The Fellowship Council
Non-ACGME Advanced Colorectal and Thoracic Matching Process
Frequently Asked Questions

About the Fellowship Council
The Fellowship Council (FC) is an association of Advanced Gastrointestinal (GI), Advanced GI MIS, Hepatopancreatobiliary (HPB), Flexible Endoscopy, Advanced Colorectal (non-ACGME), Advanced Thoracic (non-ACGME) and Bariatric Surgery fellowship directors and specialty societies charged with oversight of fellowship training programs in order to uphold uniformly high standards and produce well trained surgeons. The FC provides a communication forum for disseminating information about fellowship programs, discussing fellowship issues and communicating the FC's positions to other organizations. The FC established criteria for implementing and enriching fellowship programs and standardizing the fellowship application and selection process. Six organizations support the FC and are represented on the Board. They include:

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

About the Fellowship Council Matching Process
The Fellowship Council (FC) matching process "matches" FC member programs (fellowships) 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 matching process and only those programs that are members of the FC will be able to participate in the matching process.

How is the application process different from the matching process?
The application process is where applicants (prospective fellows) submit their applications to programs through the main Fellowship Council (FC) 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.

Programs must first apply for membership to the FC, through the main website (www.fellowshipcouncil.org), prior to participating in the matching process. If the program is approved for membership, it may participate in the current or next immediate application and matching process, or the scramble process, as determined by the FC Membership Committee.

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

How does the matching process work?
The matching process software is based on a matching process algorithm. The matching process results are determined by the Rank Order Lists (ROLs), which are submitted by both the applicants and the programs. Applicants will be matched with the highest ranked 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 matching process 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 matching process system?
If you can surf the web and print from your browser, you should be able to use the Fellowship Council's (FC) interactive web site. Users must have Internet Explorer version 8.0 or higher, Google Chrome, FireFox version 5.0 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 matching process 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 matching process system, Internet Explorer version 8.0 (or greater), Google Chrome, FireFox version 5.0, or other Mozilla compatible browsers are required. The system functions best on Internet Explorer version 8.0. 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?
Only those applicants and programs that participated in the application process will be eligible to participate in the matching process. For applicants, you will need to log into the Fellowship Council (FC) website 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 FC account to log into the FC website. **Programs: please note that only the Program Director has access to the Matching Process System and Rank Order List**. Once you login, you will click on the link to access the Matching Process Site.

Once you are logged into the matching process system for the first time, you will be required to read through the Fellowship Council Matching Services Participation Agreement. **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 matching process.** Failure to abide by the terms set forth in the FCMSPA by an Applicant or a Program can subject that Applicant or Program to sanctions issued by the Fellowship Council Board of Directors. 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. Your programs are also available under the My Programs text link. Applicants have the ability to track their status during the interview process. To edit your tracking information, click on the name of the program. A panel will appear, which allows you to indicate whether or not you have been invited for an interview, what date the interview was accepted/declined, when the interview was completed and any notes you wish to make about the program. This is not mandatory for applicants to complete but is intended to be used as a resource for keeping track of your status during the interview process. *Please note that you are the only one with access to the tracking information, programs do not see or update your status in the system.* 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. Applicants should print your ROL list and any other pertinent matching process information for your records-this information will not be available to you once the matching process officially concludes.

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. Programs have the ability to track the status of their applicants during the interview process. To edit the tracking information, click on the name of the applicant. A panel will appear which allows you to

indicate whether or not you have invited the applicant for an interview, what date the interview it was accepted/declined, when the interview was completed and any notes you wish to make about the applicant. This is not mandatory for programs to complete but can be used as a resource for keeping track of your applicants during the interview process. *Please note that you are the only one with access to the tracking information, applicants do not see or update their status in the system.* 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. Programs should print your ROL list and any other pertinent matching process information for your records-this information will not be available to you once the matching process officially concludes.

For further assistance on how to perform a specific task please refer to the Fellowship Matching Process User Guide.

How do I edit the tracking information?
Please refer to the Fellowship Matching Process User Guide.

How do I certify my list?
Please refer to the Fellowship Matching Process User Guide.

How do I de-certify my list?
Click on the option to de-certify your list. Please note: *In order to participate in the matching process you must re-certify your list by the ranking deadline*.

