

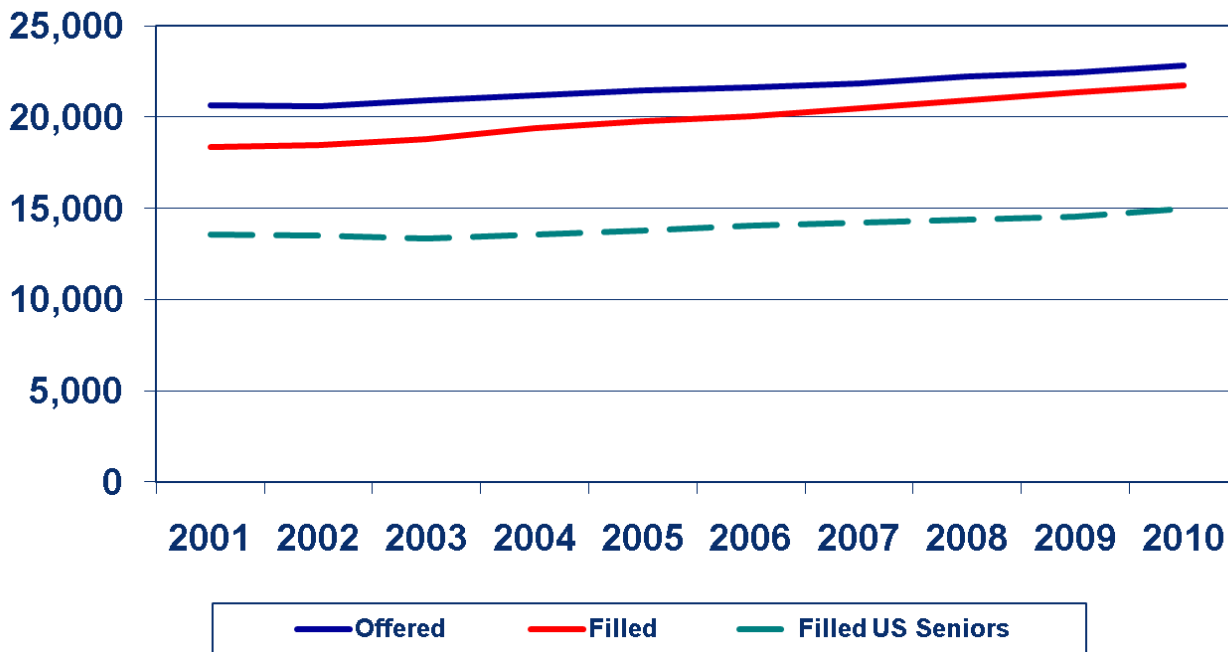
INTRODUCTION

The National Resident Matching Program (NRMP) and the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) have partnered to bring changes to the “Scramble” for unfilled positions during Match Week of the Main Residency Match. In 2008, a joint task force was established, with representation from medical school student affairs deans, residency program directors, and recent graduates of U.S. and international medical schools. Over a two-year period, comments were sought from NRMP and AAMC constituents, culminating with the NRMP Board of Directors’ decision to implement a Supplemental Offer and Acceptance Program (SOAP) during Match Week, 2012. Background information and the proposed changes are summarized below. Questions and comments may be sent to NRMP Executive Director Mona M. Signer by email at nrmp@aamc.org, by fax to 202-828-4797, or by U.S. mail c/o the National Resident Matching Program, 2450 N Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037. ERAS-specific questions may be sent to ERAS Director, Renee Overton, at broverton@aamc.org. Comments must be received no later than April 1, 2011.

