



The Fellowship Council Match Information and FAQs

About the Fellowship Council

The Fellowship Council (FC) is an association of Minimally Invasive Surgery (MIS), and Gastrointestinal, Hepatopancreatobiliary (HPB), Colorectal and Bariatric surgery fellowship directors formed to address the unique needs of fellowship directors and potential fellows. The Fellowship Council provides a communication forum for disseminating information about fellowship programs, discussing fellowship issues and communicating the Council's positions to other organizations. The Council established criteria for implementing and enriching fellowship programs and standardizing the fellowship application and selection process. Four organizations support the Fellowship Council and are represented on the Board. They include:

American Hepato-Pancreato Biliary Association (AHPBA)
American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery (ASMBS)
Society of American Gastrointestinal and Endoscopic Surgeons (SAGES)
Society for Surgery of the Alimentary Tract (SSAT)

About the Fellowship Council Match Process

The Fellowship Council match process “matches” FC member programs with applicants who have applied to those programs through the FC web site. Only those applicants who have applied to fellowships through the FC will be entered into the FC match and only those programs that are members of the FC will be able to participate in the match. In previous years, the fellowship match was run by the National Resident Matching Program (NRMP). The Fellowship Council now manages its own match.

How is the application process different from the match process?

The application process is where applicants submit their applications to programs through the main Fellowship Council website at www.fellowshipcouncil.org. Member programs may then choose to extend invitations to prospective fellows for interviews based on their applications and letters of recommendation.

The match process occurs after the application process has concluded. Through the match site, both applicants and programs submit Rank Order Lists (ROLs) where both identify their preferences. The match software will determine the matches based on the ROLs. Those who participate in the application process are not obligated to participate in the match process. However, those who participate in the match process are bound by the FC terms of agreement to enter into a commitment based on the match results.

How does the match process work?

The match software is based on a match algorithm. The match results are determined by the rank order lists, which are submitted by both the applicants and the programs. Applicants will be matched with the highest program on their list, provided that the program also ranked them and depending on how the program ranked them. This also applies to programs. The program will be matched with their highest-ranking applicant, provided that applicant did not match to another program ranked higher on the applicant's list. It is considered a match violation for programs and applicants to request, offer and accept verbal or written commitments prior to the rank order deadline.

What software will I need to use the match system?

If you can surf the web and print from your browser, you should be able to use the Council's interactive web site. Users must have Internet Explorer version 7.0 or higher, FireFox version 2.0 or higher, or other Mozilla compatible browsers. Either a PC or Macintosh computer can be used provided the computer has internet access; however, the system does not support the use of Safari by Mac users. The FC ranking and results system use such features as Java Script, Java applets, and cookies that must remain enabled for the systems to work.

What are the system requirements to access the match system?

System Requirements:

- Access to a computer that is able to connect to the world wide web
- Modem 28.8 bps or faster (or network connection)
- 16 MB of RAM (or the requirements of the browser you use)
- A working and valid e-mail address is required.

Browser Requirements:

To use the match system, Internet Explorer version 7.0 (or greater), FireFox version 2.0, or other Mozilla compatible browsers are required. The system functions best on Internet Explorer version 7.0. The system uses features such as JavaScript, Java applets, and cookies, all of which must remain enabled for the system to work. Either a PC or Macintosh computer can be used provided the computer has Internet access; however, the system does not support the use of Safari by Mac users.

JavaScript:

- You must have JavaScript enabled.

Important usage information for using the match system:

It is recommended that you close the web browser after you have logged out of the system. It will "time out" after a short period of time, but if you work in a public location, someone else may be able to use the Back button to view pages you have worked on. This is a feature of browsers that we cannot control. Closing your browser when you are done will combat this.

How do I begin ranking?

To begin, go to the Fellowship Council match information site at www.fellowshipcouncil.org/match/ to access the link to the match site. Only those applicants and programs that participated in the application process will be eligible for the match. For applicants, you will need to login using the same login ID and password that you used during the application process. For programs, you will use the login ID and password normally associated with your regular Fellowship Council account. Once you login, you will be required to read through the Fellowship Council Matching Services Participation Agreement (FCMSPA). Please read this carefully as once you agree to this policy, you are bound by this agreement to honor the policies and results of the match process. To move forward, select the "I Agree" button. To access the agreement information again, click on the Terms & Conditions text link at the bottom right of the site.

For applicants, once you login, the programs that you have applied to will automatically be displayed on your main page. They are also available under the My Programs text link. To begin ranking, simply go to the Rank column and use the drop down box to select the rank order of that program. Mark programs you do not wish to rank as NA. You may sort your programs list by Rank, Program Name, Director, or Types by clicking on the text link at the top of each column. To reset all of your rankings click on the Reset Rankings text link at the top right. *This is not reversible.* To print a copy of your program list, click on the Print My List text link for a printable version.