Am I allowed to certify Rank Order Lists (ROLs) in multiple matching processes with competing matching process deadlines (for example, through the Fellowship Council (FC) and the National Resident Matching Program (NRMP) where the matching process dates are similar)?
No, prospective fellows may only certify a Rank Order List (ROL) through the Fellowship Council (FC) if they have not certified a ROL through any other matching process with concurrent rank order and matching process dates. If a prospective fellow certifies a FC ROL and is matched in multiple matching processes, this will result in a matching process violation. If a prospective fellow matches in another matching process prior to the FC rank order deadline, then they should not certify a FC ROL and must withdraw from the FC matching process.

Can I add programs or applicants to my rank order list after the application deadline?
No, once the application deadline has passed, it is no longer possible to change a confirmation list and therefore, a Rank Order List. **Programs with 1 and 2-year positions and/or with multiple fellowships at the same institution:** Applicants must have applied to BOTH positions if they wish to rank both 1 and 2-year positions or different fellowship types at the same institution. For example: Program X has 2 Thoracic positions, a 1-year position and a 2-year position and an applicant only applied to the 1-year position. Therefore, they will not be able to rank the 2-year position. Both positions must have been confirmed in order to rank them.

When is the rank order list deadline?
January 11, 2019 at 11:59PM Pacific

When is the date for Announcement of Fellowship Matches?
Matching process results will be released on January 18, 2019 between 9:00AM and 9:30AM Pacific. At that time programs and applicants will receive an email with their matching process results and also may log into their Fellowship Council accounts to view the matching process results and matching process statistics report.

Please note: Applicants and programs who do not match will be notified on January 17, 2019 between 9:00AM and 9:30AM Pacific, and should log into the matching process system (through fellowshipcouncil.org). Unmatched applicants will be able to access the Available Programs by State report and may contact those programs directly. Programs may access the application and letters of recommendation for unmatched applicants by logging into the matching process system and accessing the Available Applicants report. Applicants and programs who did match will also be notified on January 17, 2019 between 9:00AM and 9:30AM Pacific that they matched but the detailed matching process results will not be released until January 18, 2019.

Why does the Fellowship Council want my e-mail address?
E-mail is the primary mode of communication used by the Fellowship Council (FC) and auto emails are sent from the matching process system including alerts and announcements. Please make sure that you check your email often for any emails from the FC matching process system. To change your e-mail address before the matching process system opens, log into your account at

fellowshipcouncil.org, and go to the Manage Personal Setting section. If you change your e-mail address on the FC website after the matching process system site opens, you must also email techsupport@fellowshipmatch.org your updated information.

Why haven't I received e-mail from the Fellowship Council?
Many e-mail announcements from the Fellowship Council (FC) 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 FC 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 FC 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 (FC) 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 matching process system?
At this time the Fellowship Council does not have a couples option.

As a program director, how can I change my program's quota?
You can change program quotas up until the quota change deadline, which is **January 3, 2019** by submitting the request in writing via the Member Change Form which is available at: https://fellowshipcouncil.org/fellowship-programs/program-change-notification/. Your request will be reviewed by the Accreditation, Membership and Communications Committees. After the quota deadline, the quota can be changed only in cases of extreme emergency such as loss of funding or staff. In such cases, programs must notify the Fellowship Council (FC) immediately. Programs must first receive permission by the FC to increase the number of positions. If programs increase the number of positions initially authorized by the FC (for new programs, the number approved during the application cycle and for accredited programs, the number approved during the accreditation process) without review and consent by the FC, the program's membership and accreditation status is subject to immediate review.

Can Program Directors make quota changes and withdrawals via the matching process system?
No, these program changes can only be made by the Fellowship Council office. Program quotas cannot be changed after the quota change deadline of **January 3, 2019** unless as noted above in cases of extreme emergency such as loss of funding or faculty/staff**.**

Can I make changes to my Rank Order List (ROL)?
The Rank Order List (ROL) can be modified or re-ordered any number of times up until the deadline on January 11, 2019 at 11:59 PM Pacific. **Participants in the middle of a session at 11:59PM Pacific 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 ROLs so as to avoid any problems at the deadline. If you change your ROL by adding, moving, or changing a program/applicant's status to NA, the change is saved and the previous rank order list is deleted from the matching process system. You must recertify your ROL for it to be used in the matching process.