BACKGROUND

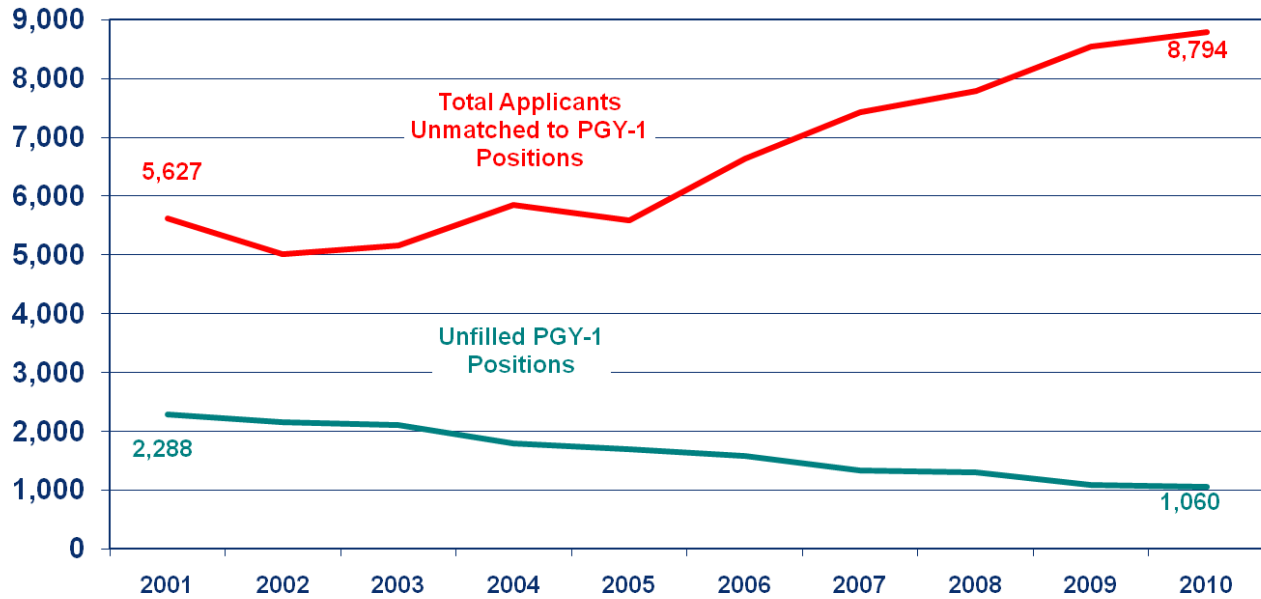
Over the past several years, the competition for residency positions has heightened. In the 2010 Main Residency Match, more than 4,100 graduate medical education programs offered 22,809 first-year and 2,711 second-year positions. The chart below shows the ten-year trend in the numbers of first-year positions offering and filled:

**Main Residency Match
PGY-1 Positions Offered and Filled**



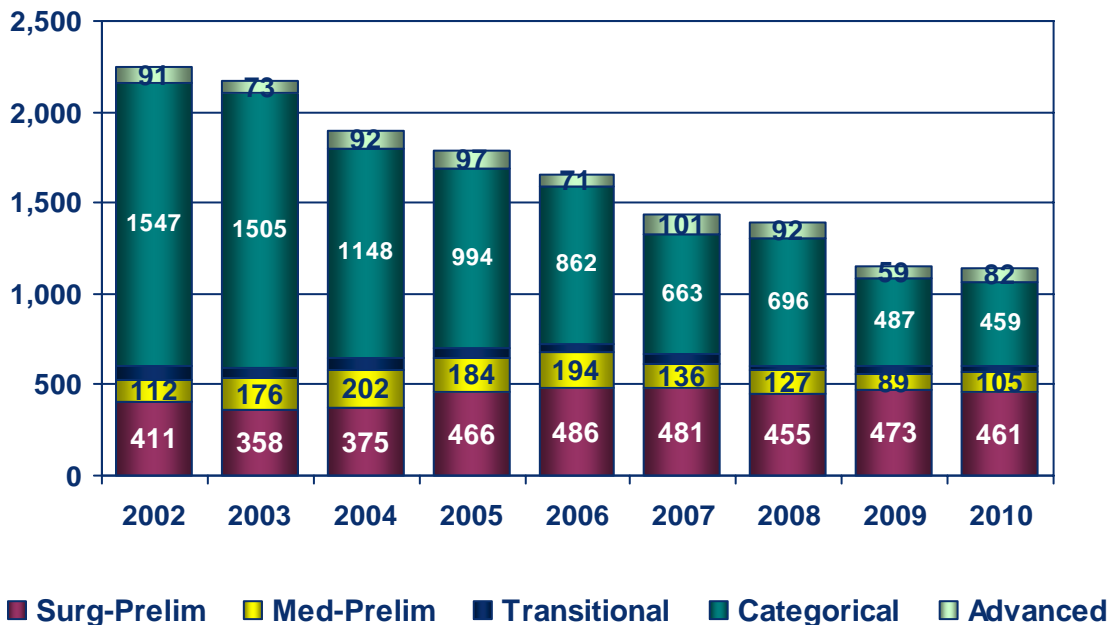
The heightened competition for positions has extended to the Scramble. More than 37,000 applicants registered for the 2010 Match; of those, 30,543 submitted rank order lists of programs, and 21,749 matched to first-year positions. Note below the growing disparity between the numbers of unmatched applicants and unfilled first-year positions.

