Nuts and Bolts of the Match

It’s as easy as

1

2

3
First Step

- Select your match
  - Military
    - The Army, The Navy, The Air Force
  - San Francisco Match
    - Ophthalmology
  - The American Urological Association
    - Urology
  - NRMP*
    - Everyone (unless your recruiter says no)

*NRMP = National Residency Matching Program
Step Number Two

- Pick your application service
  - The Air Force and The Navy have their own
  - San Francisco Match uses Central Application Service located on their own web site.
  - The American Urological Association uses ERAS*
  - NRMP uses ERAS*

*ERAS = Electronic Residency Application Service
Third and final step

- Assemble and submit your application as instructed.
- This sounds easy – why would you need or want help?
  1. Some of you will need to run more than one match.
  2. Everything in the process is deadline driven.
  3. Some matches require you to assemble the application package
  4. Some documents must go through the Dean’s Work Station to be processed. I am the DWS.
Why would I apply to more than one specialty or use more than one match?

- Your specialty of choice may require a preliminary year. (Ophthalmology and Urology both do. Your prelim year application is ERAS)
- You may not be able to preview one of your possible choices until late in the season.
- You may determine you want a backup plan.
- You may be truly undecided but do not want to delay the entire application process.
Do you want help deciding?

- There is a lot of information available on the web, in books, and from people you know.
- Check out the Careers in Medicine web site for self-assessment tools and specialty information. You can even use the thinking hats exercise – just don’t think of hats – think of radiant light beams, chakras, or any pleasant association with color.
- Talk to your deans and your faculty. Everyone is on your side!
- Come to 015 Meiling and talk to Jane and check out the books.
- Try writing a personal statement for each choice. Sometimes your subconscious knows more than you think.
Backup Plan – Yes or No?

- As you go through the process you will gauge your competitiveness for your specialty of choice.
- You will receive advice about strategy and likelihood of matching.
- The ultimate question is whether you would rather have an empty match envelope than develop an alternate plan as a backup.
Are you part of a couple?

- Only the NRMP makes provision for couples match.
- If one of the members is in an early match specialty, only the preliminary year can be considered as part of the couples match.
- Couples matching complicates the process but generally does not compromise the outcome.
- Our couples have a great success rate!
Military Match

- Application Service
  - Army uses ERAS
  - Navy and Air Force use a proprietary application
- Web site is [http://www.militarygme.org/index.html](http://www.militarygme.org/index.html)
- Letters of recommendation will upload through ERAS, but will come from military rotations.
- If you anticipate a civilian deferment or want to seek a specialty not available through the military, you should do a backup application through NRMP, using the ERAS application service.
- All application materials should be completed by September 30. Some branches include both parts of Step 2 by that date. Check with your liaison.
San Francisco Match (Early Match)

- Limited to Ophthalmology
- Application Service:
  - Central Application Service
- Web site is [http://www.sfmatch.org/index.htm](http://www.sfmatch.org/index.htm)
- Deadlines typically run 1-2 months ahead of ERAS.
- The web site is now updated for 2014. Please note: target dates listed are not program deadline dates.
American Urological Association

- Limited to the specialty of Urology
- Application Service:
  - Electronic Residency Application Service (ERAS)
- The web site is not yet updated for registration 2014, but the calendar is posted. Please note: Applications must move quickly. ERAS timeline for applications, but program deadlines are early.
National Residency Matching Program (NRMP) The Match

- Includes almost all specialties with the exception of those listed above.
- Application Service
  - Electronic Residency Application Service (ERAS)
  - [http://www.aamc.org/students/eras/start.htm](http://www.aamc.org/students/eras/start.htm)
    - Opens July 1 for registration and listing of letter writers
    - New software has not yet been installed
  - First day to file application September 15
  - Fee determined by number of program selected
  - Individual programs set deadlines.
- Web site
  - $60 fee if paid by November 30
You can count – now can you spell?

- A  B  C
- Almost
- When you look at your programs make sure you have what you want.
- A = Advanced (starts in PGY2; still need to find PGY-1)
- There is no B, but P = Preliminary (PGY-1 only)
- C = Categorical (entire residency at one program)
- M mmmm M = Primary Care (may cross specialties)
- R Growl at this one – only for practicing doctors - not for you
How to start

- Do preliminary personal statement and CV
  - Decide on your main theme for your personal statement so you can give it to letter writers upon request.

- Consider an “uber” CV listing everything from undergrad, graduate, and medical school. Start eliminating things from undergrad that don’t pertain to medicine. Remember teaching and clinical experience count as work. All publications count. Don’t forget postbacc. All students must account for any time gaps from undergrad until they started medical school.
Copy this address into your address bar to see a sample of the application form. This is a copy of this year’s worksheet and should be available until at least May 31 when the ERAS post office closes.

If you need your AAMC ID or your USMLE ID, let me know I can get those for you.

Urology applicants will need to watch when they can register with AUA because your number is needed on the form.