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

Copies of ROLs from previous matching processes are not retained. Programs/Applicants should print a copy of their rank order list for their files.

Will I be able to print a copy of my Rank Order List after or before my submission?
Yes, please refer to the Fellowship Matching Process User Guide.

Will I get a confirmation that the Fellowship Council received my certified Rank Order List (ROL)?
Yes. When you certify your Rank Order List, a confirmation message will appear on your screen. In addition to receiving the above message, your list status will change to "certified." You will also receive an email confirmation that your list has been certified.

How does the Fellowship Council know when I have certified my Rank Order List (ROL)?
Upon successfully certifying your Rank Order 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 (ROL)?
You are the only one who can access your Rank Order List (ROL) unless you give your ID and password to someone else. The Fellowship Council staff does not have edit access to your ROL.

How will I know if I matched to a program?
Applicants and programs who do not match will be notified via email on January 17, 2019 between 9:00AM and 9:30AM Pacific and should log into the matching process system (through fellowshipcouncil.org) to access report information. Unmatched applicants will be able to access the Available Programs by State report and may contact those programs directly. Programs may access the application and letters of recommendation for unmatched applicants by logging into the matching process system and accessing the Available Applicants report and may contact applicants directly. Applicants and programs who did match will also be notified on January 17, 2019 between 9:00AM and 9:30AM Pacific that they matched but the detailed matching process results will not be released until January 18, 2019.

Between 9:00AM and 9:30AM Pacific on the Date for Announcement of Fellowship Matches (January 18, 2019), matched participants will receive an email with their matching process results. However, applicants and programs may also use their ID and password to access the matching process system (through fellowshipcouncil.org) in order to find out whether they matched and, if so, to which program/applicant, and view associated reports.

Matching process results information is also available to applicants by calling the Fellowship Council office at (310) 437-0555, ext 142 or via email at info@fellowshipcouncil.org after 9:30AM Pacific on January 18, 2019.

Applicants can also access the following documents that are posted to the matching process system at 9:00 AM Pacific on the Date for Announcement of Fellowship Matches (January 18, 2019):

- **Matching Process Outcome by State** displays the number of positions offered and filled for all programs in the matching process.
- **Matching Process Statistics** provides detailed statistical information about the programs, positions, and applicants in the matching process.

What happens if I do not match (as an applicant)?
Applicants who do not match will be notified on January 17, 2019 between 9:00AM and 9:30AM Pacific. Applicants may access the *Available Programs by State* report under the Reports option that displays a list of available positions and may contact programs directly. Available programs will also have access to the Available Applicants report, which includes available applicant applications and letters of recommendation. If an applicant no longer wishes to appear on the Available Applicants report, they should review the User Guide for instructions on removing their information.

How will I know if my program(s) filled?
Between 9:00AM and 9:30AM Pacific on the Date for Announcement of Fellowship Matches, January 18, 2019, program directors will receive an email with the matching process results and may also use their ID and password to access the matching process system and obtain matching process results and associated reports. Applicants and programs who did match will also be notified on January 17, 2019 between 9:00AM and 9:30AM Pacific that they matched but the detailed matching process results will not be released until January 18, 2019. Please note: If you matched some but not all of your available positions, please do not contact your matched applicant until January 18, 2019.

What happens if one or more positions in my program do not fill?
Program directors will be notified between 9:00AM and 9:30AM Pacific on January 17, 2019 that they did not fill their positions and may then access the *Available Applicants* report in the matching process system (through fellowshipcouncil.org). This report contains links to unmatched applicants' applications and letters of recommendation. Programs may contact these applicants directly. If a program does not match through the Fellowship Council matching process, programs may contact and interview any applicant, it is no longer limited to Fellowship Council applicants. In addition, programs can access the following documents through the matching process system:

- **Matching Process Outcome by State** displays the number of positions offered and filled for all programs in the matching process.

- **Matching Process Statistics** provides detailed statistical information about the programs, positions, and applicants in the matching process.