Unmatched Applicants, Unfilled Positions 2001 - 2010



These charts do not fully depict the competitive nature of the Scramble. Many graduates of international medical schools (IMGs) do not submit rank order lists of programs; rather, they register for the Match to obtain the List of Unfilled Programs released during Match Week. The NRMP calculates that in 2010 nearly 13,000 applicants competed for only 1,060 first-year positions. The numbers are even more striking when one considers that more than 600 of the first-year positions were in preliminary programs, which many applicants view as undesirable because they do not lead to specialty training.

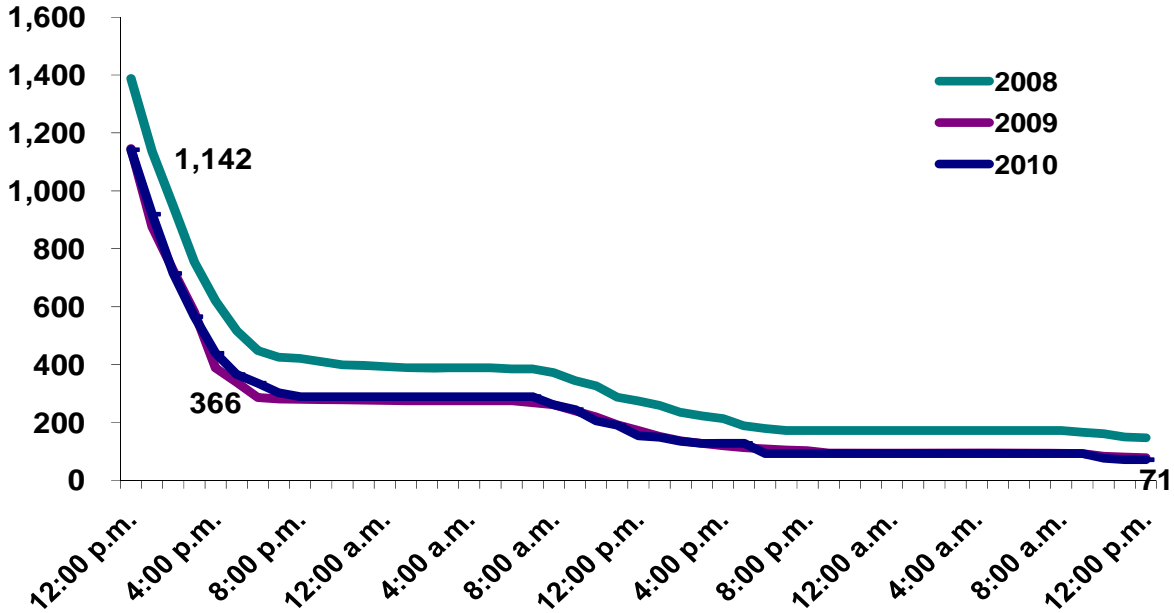
Unfilled Positions by Program Type 2002 - 2010



