroup analysis for U.S. IMGs and non-U.S. IMGs
<http://www.nrmp.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/NRMP-and-ECFMG-Publish-Charting-Outcomes-in-the-Match-for-International-Medical-Graduates-Revised.PDF-File.pdf>

NRMP data reveals that chances of matching into any specialty go down dramatically after two years from the time of graduation from medical school and/or failure on Step I or Step II of the USMLE. The effect is greatest for those who have graduated from international medical schools.

Federation of State Medical Boards (FSMB) www.fsmb.org

The FSMB website is a clearinghouse for information from individual state medical examiner/licensing boards. Check the website for state specific information for those states where you might apply for residency. If you plan to go to a residency in a particular state, you may want to know if you are eligible to train and later obtain a license to practice in that state. Some states have restrictions on how many USMLE attempts or time interval to take all the USMLE Steps.

Many students are surprised to learn that some states have strict requirements limit training and licensure to LCME and AOA graduates and a limited number of international medical schools (even if the student is a U.S. citizen). IMGs are advised to check the state eligibility requirements BEFORE applying to residency programs to avoid applying to a program(s) in a state that does not recognize their medical school as eligible for training and licensure. This can save precious time and money.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND ITEMS OF NOTE FOR INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL GRADUATES:

The Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG) www.ecfm.org

The Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG) was founded in 1956 to assess if IMGs are ready to enter ACGME accredited residency programs in the United States. You must be certified by the ECFMG BEFORE you can start a graduate medical education program. IMGs should contact the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG) early for instructions about applying to residency programs using ERAS. The ECFMG will function as the designated dean's office for IMGs in ERAS. Some programs require that the applicant has received the certificate of the ECFMG as one of the criteria to determine if an interview will be granted. The ECFMG website has many useful resources, programs, and services, including information regarding visas. The following are two notable programs:

- The **ECFMG Certificate Holders Office (ECHO)** provides resources to help IMGs be better prepared and organized in making career decisions, and provides guidance on applying to U.S. graduate medical education programs, obtaining a U.S. medical license, and gaining medical specialty certification. The program also will provide opportunities for IMGs to network and share resources with each other and other experts and organizations. www.ecfm.org/echo
- The IMG Advisors Network (IAN) is a free service of the ECFMG Certificate Holders Office (ECHO). www.ecfm.org/echo/ian-index.html

Article from *Family Medicine* (the official journal of the Society of Teachers of Family Medicine)

What Residency Applicant IMGs Need to Know When Applying to U.S. Family Medicine Residency Programs

by Perry A. Pugno, MD, MPH, CPE; Amy L. McGaha, MD; Alexander Ivanov, MBA; Kaparaboyana Ashok Kumar, MD

<http://www.stfm.org/fmhub/fm2011/January/Perry43.pdf>