

MSK Radiology Fellowship Match: Frequently Asked Questions

We have tried to highlight some of the frequently 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-Specialties-Matching-Service.pdf>
3. NRMP Specialties Matching Service Match Participation Agreement: <http://www.nrmp.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/2018-MPA-Specialties-Matching-Service.pdf>

Questions

Who is eligible to participate in the MSK Fellowship Match?

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

- Accredited by the ACGME or another entity deemed acceptable to NRMP (this represents a minority of MSK fellowship programs)
- Affiliated with an ACGME-accredited residency program in the primary discipline of diagnostic radiology (this represents a majority of MSK fellowship programs)
- Lead to certification or endorsement and oversight by a board recognized by the American Board of Medical Specialties (this does not currently apply to any MSK fellowship programs)

The SSR is the sponsoring organization for the MSK Fellowship Match. In order to participate in the NRMP 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.

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.

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

What is the timeline for the MSK Fellowship Match?

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 plans to enter the spring 2019 Match for fellowship appointment year 2020-21. Traditionally, the non-Match MSK application and interview season would start in the Spring/Summer of 2018 for appointment year 2020-21. 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.

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. The NRMP Match registration and ranking process is independent of the application and interview timeline, which is overseen by the SSR.

**The NRMP Radiology Fellowship Match dates for 2019 (appointment date July 1, 2020) are not officially confirmed and finalized until all subspecialties in the Radiology Fellowship Match (Breast Imaging, Independent Interventional Radiology, MSK Radiology, Neuroradiology) submit their sponsorship agreements in August 2018. However, these are not expected to deviate from the general timeline that has been used in recent years and is reflected below. The SSR will notify members when the NRMP Match dates are officially confirmed.*

- **May 1, 2018:** Deadline to complete the MSK Match Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for consideration toward the SSR's decision to establish the MSK Match.

Update: Now that the SSR is officially moving forward with the MSK Match, Match-eligible programs have until **Friday, June 1, 2018 to submit the MOU with this knowledge. After this date, the SSR will begin delisting eligible programs that opt out of the Match or fail to submit an MOU from the SSR website.*

**After the SSR registers our specialty with the Match, programs that wish to participate but did not complete the MOU will need to register their MSK fellowship program directly with the NRMP.*

- **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.
 - *Update: The SSR has completed this step and will officially serve as the sponsoring organization for the MSK Radiology Fellowship Match.*
- **October 1, 2018:** Though not specified in the MOU and independent of the NRMP, the SSR strongly recommends that programs not accept fellowship applications until this date.
- **November 25, 2018:** First day that interviews may occur for appointment date July 1, 2020
 - *Update: The interview start date was changed at the 2018 SSR meeting from January 1, 2019 to November 25, 2018 to accommodate MSK Fellowship candidate interviews at RSNA for participating programs.*
- **February/March 2019:** NRMP new specialty newsletter will be sent to participating fellowship program directors to provide information and resources on the match process and timeline
- **March 20, 2019:** Match registration opens for programs and applicants

- **April 24, 2019:** Ranking opens within the NRMP R3 system
- **May 15, 2019:** Quota change deadline for programs
- **May 29, 2019:** Ranking closes for programs and applicants
- **June 12, 2019:** Match Day
- **July 1, 2020:** Fellowship appointment date

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 concurrently with positions offered in the Match. Similarly, all programs (both those within and outside of the Match) must refrain from discussing, interviewing for, or offering positions during that time period.

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 may 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.

Many of our MSK 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.

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

Reference: http://www.nrmp.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/MPA-2018-MRM-Applicants_Programs.pdf

What does it cost to participate in the Match?

NRMP Match Fees (effective July 1, 2018; fee changes for the 2019 Match will not be confirmed until after the 2018 Radiology Fellowship Match Cycle, but are not expected to change significantly from what is below)

- Applicant registration: \$85
 - This allows processing of up to 20 unique fellowship program ranks.

- Institution registration: \$250
 - There is 1 institutional registration fee per match, and it is billed at the institutional level to the GME Designated Institutional Officer (DIO). 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 general "Radiology Fellowship" match.
- Program registration: \$60/program track
 - 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. 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 .
- Matched applicant: \$60 per matched applicant
 - This is billed by the NRMP to the Institutional DIO.

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

What is the “All In Policy”?

As the sponsoring organization, the SSR has opted to abide by the “All In Policy” for the MSK fellowship match. This means that for eligible MSK fellowship programs who decide to participate in the Match, 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:

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

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

What are the policies surrounding internal fellowship candidates?