THE “SCRAMBLE” FOR UNFILLED POSITIONS

The “Scramble” officially begins on Tuesday at noon eastern time, when the NRMP posts the List of Unfilled Programs to its web site, and continues until noon on Thursday, when U.S. medical schools hold their Match Day ceremonies. Although the unfilled positions remain posted until May 1 in the NRMP Registration, Ranking, and Results (R3) System, few are available after the first 48 hours:

Unfilled Positions: First Two Days



Data from the Electronic Residency Application Service (ERAS) corroborate the NRMP figures. Between noon and 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, almost 80,000 MyERAS logins occurred, and more than 8,700 applicants sent just over 205,000 applications. Below are the numbers of applications submitted for the top seven specialties:

Specialty	Applications Transmitted	Mean Number of Applications Per Unfilled Program
Anesthesiology	4,188	233
Emergency Medicine	1,910	382
Family Medicine	39,097	439
Internal Medicine	27,893	429
Pediatrics	5,077	221
Psychiatry	3,816	294
General Surgery	19,653	148

These numbers understate the magnitude of the problem, however. If 8,700 applicants used ERAS, the remainder of the estimated 13,000 participating in the Scramble sent their applications individually or through commercial services, clogging telephones, faxes, and email inboxes.

SCRAMBLE WORK GROUP

The Scramble Work Group established by the NRMP and AAMC identified several problems:

- No organization has stewardship of the Scramble.
- The Scramble lacks the trust, transparency, and integrity inherent in the Match.
- Applicants must make career decisions too quickly, often in minutes.
- There is no separation between application, interview, and appointment.
- There is no consistent or orderly process for applying to programs.
- No rules govern applicant and program behavior.

The Work Group agreed the NRMP is the logical organization to assume stewardship of the Scramble because it releases and manages the dynamic List of Unfilled Programs and controls which applicants have access to it. The Work Group also believed the NRMP could establish the same level of trust and integrity in the Scramble that exists in the Match. Accordingly, the Work Group recommended and the NRMP Board of Directors affirmed the following principles for change, which will serve as the basis for a Match Week Supplemental Offer and Acceptance Program (SOAP):

- Unmatched applicant and unfilled program information will be released simultaneously.
- There will be a “time out” period during which unmatched applicants can send applications but programs cannot make offers.
- Applicants and programs will be required to send and receive applications only through ERAS.
- NRMP-participating programs that fill positions during Match Week must do so only through the SOAP.
- New functionality will be added to the R3 System to allow programs to offer unfilled positions on the basis of preference lists submitted by the programs.
- Applicants must accept or reject their offer(s) within a specific timeframe; offers not accepted or rejected will expire.
- The R3 System will establish an electronic “handshake” when an applicant accepts a position.
- Positions will be deleted from the dynamic List of Unfilled Programs once an offer has been accepted.
- A program’s unfilled positions will be offered to applicants in order of preference until all positions are filled or the preference list has been exhausted; programs will be able to add applicants to the bottom of their preference lists throughout Match Week.
- The NRMP Match Participation Agreement will be expanded to include Match Week and SOAP, and sanctions will be imposed for improper behavior.

Because offers made and accepted during Match Week will be binding under the Match Participation Agreement, only applicants eligible to begin training on July 1 in the year of the Match will be allowed to participate. Prior to Match Week, the NRMP—using the R3 System—will require medical school deans to recertify the status of their senior students. In addition, the NRMP will exchange data with the ECFMG to recertify the status of IMGs. Ineligible applicants, even if unmatched, would not have access to the List of Unfilled Programs. Prior to Match Week all applicants would be notified whether they are eligible to participate in SOAP.

