

## FAQs from the “Society of Skeletal Radiology” about the MSK Fellowship Match

We have tried to highlight some of the commonly asked questions below. You are strongly encouraged to review the NRMP match agreements in their entirety for specific guidelines, requirements and responsibilities at <http://www.nrmp.org/match-participation-agreements/>. Of particular importance are the following documents:

1. Match Participation Agreement for Institutions: <http://www.nrmp.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/2018-MPA-Institutions.pdf>
2. Match Participation Agreement between Applicants and Programs: <http://www.nrmp.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/2018-MPA-Specialities-Matching-Service.pdf>
3. NRMP Specialities Matching Service Match Participation Agreement: <http://www.nrmp.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/2018-MPA-Specialities-Matching-Service.pdf>

### Questions

#### 1. Who is eligible to participate in the MSK Fellowship Match?

a. To be eligible for the NRMP MSK Fellowship Match, fellowship programs must meet at least one of the following criteria:

i. accredited by the ACGME or another entity deemed acceptable to NRMP (this represents a minority of MSK fellowship programs)

ii. affiliated with an ACGME-accredited residency program in the primary discipline (Diagnostic Radiology) (this represents a majority of MSK fellowship programs)

iii. lead to certification or endorsement and oversight by a board recognized by the American Board of Medical Specialties (this does not apply to MSK fellowship programs)

b. The SSR is the sponsoring organization for the MSK Fellowship Match. In order to participate in the subspecialty fellowship Match, the SSR must annually attest that  $\geq 75\%$  of eligible MSK fellowship programs and  $\geq 75\%$  of available fellowship positions are represented in the Match. Therefore, confirming your program’s commitment to the Match through the survey link is vitally important to move the process forward. It is no secret that the more programs that participate, the more fair and successful the Match will be—we are striving for 100% participation from eligible programs.

c. Canadian MSK fellowship programs can opt-in to the Match through an NRMP partner organization. They are not considered part of the denominator for the 75% participation threshold. If a Canadian program is interested in participating, please contact the NRMP directly.

d. Reference: <http://www.nrmp.org/fellowship-program-eligibility/>

2. What is the timeline for the MSK Fellowship Match?

a. Awareness of the Match timeline is essential for MSK Match campaign success, as we are on a potential collision course without your cooperation and commitment. MSK will enter the Spring 2019 Match for fellowship appointment date July 1, 2020. Traditionally, the non-Match MSK application and interview season would start in the Spring/Summer of 2018 for appointment date July 1, 2020. Therefore, we are asking all eligible

fellowship programs to refrain from making any fellowship offers outside of the Match for the upcoming selection cycle (as it would violate match guidelines to do so), and that all fellowship programs refrain from interviewing MSK fellowship applicants until November 25, 2018 for appointment date July 1, 2020.

b. Important Dates: The Match timeline is established by the NRMP. The MSK Match will occur on the same timeline as all other Radiology Fellowship Subspecialty Matches according to NRMP guidelines.

i. May 1, 2018: Deadline to complete the Match commitment survey link for the SSR

ii. August 2018: Due date for the MSK Fellowship Sponsorship Agreement from the SSR to the NRMP, attesting that  $\geq 75\%$  of eligible programs and  $\geq 75\%$  of available fellowship positions will be represented in the Match. We are working to have this confirmed well ahead of the deadline, and will submit the sponsorship agreement as soon as we achieve the participation threshold.

iii. November 25, 2018: Interview season opens for appointment date July 1, 2020 \*This is a recent change that was suggested to enable programs to interview candidates (particularly from foreign countries) at RSNA.

iv. February/March 2019: NRMP new specialty newsletter will be sent to program directors to provide information and resources on the match process and timeline

v. March 20, 2019: Match opens

vi. April 24, 2019: Ranking opens

vii. May 15, 2019: Quota change deadline

viii. May 29, 2019: Ranking closes

ix. June 12, 2019: Match Day

x. July 1, 2020: Fellowship appointment date

c. Between the Rank Order List Certification Deadline and Match Day, applicants can not apply for, discuss, interview for, or accept any position that would run concurrent with positions offered in the Match. Similarly, all programs must refrain from discussing, interviewing for, or offering positions during that time period.