Because MSK has 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. This does not represent a match violation.

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

Are there consequences for eligible MSK fellowship programs that decide not to participate in the Match?

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.

The SSR wants to support programs that 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:

- MSK fellowship programs that participate in the Match
- 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
- Canadian MSK fellowship programs

The SSR will not extend Member-In-Training (MIT) benefits to fellowship classes selected during year(s) that Match-eligible programs choose not to participate in the Match.

How does this affect MSK fellowship programs that are currently not eligible to participate in the Match?

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:

- **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.
- **May 29, 2019—June 12, 2019:** No fellowship interviews or offers can occur during this time period between when Rank Lists are finalized and Match Day.
- **After June 12, 2019:** Interviews and offers may resume for appointment date July 1, 2020.
- **July 1, 2020:** Fellowship appointment date

Though not required, the SSR recommends that these programs not accept fellowship applications until October 1, 2018 for appointment date July 1, 2020.

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.

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. The SSR will not extend Member-In-Training (MIT) benefits to fellowship classes selected during year(s) that Match-ineligible programs choose not to participate in the uniform interview and selection timeline.

**We have reached out to several programs that are currently ineligible for the Match according to NRMP guidelines, but who would like to participate. We are in discussions with the ACGME to explore options for these programs to either become ACGME accredited or establish affiliations with ACGME-accredited diagnostic radiology residency programs. If you represent a program that is currently ineligible for the Match but would like to participate, please contact SSR Executive Director and Match Liaison Sue O'Sullivan at sue@veritasmeeetingsolutions.com.*

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

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.

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

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.

How can program directors communicate their MSK Fellowship Program's intent to participate in the Match?

Intent to participate in the MSK Match can be made by completing the MSK Match Memorandum of Understanding (MOU): <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/T895MGP>

Once the required information has been submitted through the survey link, your program will be recognized on the SSR website as an MSK Match participant. Please note that all items in the survey are required, including the DOB for Fellowship Directors and Program Coordinators and the ACGME code for either the accredited MSK Fellowship Program or its affiliated diagnostic radiology residency (your Diagnostic Radiology Residency Program Director will have this information, or you can search the code on the ACGME website at <https://apps.acgme.org/ads/Public/Programs/Search>).

How does participation in the MSK Match affect the interview process for programs and applicants?

The MSK Match is not supported by the ERAS application service because of the large number of non-ACGME-accredited programs, so each MSK fellowship program will distribute, collect and review applications as they do under the current non-Match system. In other words, the application and interview process is independent of the NRMP Match registration and ranking process. The SSR has developed a Common Application Form that programs can elect to use to simplify the process for applicants; this is available for download to programs and applicants on the SSR website (<https://skeletalrad.org/>).

It is not possible to know how many candidates each program will need to interview to fill their fellowship spots in the Match, or how many programs candidates will need to apply to in order to match into an MSK fellowship spot. Some of that data will be available from the NRMP after the Match occurs: <http://www.nrmp.org/fellowship-match-data/>. Potential increased number of interviews for an MSK Match could be particularly burdensome to residents in terms of time away from training and financial costs of travel. Further, travel to interviews during winter months may be more unpredictable than the current spring/summer interview cycle due to inclement weather. Programs are encouraged to consider alternatives to decrease this burden such as interviewing candidates at RSNA or other meetings, or using video conferencing to conduct preliminary interviews. Based on these preliminary interactions, candidates may then select a subset of programs to visit on-site prior to entering their rank list.

Does participation in the MSK Match affect the training structure or responsibilities of MSK fellows?

There is no change to fellow responsibilities, practice latitude (i.e. ability to read or do procedures independently), or fellowship education or training requirements with institution of the Match. To be

eligible to participate in the Match, an MSK fellowship must be either ACGME accredited (this represents a minority of programs), *or* affiliated with an ACGME accredited diagnostic radiology residency (this represents a majority of programs). This is a requirement of the NRMP for programs to be able to participate in the Match, and is in place to have some sort of quality standard for participating programs. Beyond that, the NRMP has no jurisdiction (or interest) in monitoring the training requirements and expectations for individual programs. MSK Fellows appointed through the Match can continue to take independent call, read out studies on their own, supervise residents, and perform procedures on their own—this is at the discretion of each individual training program regardless of Match participation.

