

Council of Residency Directors in Emergency Medicine

Application Process Improvement Committee (APIC): Best Practices for the 2026-2027 Residency Application and Interview Season

Approved by the CORD Board of Directors

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For the 2026-2027 application cycle, all Emergency Medicine programs should utilize the ResidencyCAS Application Platform for both the Main Residency Match and SOAP.

- Ongoing unification on a single platform for all applicants and programs will reduce cost and complexity for students while helping programs maximize access to a broad and diverse pool of candidates.
- Programs should identify as “Not Participating” on ERAS
- Programs should identify ResidencyCAS as their platform for the Main Residency Match and SOAP on the NRMP Program Directory

Guided by the experience of Emergency Medicine over the last several application cycles, the APIC issues the following guidance to programs for the 2026-2027 application and interview cycle. These recommendations are also guided by the [NRMP Code of Conduct for Programs](#), the AAMC’s recommendations, [Interviews in GME: Where Do We Go From Here?](#), and the Coalition for Physician Accountability’s (CoPA) Undergraduate Medical Education - Graduate Medical Education Review Committee’s [Recommendations for Comprehensive Improvement of the UME-GME Transition](#).

Embedded in both of these documents are concerns over the financial and time costs to applicants associated with in-person interviews, the environmental impact associated with interview travel, and a desire for increased fairness and equity in the application process.

CORD APIC provides the following guidance to programs offering Emergency Medicine positions:

- Programs should limit interview invitations to only the number of interview slots available.
- Programs should release interview offers after 8 PM (Eastern Time) to minimize interruptions to education and patient care during daytime hours across all four major US time zones.

- After the initial release of (non-waitlist) interview invitations, programs should allow a minimum of 48 hours for applicants to accept or decline the offer before releasing additional invites to other candidates.
 - The 48 hour window applies to all interview invitations at any point during the interview season, including waitlist offerings.
 - Section 6.2 of [NRMP Code of Conduct for Programs](#)
- Programs should notify applicants of their application status (interview offer, rejection, or placement on an interview waitlist) no later than December 18, 2026, which is intentionally scheduled to be after the anticipated date of the Military Match.
- All programs participating in Program Signaling for the 2026-2027 application cycle will do so through the ResidencyCAS platform. As a condition of participation, programs should adhere to the following:
 - As signals reflect an applicant's interest prior to the interview season, program signals should only be used when considering applicants for interview offers. Given that preferences may change as applicants have the opportunity to fully engage with programs during the interview season, programs are encouraged **not** to use program signals in final rank order decisions.
 - Programs **should not** inquire why an applicant did not signal their program or ask about other programs an applicant may have signaled.
 - Programs **should not** disclose the identity of applicants who have signaled their program.
- Programs should prepare for the upcoming application cycle by reviewing resources on anti-bias practices.
 - All faculty and residents involved in application review or interviews should participate in anti-bias training prior to the start of the application season.
 - [Holistic Review, Mitigating Bias, and Other Strategies in Residency Recruitment for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: An Evidence-based Guide to Best Practices from the Council of Residency Directors in Emergency Medicine](#)
- The strongly preferred option for the upcoming 2026-2027 interview cycle continues to be that programs conduct **virtual interviews for all applicants**.
 - While all-virtual is strongly preferred, should a program opt to pursue a format that is not all-virtual, APIC recommends the following considerations:
 - If programs elect to pursue a hybrid approach to interviews (some in-person, some virtual), programs should implement processes to prevent bias favoring those applicants who can participate in-person over virtual candidates, or vice versa.

- Programs should implement efforts to make virtual and in-person interviews as similar in process as possible, maximizing fairness and equity to applicants.
 - Examples may include a standardized duration and number of interviews, opportunities to meet with residents during unstructured time, and facility tours.
 - Of note, the NRMP's [Match Code of Conduct for Programs](#) recommends against a hybrid approach, however it is [not a violation of NRMP policy](#).
- Programs should prominently share their interview season plans on their websites and other relevant media as early as possible, including but not limited to:
 - Interview format(s) offered.
 - Date of initial interview offer release.
 - Date after which second look events will occur or dates on which second look events are scheduled, if applicable.
 - Anticipated platform for interview offers, scheduling, and virtual interview hosting
- Programs are strongly encouraged to submit their rank order list prior to hosting any second look events, virtual or in-person.
 - If a program offers second look events, it should not let attendance at a second look event influence rank order list position.
 - This includes implementing efforts to minimize bias favoring applicants who attend or penalizing applicants who either do not or cannot, for whatever reason, attend.
 - Programs may wish to reserve the right to amend their rank lists in the event of major professionalism lapses demonstrated at a second-look event. If this is the case, programs should communicate with applicants in a transparent fashion that such egregious behavior may negatively impact their standing on the rank list.
 - An example of communication language programs may use:
 - “We are offering a second look event to allow you more opportunity to get to know our program and make the most informed decision about the location of your future residency training. We believe that your decision and ability to attend a second look event should not impact your position on our rank list. Attendance at our second look event will have no impact on your position on our rank list, except for egregious lapses in professionalism, as defined in the [AAMC Core Entrustable Professional Activities for Entering Residency](#).

which may negatively impact your rank list position at the discretion of the program director.”

- If a program hosts second look events prior to rank order list preparation and submission, efforts should be made to negate the impact of attendance on the applicant’s rank order list position.
 - Some approaches include institution-wide second look events hosted by the GME office where program faculty are not made aware of who attends, or program-sponsored second looks that do not involve program leadership or other faculty involved in creating the rank list.
- If a program adopts a hybrid approach to second looks, they should implement efforts to make virtual and in-person experiences as similar in process as possible, again maximizing fairness and equity to applicants and limiting bias.
- Programs should communicate to applicants their policy regarding interview cancellations and the timing of notification of a cancellation by an applicant.
 - Interview scheduling instructions, including cancellation expectations, should be clearly delineated at the time an interview offer is extended from the program.
 - Applicants should be aware of program cancellation timelines and should make every effort to cancel interviews as early as possible to provide an opportunity for other applicants to receive an interview offer.
- Applicants should review and follow the ResidencyCAS Applicant Attestation which clarifies expectations regarding the accuracy of submitted information and the finality of data fields at the time of submission.

CORD EM APIC requests that emergency medicine residency applicants adopt the following guidelines:

- Applicants should review the [EMRA and CORD Student Advising Guide](#) to better understand up-to-date recommendations regarding the process of admission to emergency medicine and guidance about their competitiveness as an EM applicant.
- **Prior to submitting applications, applicants should meet with an experienced emergency medicine advisor** to determine their individual needs and get expert recommendations. If an applicant does not have access to an experienced emergency medicine advisor, the applicant may request one through the CORD Advising Students Committee in EM (ASC-EM) distance advising program (distanceadvising@cordjobboard.com).