The following principles will apply to ERAS users participating in SOAP during Match Week:

- The ERAS system will be synchronized to begin with the onset of the NRMP SOAP.
 - Only applicants who are certified by the NRMP to participate in SOAP will be able to apply to NRMP unfilled programs using ERAS.
 - Applicants who used ERAS during the regular season but did not participate in the NRMP may use ERAS during the SOAP period; however, they will have access only to programs that are not listed on the NRMP List of Unfilled Programs.
 - Applicants applying via ERAS will have a limited number of applications they may transmit free of charge during the SOAP period.
 - Before and after the SOAP period, the normal ERAS fees will apply.
 - Programs may begin downloading applications as soon as the SOAP session opens.
-

- Non-NRMP participating programs that do not have unfilled positions will be encouraged to update their status in ERAS to indicate that they are “no longer accepting (NLA) applications”.

Eligible NRMP applicants:

- Must be able to enter GME on July 1 in the year of the Match
- Will be able to apply only to unfilled Match-participating programs during Match Week
 - ✓ Access to the List of Unfilled Programs will be restricted by match status (preliminary or advanced)
 - ✓ Must use ERAS and will be able to select only unfilled Match-participating programs
 - ✓ Cannot use phone, fax, email, or other methods
 - ✓ Cannot have another individual/entity contact programs on applicant’s behalf
 - ✓ Will be able to accept positions only through SOAP during Match Week
- Can apply to non-Match-participating programs after Match Week

Ineligible NRMP applicants:

- Cannot participate in SOAP
 - ✓ Cannot apply to Match-participating programs using ERAS, phone, fax, email, or other methods
 - ✓ Cannot have another individual/entity contact Match-participating programs on applicant’s behalf
- Can apply to non-Match-participating programs during Match Week
 - ✓ Can use ERAS to select non-Match-participating programs
 - ✓ Can use phone, fax, email, or other methods
- Can apply to Match-participating programs after Match Week

Unfilled Programs:

- Must accept applications only through ERAS during Match Week
 - ✓ Cannot use phone, fax, email, or personal contacts
- Must fill positions using SOAP during Match Week
 - ✓ Cannot offer positions to ineligible applicants during Match Week
 - ✓ Cannot make offers outside SOAP during Match Week
 - ✓ Are not required to fill positions during Match Week
- Can add applicants to bottom of preference list

If an applicant rejects an offer or allows an offer to expire, no further offers will be made to that applicant by the same program.

Once an applicant accepts an offer, the applicant will not be able to send additional applications via ERAS.

Once a program has filled all of its positions through SOAP, applicants will be unable to send applications to that program via ERAS.

Offers extended by programs and accepted by applicants during the Match Week Supplemental Offer and Acceptance Program (SOAP) will create a binding commitment. Failure to honor that commitment or failure to adhere to SOAP policies will be a violation of the Match Participation Agreement.

SCHEDULE FOR PROGRAM OFFERS

Monday	12:00n	Programs will begin receiving SOAP applications and conducting telephone interviews with eligible applicants
Tuesday	11:30 a.m.	Programs begin entering preference lists in R3 System
Wednesday	11:30 a.m.	Programs finalize preference lists in R3 System
	12:00 p.m.	R3 System sends first offers to applicants
	2:00 p.m.	First offers expire
	2:30 p.m.	Deadline for programs to update preference lists
	2:55 p.m.	ERAS updated with applicant/program offers accepted
	3:00 p.m.	Second round of offers sent
	5:00 p.m.	Second offers expire
Thursday	9:00 a.m.	Third, fourth, and fifth offer rounds
		Offers every 3 hours, using same schedule as Wednesday
Friday	9:00 a.m.	Sixth, seventh, and eighth offer rounds
	12:00 p.m.	Match Day Ceremonies
	5:00 p.m.	Last offers expire

The table below compares the current and planned Match Week schedules:

Day	Current Schedule	Proposed Schedule
Monday Before Match Week		NRMP sends recertification request to Deans.
Wednesday Before Match Week		12:00 p.m. ECFMG data exchange completed 12:00 p.m. Deans' recertification deadline
Friday Before Match Week		12:00 p.m. NRMP notifies all applicants, regardless of match status, whether they are eligible for SOAP.
MATCH WEEK Monday	11:30 a.m. Schools: Unmatched Seniors Report 12:00 p.m. Applicants: Did I Match? 12:00 p.m. Regional Match Statistics	11:30 a.m. Schools: Unmatched Seniors Report 12:00 p.m. Applicants: Did I Match? 12:00 p.m. Programs Did I Fill? 12:00 p.m. List of Unfilled Positions posted 12:00 p.m. Regional Match Statistics 12:00 p.m. ERAS opens in SOAP mode Applicants begin sending applications using ERAS. Program-initiated telephone interviews with applicants begin, but no offers allowed.
Tuesday	11:30 a.m. Programs: Did I Fill? 11:30 a.m. Schools: List of Unfilled Programs 12:00 p.m. List of Unfilled Positions Applicants begin sending applications	Applicants and programs communicate by program-initiated telephone interviews. Programs begin entering preference lists in R3 System.
Wednesday	6:00 a.m. Schools: Match Notification Letters 6:00 a.m. Schools: Electronic Match Results 6:00 a.m. Schools: Match Results (Web) 6:00 a.m. Schools: Applicant Choices by Specialty 6:00 a.m. Advanced Data Tables 2:00 p.m. Programs: Roster of Matched Applicants	11:30 a.m. Program preference list deadline 12:00 p.m. Electronic offers begin using R3 System Offers made every three hours, with last offers valid from 3:-5:00 p.m. Program-initiated telephone interviews continue. Programs may continue adding applicants to the bottom of their preference lists, as appropriate.
Thursday	Match Day! 12:00 p.m. School Ceremonies 1:00 p.m. Applicants: Where Did I Match?	Offers made every three hours beginning at 9:00 a.m. with last offers valid 3:00-5:00 p.m. 8:00 a.m. Schools: Match Notification Letters 8:00 a.m. Schools: Electronic Match Results 8:00 a.m. Schools: Match Results (Web) 8:00 a.m. Schools: Applicant Choices by Specialty 8:00 a.m. Advanced Data Tables 2:00 p.m. Programs: Roster of Matched Applicants
Friday		Match Day! 12:00 p.m. School Ceremonies 1:00 p.m. Applicants: Where Did I Match? Offers made every three hours beginning at 9:00 a.m. with last offers valid 3:00-5:00 p.m. 5:00 p.m. ERAS SOAP mode ends Dynamic List of Unfilled Positions posted thru May 1
Monday	12:00 p.m. Match Outcome for All Programs 12:00 p.m. Match Results by Ranked Applicant	12:00 p.m. Match Outcome for All Programs 12:00 p.m. Match Results by Ranked Applicant

SCHEDULE FOR CONSTITUENT COMMENTS

The Supplemental Offer and Acceptance Program will be implemented for the 2012 Main Residency Match, which opens for registration in August 2011. Accordingly, at its May 2011 meeting, the NRMP Board of Directors will amend the Match Participation Agreement to codify SOAP policies. The following schedule will be used by the Board to solicit and review constituent comments:

May 2010	NRMP Board drafts policies for review and comment
May 2010 – October 2010	Constituents review and submit comments to NRMP
October 2010	NRMP Board reviews comments; revises draft policies
November 2010 – April 2011	Additional opportunity for constituent review and comments
May 2011	NRMP Board adopts SOAP policies
August 2011	2012 Main Residency Match opens for registration
March 2012	SOAP implemented for Match Week 2012

Questions and comments may be sent to NRMP Executive Director Mona M. Signer by email at nrmp@aamc.org, by fax to 202-828-4797, or by U.S. mail c/o the National Resident Matching Program, 2450 N Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037. Comments must be received no later than April 1, 2011.