For programs, once you login the applicants that applied to your program will automatically be displayed on your main page. They are also available under the My Applicants text link. To begin ranking, simply go to the Rank column and use the drop down box to select the rank order of that applicant. Mark applicants that you do not wish to rank as NA. You may sort applicants by Name, City, or State by clicking on the text link at the top of each column. To reset all of your rankings click on the Reset Rankings text link at the top right. *This is not reversible.* To print a copy of your applicant list, click on the Print My List text link for a printable version.

For further assistance on how to perform a specific task please refer to the fellowship match user guide.

<http://www.fellowshipcouncil.org/match/documents/FCMatchUserGuide.pdf>

How do I certify my list?

Please refer to the fellowship match user guide.

<http://www.fellowshipcouncil.org/match/documents/FCMatchUserGuide.pdf>

How do I decertify my list?

Please refer to the fellowship match user guide.

<http://www.fellowshipcouncil.org/match/documents/FCMatchUserGuide.pdf>

In order to participate in the match you must recertify your list by the ranking deadline.

How do I recertify my list?

Please refer to the fellowship match user guide.

<http://www.fellowshipcouncil.org/match/documents/FCMatchUserGuide.pdf>

When is the rank order list deadline?

Friday, November 14, 2008 at 11:59PM Pacific time.

When is the match date?

Monday, November 24, 2008 at 12:00PM Pacific time.

Why does the Fellowship Council want my e-mail address?

As e-mail is the primary mode of communication used by the FC, please make sure that you check your email often for alerts or announcements. To change it, email techsupport@fellowshipmatch.org your updated email address.

Why haven't I received e-mail from the Fellowship Council?

Many e-mail announcements from the Fellowship Council are sent simultaneously to multiple applicants. Some e-mail providers use filters to ensure that users do not receive spam (junk e-mail). In some cases those filters can prevent Fellowship Council e-mails from getting through to participants.

The majority of providers that offer filters generally provide the user with the option to turn the filter on or off. Other providers make a "junk mail file" or a "bulk mail folder"

that includes all messages sent to the user but identifies multiple-addressee e-mails. For example, if Yahoo sends a Fellowship Council e-mail to your Spam folder, you can click on the techsupport@fellowshipmatch.org email as Not Spam to send it to your in-box.

If you are not receiving e-mail from the Fellowship Council and your provider does not offer such options, we recommend that you either contact your providers to determine the best way to access such messages, or consider using an additional or replacement provider during your matching process.

Can couples use the match system?

At this time the FC does not have a couples option.

How can I change my program's quota?

You can change program quotas up until the quota change deadline, which is **October 31, 2008** by contacting the FC office. After the quota deadline, the quota can be changed in cases of extreme emergency such as loss of funding or staff. In such cases, programs must notify the Fellowship Council immediately.

Can program directors make quota changes and withdrawals via the match system?

No, these program changes can only be made by the Fellowship Council. Program quotas cannot be changed after the quota change deadline, **October 31, 2008**.

Can I make changes to my rank order list?

The rank order list can be modified or re-ordered any number of times up until 11:59 PM Pacific time on the deadline day for rank order list entry. **Participants in the middle of a session at 11:59PM will not be able to complete their session and will be forced off the server.** Participants are advised not to wait until the last minute to enter their rank order lists so as to avoid any problems at the deadline. If you change your rank order list by adding, moving, or changing a program's status to NA, the change is saved and the previous rank order list is deleted from the match system. You must recertify your rank order list for it to be used in the match.

Are previous versions of my rank order list maintained in the match system?

No, previous versions of the list are not retained in the match system, regardless of whether they were certified. The rank order list that is displayed when the participant logs in is the only version on file with the Fellowship Council. Once the last updates have been made, the participant must certify the final version by the rank order list deadline in order for it to be used in the Match. No changes can be made to your rank order list after the rank order list deadline. The Fellowship Council will not add, delete, or move programs or applicants in your rank list or in any way modify your rank order list.

Will I be able to print a copy of my rank order list after or before my submission?

Yes. Please refer to the fellowship match user guide.

<http://www.fellowshipcouncil.org/match/documents/FCMatchUserGuide.pdf>

Will I get a confirmation that the Fellowship Council received my certified rank order list?

Yes. When you certify your rank order list, the following message will appear on your screen:

“Your rank order list is certified. You may make changes to this list up until November 14, 2008 at 11:59PM Pacific time. After this time, your rank order list will be considered final and entered into the match.”

In addition to receiving the above message, your list status will change to “certified.”

How does the Fellowship Council know when I've finished my rank order list?