d. The uniform timeline is essential for maintaining the integrity of the Match. Candidates can only participate in a single match at a given time (to prevent multiple appointments from being made in the Match), but can simultaneously apply to multiple program tracks within the Radiology Fellowship Match. For example, a candidate can apply to both Neuroradiology and MSK fellowship programs. The candidate submits a single NRMP Match rank list that will include both Neuroradiology and MSK programs in the order selected by the applicant, but it is not possible to be matched into both a Neuroradiology and MSK program at the same time.

e. Many of our fellowship program directors have expressed an interest in moving back the NRMP Match timeline so that fellowship interviews and selection would occur after the Core Exam. This is a decision that must be made in cooperation with the other Radiology Fellowship programs in the Match and approved by the NRMP, and is being discussed by the SCARD Fellowship Match Task Force. Any proposed changes would occur after the 2019 Match (dates for which are listed above).

f. Reference: <http://www.nrmp.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/SMS-Master-Calendar.pdf>

g. Reference: [http://www.nrmp.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/MPA-2018-MRM-Applicants\\_Programs.pdf](http://www.nrmp.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/MPA-2018-MRM-Applicants_Programs.pdf)

### 3. What does it cost to participate in the Match?

#### a. NRMP Match Fees (effective July 1, 2018)

##### i. Applicant registration: \$85

1. This allows processing of up to 20 unique fellowship program ranks

##### ii. Institution registration: \$250

1. There is 1 institutional registration fee per match, and it is billed at the institutional level (paid by the GME Designated Institutional Officer (DIO))

a. For example, if a single institution participates in the Neuroradiology and MSK fellowship matches, there is only 1 institutional fee of \$250—it covers all subspecialties within the "Radiology Fellowship" match.

##### iii. Program registration: \$60/program track

1. This is billed to the institutional GME office; how or whether the cost is transferred to individual departments or sections is determined by the GME office.

2. If there are two program tracks for a given fellowship at an institution (e.g. a Clinical MSK fellowship and a Research MSK fellowship), then the total program track fee is  $\$60 \times 2 = \$120$

iv. Matched applicant: \$60 per matched applicant

1. This is billed by the NRMP to the Institutional DIO

v. Reference: <http://www.nrmp.org/match-fees/>

4. What is the "All In Policy"?

a. As the sponsoring organization, the SSR has opted to abide by the "All In Policy" for the MSK fellowship match (Breast Imaging also does this). This means that for eligible MSK fellowship programs who decide to participate in the Match that they must list all available fellowship spots in the Match (i.e. a program cannot withhold any spots to be filled outside of the match, including for internal candidates). This helps our specialty in several ways:

i. It will make it easier to reach the 75% threshold for listing available fellowship spots in the match. The denominator of that threshold is determined by the total number of available fellowship spots for a given subspecialty—whether the spots are listed in the match or not. By requiring all available fellowship spots at participating programs to be listed in the match (including those for internal candidates), the numerator for the threshold is increased and stabilized year-to-year.

ii. By implementing the "All In Policy", the NRMP will help monitor Match compliance and investigate aberrancies or reports of non-compliance. This

helps ensure a level playing field for the Match, and shifts some of the burden for monitoring the Match from the SSR to the NRMP.

iii. Most importantly, the "All In Policy" is the only option that is truly in the spirit of the Match. We are doing this because we believe it is the right thing to do, and we believe the "All In Policy" will help create the level of commitment and transparency required to make this work.