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 matching process 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 contract Agreement and will be investigated by the Fellowship Council (FC) in accordance with the policies and procedures detailed in the FCMSPA and the Match Policies and Procedures. Penalties may be levied if a violation is confirmed. If an applicant is requesting a matching process commitment dissolution, the applicant must submit the Matching Process Commitment Dissolution Form found in the Current Fellows section of the Fellowship Council website, which will be reviewed by the Fellowship Council's Communications Committee and its Board of Directors.

What happens if I match to a program and there are changes to the program (including closure)?

The Fellowship Council (FC) will oversee the fellowship experience, and will use its best efforts through accreditation to make the clinical experience a positive one. However, the FC cannot guarantee that turnover within the faculty or within the program's administration will not occur, either prior to or during, the applicant's tenure in the program. Applicants match with programs and not with program directors or other faculty members associated with that program.

If a program has reason to close and/or reduce the number of fellows after certification of the Rank Order List, the program must notify the Fellowship Council of the method it intends to use to assist each matched applicant in securing another fellowship position. Failure to adhere to those requirements will be a breach of the FCMSPA.

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 Fellowship Council Matching Service Participation Agreement (FCMSPA) is to accept the results of the matching process. 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 have signed a contract outside the matching process. What happens now?

An applicant who accepts a position through another national matching plan or by agreement outside the Fellowship Council (FC) matching process must withdraw prior to the Rank Order List (ROL) deadline January 11, 2019 at 11:59PM Pacific. Failure to do so is a violation of the Fellowship Council Matching Service Participation Agreement and will be investigated by the FC. Applicants who elect to participate in the FC matching process and certify a ROL on January 11, 2019 at 11:59PM Pacific are prohibited from accepting a position through any other national matching service or by agreement outside the matching process after the ROL deadline.

What is the process if I'm investigated for a Matching Process Violation?

Refer to the Fellowship Council Matching Policies and Procedures, which is available once you log into your account and on the main Fellowship Council website at https://fellowshipcouncil.org/fellowship-programs/policies-procedures/.

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

The Fellowship Council Matching Service Participation Agreement to which you both agreed to when you logged into the matching process 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 Matching Policies and Procedures. If a program is requesting a matching process commitment dissolution, the program must complete the Member Change Form and return it to the Fellowship Council office for review by the Fellowship Council's Communications Committee and its Board of Directors. No matching process commitment dissolution will be permitted without the Member Change Form being completed. If an applicant is requesting a matching process commitment dissolution, the applicant must submit the request in writing to the Fellowship Council office for review by the Fellowship Council's Communications Committee and its Board of Directors. Applicants match with programs and not with program directors or other faculty members associated with the program.

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

Programs must direct all applicants to the Fellowship Council 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 FC 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 FC.

What do I do if an applicant who matched to my program does not show up for training?
The Fellowship Council Matching Service Participation Agreement 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 the name of any applicant who does not honor his/her matching process commitment to the Fellowship Council via the Member Change Form. The Fellowship Council will initiate a violation investigation of the applicant in accordance with Matching Policies and Procedures. If a program is requesting a matching process commitment dissolution, the program must complete the Member Change Form and return it to the Fellowship Council office for review by the Fellowship Council's Communications Committee and its Board of Directors. No matching process commitment dissolution will be permitted without the Member Change Form being completed. If an applicant is requesting a matching process commitment dissolution, the applicant must submit the request in writing to the Fellowship Council office for review by the Fellowship Council's Communications Committee and its Board of Directors. Applicants match with programs and not with program directors or other faculty members associated with the program.

How do I request a matching process commitment dissolution?
If an applicant is requesting a matching process commitment dissolution, the applicant must submit the Matching Process Commitment Dissolution Form found in the Current Fellows section of the Fellowship Council website, which will be reviewed by the Fellowship Council's Communications Committee and its Board of Directors.

If a program is requesting a matching process commitment dissolution, the program must complete the Member Change Form and return it to the Fellowship Council office for review by the Fellowship Council's Communications Committee and its Board of Directors.

Once the request/form is submitted, it will be reviewed in accordance with the processes and policies listed at: https://fellowshipcouncil.org/fellowship-programs/policies-procedures/