Upon successfully certifying your list, your list status will change to “certified.” The Fellowship Council Administrators will be able to view your list status.

Can anyone else see my rank order list?

You are the only one who can access your rank order list unless you give your ID and password to someone else. The Fellowship Council staff does not have edit access to your rank order list.

How will I know if I matched to a program?

Beginning at noon Pacific Time on Match Day (November 24th), applicants may use their IDs and password to access the match system and

- 1) Find out whether they matched and, if so, to which program, and
- 2) view associated reports.

Match results information also is available to applicants by calling the Fellowship Council office at (310) 437-0555, or via email at info@fellowshipcouncil.org.

What happens if I do not match?

Applicants who learn at noon Pacific Time on Match Day that they did not match to a program can access the *Un-Matched Programs* report under the Reports option that displays a list of available positions for unmatched applicants. Applicants can also access the following documents that are posted to the match system at noon Pacific Time on Match Day (November 24th):

- **Match Outcome for All Programs by State** displays the number of positions offered and filled for all programs in the Match.
- **Match Results Statistics** provides detailed statistical information about the programs, positions, and applicants in the Match.

How will I know if my program(s) filled?

Beginning at noon Pacific on Match Day (November 24th), program directors may use their IDs and password to access the match system and obtain match results and associated reports. Program directors can learn who matched to their program, as well as

the number of unfilled positions, if any, by accessing the *Un-Matched Programs* report. This report can be found under the Reports option in the top right hand corner.

What happens if my program does not fill?

Program directors who learn at noon Pacific on Match Day (November 24th) that they did not fill their positions can access the *Un-Matched Applicants* report that displays a list of potential candidates for programs that went unfilled. In addition, programs can access the following documents at noon Pacific on Match Day (November 24th):

- **Match Outcome for All Programs by State** displays the number of positions offered and filled for all programs in the Match.
- **Match Results Statistics** provides detailed statistical information about the programs, positions, and applicants in the Match.

What happens if I match to a program and I decide not to accept the position?

The Fellowship Council Matching Service Participation Agreement (FCMSPA) to which you agreed to when you logged into the match site states that a match between an applicant and a program creates a binding commitment to accept or offer a position. A decision not to honor that commitment is a breach of the Agreement and will be investigated by the Fellowship Council in accordance with the policies and procedures detailed in the FCMSPA and the Violations Policy. Penalties may be levied if a violation is confirmed.

What happens if I match to a program and begin training, but then decide I want to leave the program to change specialties and/or accept another position?

The commitment a participant undertakes in the FCMSPA is to accept the results of the match. To meet that obligation, you must sign a contract and begin training at the program to which you matched. Your subsequent obligations are determined by the terms of that institution's contract, not the FCMSPA.

I've signed a contract outside the Match. What happens now?

An applicant who accepts a position through another national matching plan or by agreement outside the Match must withdraw prior to the rank order list deadline. Failure to do so is a violation of the FCMSPA and will be investigated by the Fellowship Council. Applicants who elect to participate in the match and certify a rank order list on November 14 are prohibited from accepting a position through any other national matching service or by agreement outside the match after the rank order list deadline.

What is the process if I'm investigated for a Match violation?

Refer to the Fellowship Council Violations Policy.

www.fellowshipmatch.org

What happens if I matched at a program and the program will not accept my employment?

The FCMSPA to which you both agreed to when you logged into the match site states that a match between an applicant and a program creates a binding commitment to offer a position. A decision not to honor that commitment is a breach of the Agreement and will be investigated by the Fellowship Council in accordance with the Violations Policy.

A non-match participating program at my institution offered a position to an applicant who has matched at another program. Is my institution liable?

Institutions are responsible for ensuring that none of their programs, regardless of match participation status, discusses or offers a position to an applicant who has been matched with another program and who is ineligible because a release has not been granted. If any of the institution's programs discusses or offers a position to an applicant who has matched to a concurrent year position, the institution will be in breach of the FCMSPA and subject to a violation investigation.

An applicant has contacted me about an open position in my program. What information can I share?

Programs must direct all applicants to the FC web site to apply to fellowships prior to the application deadline. Prior to discussing or offering a position to an applicant, program directors must determine the applicant's eligibility for appointment. Any program that discusses or offers a position to an applicant who has matched for another position in another program will be subject to a violation investigation by the Fellowship Council.

What do I do if an applicant who matched to my program does not show up for training?

The FCMSPA states that a match between an applicant and a program creates a binding commitment to accept or offer a position, and a decision not to honor that commitment is a breach of the Agreement. Accordingly, fellowship program directors are expected to report to the Fellowship Council the name of any applicant who does not honor his/her match commitment. The Fellowship Council will initiate a violation investigation of the applicant in accordance with Violations Policy.