Unless you are military check yes I plan to participate in NRMP.

Applications will not be processed without the check.

Matching as a couple in the same match? I recommend to check the box.
More basic application tips

- I don’t know where you can get ACLS information if you don’t have your card.
- AOA elections should be complete before September 15.
- This is the end of the profile everything above this point can be changed at any time through the process. Once you start the application nothing can be changed or added after you submit your application.
- Education – include graduate education if you did prerequisites for medical school, no matter how few. The most common error here is to forget to add Postbaccalaureate programs.
- Training will be none
Tougher parts of application

- Read the instructions carefully to sort out your experiences. Include undergraduate experiences relevant to medicine, teaching, or research. If you left an activity to enter Med 3 – no explanation is necessary.

- Read formats for publications and which types are acceptable. Be sure to differentiate if you had a research job after graduation from being a student researcher.

- Be sure to check that your explanation of extended or interrupted training matches up with what is listed in the MSPE.
Pleasant part of application

- Hobbies and Interests – this is where the extensive CV comes in handy – you may want to list some health fairs, and volunteer things here as well as personal interests and hobbies.

- Medical School Awards – Merit scholarships; any grades of Honors or Letter of Commendation; any leadership roles you were elected or selected for. You have 510 characters so if you have a lot - the Candy Apple award might not make the cut, but you can still talk about it at interview if you can work it in. An explanation of Project Professionalism and what you do there might serve you better.

- Other awards – awards from the university at large; undergrad awards; some include Eagle Scout here; some list church leadership roles; or you may just want to divide all of your medical school things between the two categories.
Coming in to the home stretch

- Membership in Honorary/Professional Societies – AMA; AMSA; Gold Humanism Society, AOA, - everyone knows what those are. Landacre is a research honor society which should be identified – don’t be parochial.

- Once you certify and submit your application the document is final and you have attested to its accuracy.

- There are 2 ways to view the application – in application and in CV mode. CV mode has next to no formatting and doesn’t look pretty, but some programs will only look at that version. Before you decide on bullets or sentences, do short segments of the form and see what you can live with.
Next steps

- Contact letter writers you have selected.
  - Be prepared to provide requested documents
  - Have coversheet ready.
  - Try to meet with the author in person if possible.
- Review your application web site before you begin completing or requesting documents
  - Know which documents you submit directly.
  - Know which documents must be submitted confidentially.
  - For Ophthalmology if you want to use the same letters for your prelim and advanced programs, ask your writer up front for 2 copies – 1 for you and 1 for me.
The biggest step for some

- Requesting a USMLE transcript is built into your ERAS application.
- Programs which participate in ERAS will only accept scores via official transcripts.
- There are two questions to answer on the application.
  1. Do you want to release all USMLE scores that are currently in your record? This answer will almost always be yes. Most programs won’t consider an application that doesn’t contain at least a Step 1 score.
  2. Do you wish to allow automatic retransmission of all subsequent scores to programs as you have directed? For the majority of students the answer will again be yes. However, if a student had difficulty with Step 1 they may want the score to come to them first before they release the score to all of the programs. Retransmitting scores is easy but one must remember, and if any new programs are added to the list all scores must be manually transmitted to them.
Do your part of the application as
timely as possibly

- **During August**
  - Have your photo taken – send to Jane to upload
    - Color, headshot specifications listed in ERAS.
  - Request an OSU transcript sent to Jane to upload (Trying to get a discount – watch for email)
  - Transfer students must request transcript from original medical school.
  - Ophthalmology and Orthopedics will need Undergrad transcripts too
    - Request after beginning of fall semester
    - Mail directly to Jane Trask, 015 Meiling Hall
      - If mailed to you it will state Student Copy – Unofficial
  - Complete your application form as completely as possible.
  - Polish and complete personal statement and CV.
    - This CV will be for you to take with you on interviews.
When do I need to submit my ERAS application?

- September 15 (80% filed on day 1)
- Be sure the information is complete and accurate enough to represent you.
- There may be legitimate reasons to delay a few days, but discuss your thoughts with Jane or one of the Deans.
- Always by the program deadline.
Why would I wait to submit?

- Valid reasons to wait a short time to submit
  1. You have not had a chance to proof your application. Take the time to read the application.
  2. A publication that may be accepted to a major journal in a few days.
  3. A pending grade that has direct impact, e.g., you received a Satisfactory with marginal comments in your field of choice, but your August Sub-I was great. Wait no longer than a week.

- Once the application is transmitted, no changes can be made.
Never wait for these reasons!

- **I can’t request my OSU transcript** – my Peds grade isn’t here. Your Peds grade will never be there. OSU transcripts only show pass/fail for MED 1 and Med 2 and that you are progressing through clinicals.