b. Reference: <http://www.nrmp.org/all-in-policy-for-fellowships/>

5. What about internal fellowship candidates?

a. Because we have opted to abide by the "All In Policy", all available fellowship positions at participating programs must be listed in the Match—including those for internal candidates. Internal candidates must register for and be ranked in the match in order to secure an MSK fellowship spot. That said, it is within the match guidelines for both applicants and programs to express interest in each other; however, they cannot solicit verbal or written statements outside of the Match implying a commitment. Any such expressed interest is nonbinding and cannot be contingent on any agreement outside of the Match results. Assuming a reasonable level of trust and honesty of both parties, this should provide some level of security for candidates and programs—regardless of whether the applicant is internal or external. We know from our survey results of R3 and R4 residents who participated in both match and non-match specialties that this "expressed interest" occurs with relative frequency—approximately 20-25% of residents in each group applied to only 1 fellowship program. This does not represent a match violation.

b. Reference: See Section 6.2 <http://www.nrmp.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/2018-MPA-Specialities-Matching-Service.pdf>

6. What about eligible MSK fellowship programs that decide not to participate in the Match?

a. Neither the NRMP nor the SSR can require a program to participate in the Match if they do not want to, but we recognize that success of the Match depends on widespread cooperation and commitment. As leaders and educators in MSK radiology, the primary incentive to participate in the Match is self-evident—it is vital for sustaining the value and quality of MSK radiology fellowship training.

b. The SSR wants to support programs who have committed to the Match, and incentivize others to join. Going forward, the SSR will only list the following MSK fellowship programs on the SSR website:

i. MSK fellowship programs that participate in the Match

ii. MSK fellowship programs that are ineligible to participate in the Match, but have agreed to abide by a uniform interview and selection timeline determined by the SSR in concordance with NRMP guidelines

iii. Canadian MSK fellowship programs

c. The SSR will not extend Member-In-Training (MIT) benefits to fellows at Match-eligible programs that choose not to participate in the Match.

7. What about MSK fellowship programs that are currently not eligible to participate in the Match?

a. There are several highly competitive MSK fellowship programs that are not eligible to participate in the Match because they either are not ACGME-accredited, or are not affiliated with an ACGME-accredited residency program in the core discipline of

Diagnostic Radiology. To encourage compliance with the Match timeline, the SSR is asking these programs to abide by the following interview and selection timeline:

i. November 25, 2018: Interview season opens for appointment date July 1, 2020. Fellowship offers may be made between this date and May 29, 2019 when rank lists are finalized.

ii. May 29, 2019—June 12, 2019: No fellowship interviews or offers occur during this time period between when Rank Lists are finalized and Match Day.

iii. After June 12, 2019: Interviews and offers may resume for appointment date July 1, 2020.

iv. July 1, 2020: Fellowship appointment date

b. If these programs become ACGME-accredited fellowships in the future, they would then be eligible to participate in the Match and could directly register with the NRMP.

c. Programs that are ineligible for the Match and do not abide by the uniform fellowship interview and selection timeline will be delisted from the SSR website.

d. The SSR will not extend Member-In-Training (MIT) benefits to fellows at Match-ineligible program that choose not to participate in the uniform interview and selection timeline.

8. What happens to unmatched MSK fellowship applicants, or training programs that go unfilled in the Match?

a. There is not a Supplemental Offer and Acceptance Program (“SOAP”) process for Fellowship Matches. The NRMP will provide a list of unfilled programs to applicants that are unmatched, and a list of unmatched applicants to programs that are unfilled—there is then a “scramble” to fill those spots. Spots filled through the “scramble” are appointed outside of the match and are therefore not bound by the NRMP match participation agreement.

9. What will be done to programs that violate the Match, or to Match-ineligible programs that violate the uniform timeline established by the SSR?

a. Programs that violate the Match agreement will be subject to penalties and procedures determined by the NRMP. The SSR Executive Committee will also review cases of Match violations to determine consequences on a case-by-case basis.

The SSR Executive Committee will review any reported cases of uniform timeline and selection violations by Match-ineligible programs that had previously agreed to abide by the uniform timeline, with consequences determined on a case-by-case basis.