There is no requirement from the NRMP that MSK fellowship programs become ACGME accredited if they are not already in order to participate in the Match, or change or restrict their fellows' duties. That said, each institution's GME Designated Institutional Officer (DIO) may have local requirements for their own programs that want to participate in the Match. It is the responsibility of each program director to discuss this with their institution's GME DIO.

How are military or self-funded candidates accommodated in the NRMP Match under the All In Policy?

If the military/self-funded candidate receives approval for MSK fellowship prior to the NRMP quota change deadline (for the 2019 Match/Fellowship Appointment Year 2020-21, the deadline is May 15, 2019), programs have 3 options for accommodating these candidates in the Match: 1) Rank the candidate within the institution's regular MSK Match and fellowship quota, 2) Increase the MSK fellowship quota in the NRMP R3 system to allow for additional fellow(s) under the All In Policy and rank the candidate within that cohort, or 3) Create a 2nd MSK fellowship track at that institution that would be designated solely for military/self-funded candidates, allowing this to be an "extra" fellowship spot if it fills; if the spot does not fill because the military/self-funded candidate goes elsewhere, the program's regular fellowship quota and funding requirements are unchanged.

If it is not known until after the Match that the military/self-funded candidate has received approval for MSK fellowship, any fellowship spots filled at that time are appointed outside of the Match/NRMP and are not in violation of the All In Policy. This is also the case if there are unfilled positions in the MSK Match—any appointments made after the Match to fill those positions are not bound by the NRMP match participation agreement or All In Policy. Per the NRMP, if a position is added after the Match due to additional funding and/or increased fellowship quota, the institution needs to report the circumstances to the NRMP when they are reconciling the number of entering fellows with the quota entered into the Match as a part of the All In Policy compliance review, but this is not considered a Match violation.

Where can I find 2019 NRMP Fellowship Match Information from the NRMP?

To avoid confusion with the current 2018 Match cycle (Match Day on June 13, 2018), official dates and fees for the 2019 NRMP Fellowship Match will not be finalized or appear on the NRMP website until late summer of 2018. However, at this time they are not expected to change significantly from what is specified for the current cycle. SSR will send an announcement when that information is confirmed and available on the NRMP website.

Now that the SSR is officially establishing the MSK Imaging Fellowship Match, what are the next steps for programs participating in the Match (posted 5/21/2018)?

Programs should do the following to prepare for the MSK fellowship application and interview process:

- Update your program's MSK fellowship website to reflect any changes related to the MSK Match
 - Indicate whether or not your program is participating in the MSK Match (if eligible), or abiding by the SSR interview timeline agreement (if Match-ineligible)
 - Ensure that your program's application requirements and timeline reflect any changes due to the Match. This includes consideration of the following:
 - Whether you will use the SSR Common Application Form, or your own application form
 - The date you will begin accepting applications. SSR strongly recommends that programs not accept fellowship applications before October 1, 2018.
 - The date you will begin interviewing. According to the MSK Match MOU and Interview Timeline Agreement, interviews cannot begin before November 25, 2018.
 - Availability of flexible interview options, such as meeting at RSNA or conducting preliminary and/or final interviews by video conference
- As soon as possible, MSK Fellowship Program Directors need to reach out to your institution's Graduate Medical Education (GME) Designated Institutional Official (DIO) to notify them of your intent to participate in the newly-established MSK Imaging Fellowship Match for 2019 (appointment year 2020-21).
 - Activation of your fellowship program in the NRMP R3 system for participation in the Match and all NRMP-related fees will be handled directly between the NRMP and your institution's GME DIO.
 - Each institutional DIO must attest to oversight of all programs at their institution that participate in the Match, and there may be institution-specific requirements that must be met before the DIO will agree to manage the Match for any particular training program. Therefore, it is important that you are aware of and address any requirements before beginning the MSK fellowship application and interview process.

- The DIO will not have access to the NRMP R3 system to activate your fellowship in the Match until the Match opens in late-March 2019. Before your fellowship can be activated within the NRMP R3 program, your DIO must attest to oversight of your program. For MSK fellowships that are not ACGME-accredited, the DIO must also attest that an affiliation agreement between the institution and fellowship is on file and available to the NRMP.
- In the first year of the MSK Match (2019), all information about participating programs gathered through the MOUs will be submitted directly to the NRMP from the SSR. This will pre-populate the NRMP R3 system, and will be available once the Match opens in late-March 2019. Therefore, participating programs that submitted an MOU to the SSR do not need to submit separate NRMP New Program or New Institution forms for the 2019 Match.