- **Programs will remember me better if I submit later** – Programs will fill all of their interview spots before you send in the application.
I’m afraid to make a fatal error

- The ERAS application is generic – designed for all specialties.
- Customization occurs in the personal statement, the letters of recommendation, and the programs selected. You have control over these assignments.
- You can add programs and specialties at any time.
I am from the government and I am here to help you

- Ask questions when they arise. It’s much easier to prevent an error than fix one.
- The Associate Deans, Program Directors, and Jane Trask are standing by ready to help with questions or problems.
- Many tools exist to help you track documents. Your peers have on-line resources. Most importantly you have a strong community that wants to see you succeed.
- You are not alone in this process unless you choose to be.
Personal to-do list from now until September 15

- Sign Consent to Release Information form
- Choose Match – pay registration fee when due
- Upon receipt of your ERAS token – enter letter writers
  - Others can be added later
- Read instructions or watch tutorials
- Write an original personal statement
- Construct a CV
- Complete your application form
- Gather additional documents
More for you to do

- Get your photograph, transcript, and letter of recommendation requests done.
- Select the programs you want to apply to.
- Assign the additional documents to each program you have chosen.
- Application fees and USMLE transcript fees will be assessed when you submit your application. Programs can be added at any time with the standard fee structure. No refunds. USMLE will not transmit until your payment has cleared.
What does Jane do?

- Issue ERAS tokens before July 1.
- Process all documents that go to all programs or should remain confidential:
  - Photo, transcript, and MSPE go to all
  - Letters of rec are confidential. I upload the letters you assign. You can mix and match letters and programs. Department letters are letters of recommendation. The MSPE IS NOT. DO NOT LIST MSPE anywhere in your letter writer list.
Is that all?

- Proof CVs and personal statements if asked
- Couples Matching advice
- General advising for career and Match in particular.
- Send reminders when the big deadlines are coming up.
- Assist in completing application forms.
- Send out supplemental materials.
You do the work – we will succeed together
October Match Status

- Your application should be filed.
- You should be rounding up supporting documents.
- You need to check email every day including your spam filter.
- You need to formulate a plan for interviewing.
- You need to respond to each invitation immediately upon receipt.
October questions

- How do I delay an interview appointment?
- How can I get my letter writers to hurry up?
- Why can’t you read my letters and pick the best one?
- Do I need an insurance letter?
- When will you contact a faculty member on my behalf?
October fears

- Why don’t I have more interviews?
- Programs won’t consider my application until the MSPE is released.
- I don’t have vacation scheduled for interviewing, now what?
- OSU is not a top tier program, who will want me?
- Everyone in my class is going into my specialty!
Trick or Treat?

- What is the absolute deadline?
- What if I am still trying to choose a specialty?
- How do I pick my letters of recommendation?
- When all else fails, do a year of research?
- Interviewers are required to tell the truth, right? I can believe everything they say.
Are your brains scrambled yet?

- The scramble has been replaced by the Supplemental Offer and Acceptance Program or SOAP.
- Any students who remain unmatched after the main matching round will have the opportunity to submit applications via ERAS to unfilled programs. Only unmatched students will have access to the list of programs.
 SOAP continued

- The week prior to match each student will receive an email stating whether or not they are eligible for SOAP. Do not be alarmed. Everyone who is scheduled to graduate on time, has paid all of their fees to ERAS and the NRMP, and applied to at least one program through ERAS will receive this notice. You should all be eligible for SOAP unless you have decided not to participate in the match at all
SOAP during Match Week

- SOAP will be the only game in town. Any positions offered or accepted outside the match must wait until after Match Day, Friday March 16.

- The new schedule is much like the current Match Week schedule, but there is a day built in for interviews.
Match Week Schedule

- Monday – Medical schools notified 11:30 of unmatched students: students notified at noon
- Programs will be notified of unfilled positions at noon on Monday.
- Students begin submitting applications at 1:00 on Monday. Applications will be released at 2:00.
SOAP Preference lists begin on Tuesday

- Programs with unfilled positions may start entering their preference lists at 11:30 on Tuesday.
- Programs with unfilled positions must finalize their first-round preference lists by 11:30 on Wednesday. Offer rounds begin at 12:00 noon. Offers will continue through Friday.
- Friday **March 16, 2012**, Match Day! Match results for applicants are posted to Web site at 1:00 p.m. eastern time. Supplemental Offer and Acceptance Program (SOAP) concludes at 5:00 p.m. eastern time.
Program Participation in SOAP

- Must accept applications only via ERAS
  - No phone, phone, fax, email or personal contact until after an application has been received

- During Match Week
  - Cannot make offers outside SOAP
  - Cannot make offers to ineligible applicants
  - Can opt out of SOAP, but will be unable to fill positions during Match Week.
Advantages of SOAP

- Only eligible applicants can apply.
- Commercial vendors will be closed out.
- A student’s application will speak for them first.
- Student may receive multiple offers.
- Everyone needs to be re-educated and be flexible in the way vacant residency positions are filled.
Possible disadvantages of SOAP

- No one can advocate for you unless you are contacted by a program.
- Earlier planning for Plan B is inevitable.
- Everyone needs to be re-educated and be flexible in the way vacant residency positions are filled.