



Perspective / Opinion

When “Match” Comes

By Nai-Fen Su, PhD

Dr. Su, who is the Associate Director of Career Services in the Office of Academic Affairs, describes the new SOAP process and celebrates the successes of the MCW Class of 2022 ...

Currently, over 50,000 applicants participate in Match. Besides the military match in December and the ophthalmology and urology match in February, March is an exciting month for most medical students, faculty, and staff.

[The National Resident Matching Program®](#) (NRMP®), or The Match®, is a private, non-profit organization established in 1952 at the request of medical students to provide an orderly and fair mechanism for matching the preferences of applicants for U.S. residency positions with the preferences of residency program directors.

On Monday of the second week in March, medical students received a notification from the NRMP to know if they matched or not. If applicants did not match or partially matched to preliminary/transitional year or advanced programs, students were eligible to participate in the [Supplemental Offer and Acceptance Program \(SOAP\)](#). The SOAP provides a uniform system for programs to offer unfilled positions to eligible unmatched or partially matched applicants through a series of offer rounds during Match Week.

THIS YEAR, the NRMP changed the schedule, and increased three-round offers to four-round offers. This new schedule gave schools and students more time to work on students' applications before programs could access applications and provided programs more time to review SOAP applications. For the first time, applicants could review and revise their materials and thoughtfully consider their opportunities before programs began accessing the system on Tuesday morning. And residency programs granted four-round offers on Thursday. We had a mix of emotions during this week—uncertain, nervous, exciting, happy, etc. Today, March 18, 2022, is very thrilling, and reveals where students matched.

Career Service has been working with students since day one in the medical school for their specialty exploration, specialty decision making, competitive discussion, residency application preparation and strategies, interview coaching, SOAP/Match, etc. We provide holistic support and career advising resources to medical students and faculty. I always told students, “Every little piece of effort is like how we consistently plant seeds for future success.” Now, it’s time to see how these seeds are growing up!

Every year, I feel very proud of students’ hard work, persistence, and resilience in the medical school that productively path their success to residency. As Ayanna Howard said, *“Your best champion and cheerleader is yourself. Always be proud of your accomplishments, big or small.”*

Congratulation to the Class of 2022!

For further reading:

Roth AE. The Origins, History, and Design of the Resident Match. *JAMA*. 2003;289(7):909–912. [doi:10.1001/jama.289.7.909](https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.289.7.909)

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