



Scramble Toolkit

This resource has been developed to provide guidance to students about the AOA Internship and Residency Program (IRP) post-match period. This is more commonly called “the Scramble”, and it can certainly feel chaotic for those involved. It is hoped that the advice here can help students successfully navigate the Scramble and secure a graduate medical education position.

PART 1: PLANNING AHEAD

Should you consider planning ahead for the scramble? If you feel there is a chance that you will not match into a residency or internship program through the AOA IRP, it is wise for you to take some steps while you have the time and ability to focus. Some reasons that you might consider preparing for the scramble include:

- You interviewed at a limited number of programs and/or late in the season
- You received little or no feedback from programs where you interviewed
- You’re applying for a highly sought-after specialty
- You are concerned that you might not be as competitive as other applicants

Ways that you can be better prepared if you find yourself in the Scramble fall into these categories.

- Plan A vs. Plan B
- Get your documents in order
- Know where to find information
- Prepare for Scramble day

PART 2: PLAN A VS. PLAN B

If you don’t already have a backup plan, now is the time to give this some thought. Obviously, you are hoping to pursue your first choice of residency. However, you should ask yourself these questions:

- Is it reasonable for me to continue to pursue my first choice of residency?

Consider how many positions are offered; how many are likely to be available in the Scramble; how many programs you applied to initially. Highly competitive programs may fill in the match or have very few available positions in which many other candidates are

interested. For AOA match statistics from 2017, click here: <https://www.natmatch.com/aoairp/stats/2017prgstats.html>

- What other specialty could I see myself in?

Think back to your rotations and other experiences to those specialties that you enjoyed. Which of these may have positions available in the scramble? For more detailed information about various specialties, consider reviewing the Careers in Medicine site. If you need access to this website, please send an email to Trish Horn at horn@msu.edu or ac.guidance@hc.msu.edu

- Where is this specialty offered, and how far am I willing to go for graduate medical education?

Are you limited to a certain geographic area, or are you able to relocate if offered a position? You may want to discuss this in advance with your significant other or family, if applicable. Review the listings of available residencies and internships by state on AOA’s Opportunities website (link below). A list of programs participating in the AOA Match is also available on the National Matching Service website at: <https://www.natmatch.com/aoairp/instdirp/aboutproglis.html>

PART 3: GET YOUR DOCUMENTS READY

When match results are released, the Scramble begins within hours. You can be among the first applicants in line if you invest some time in preparing your documents.

- Personal statement

Review your personal statement. If it includes references to a specific specialty, be sure to update if you intend to apply to a different specialty. You may also consider updating relevant experiences or other details.

- Letters of recommendation

If you have multiple letters of recommendation already uploaded to ERAS, think about which ones you would release to programs during the Scramble. If all your LOR’s were from orthopedic surgeons and you are now planning to scramble for a family medicine position, consider reaching out to other physicians who can speak to your abilities in the clinic. As a reminder, those who write a letter of recommendation for you will be

expected to upload it directly to ERAS through the Letter of Recommendation Portal (LoRP). If you don't have enough time, having a physician email or fax a letter on your behalf to a program can be a useful alternative. This would be preferred to having a physician provide you with a letter that you would send to programs.

- Updated scores

Be sure that your COMLEX/USMLE scores are up to date. Be prepared to advise programs about a new result if the transcript is lagging.

- Draft your communications

Prepare an email script that you can copy and paste. This will give you time to put some thought into how you will introduce yourself to programs, and avoid embarrassing typographical or grammatical errors made in haste. If you have any insight as to why you failed to match, consider including that in your communication. For example, if you realized late in the interview season that you really enjoy emergency medicine but only got one interview, you can speak to the additional experience and insight you now have. Or if you recently improved your COMLEX Level 2 CE score, point that out and briefly describe how you improved your study regimen and your knowledge base. Include a statement that you will be forwarding your ERAS application to the program immediately, and provide reliable contact information (email and telephone).

PART 4: KNOW WHERE TO FIND INFORMATION

The pace of the Scramble can live up to its name. Visit and bookmark the following sites, so that you can readily access them when you need them.

- National Matching Service:
<https://www.natmatch.com/aoairp/>

Match results for the AOA IRP will be posted on this website on February 5, 2018 around 12:00 noon ET. A complete list by state and institution will show numbers of positions offered and filled in the match, as well as number of open positions by specialty. National Matching Service also provides listings of open positions following the match. Please note that this numbers reflect the status after the match has concluded, but are not updated to indicate when available positions are filled during the Scramble.

- AOA Post-Match:
<http://cf.osteopathic.org/oaapostmatch/index.cfm>

Match results will be posted on the AOA website on February 5, 2018. In addition, programs may choose to

list open positions on the AOA Post-Match page. On this site, you can filter a search by specialties, year of training desired (for 2018 graduates, OGME1), and location. Note that programs will generally update their listing when an offered position has been filled, but this is not always the case. If the match results indicate a program has an open position in a certain specialty but does not have that position listed on AOA Post-Match, consider contacting the program directly.

- Opportunities:
<http://opportunities.osteopathic.org/>

This is the main database for detailed information about residency programs. It will contain contact information for program directors and coordinators.

PART 5: PREPARE FOR SCRAMBLE DAY

If you find yourself in the Scramble, these suggestions will help you effectively navigate the process.

- Let your attending physician and resident, if applicable; know that you will receive your match results on February 5, 2018. If you have reason to believe you will need to scramble, consider asking in advance to be released from your rotation duties after 12:00 noon ET.
- Have access to email and telephone. Ideally, you should have a means to send and receive emails and take phone calls. If your rotation site does not have adequate connectivity, consider making other arrangements. Make sure your devices are charged and you have access to recharge them if necessary.
- Be prepared to reach out via email to programs with available positions. Again, if you have a script ready to go, you can send emails more quickly. However, as you cut and paste, be very cautious to update the salutation, email address, and any other information that is specific to the program to which you are applying. Try to avoid blasting emails to multiple programs; take the time to make your emails personal. As you do, be sure to match font sizes and colors to produce a professional result instead of something that looks rushed or duplicated.
- While you are sending introductory emails, forward your application to programs via ERAS.
- It would be wise to also place a telephone call to the program. Contact information can generally be found on Opportunities, or may be included in listings on AOA Post-Match. When you call, provide your name and the specialty to which you are applying. Let the program know that you have sent an email and forwarded your ERAS application, and that you will be available by email and phone for an interview or to answer any questions. Be polite and positive!

- Programs may frequently conduct telephone interviews during the Scramble. Try to be available for those calls. Plan ahead for where you might take calls if you are scheduled to be on a hospital based rotation. Some programs may elect to invite applicants for interviews in person. Think ahead to whether you are willing and able to travel for a face-to-face interview.
- If you need additional assistance or moral support, advisers from [Academic and Career Guidance](#) will be available at each COM site in East Lansing, Detroit, and Macomb on match day. Fax machines are also available at each site if a program requests materials by facsimile.

FAX NUMBERS:

EL 517-432-3612
DMC 313-578-9601
MUC 586-416-5220

PART 6: ACCEPTING AN OFFER

Keep in mind that offers may be made – and may disappear – quickly. You may be placed in a position where a quick decision is necessary. If the input of a significant other or family might be needed, plan to have that discussion in advance. Once you do accept an offer, let the program know you are willing to put that in writing and you would be happy to sign a contract as soon as one can be made available. If you have other programs that you have contacted, extend them and fellow applicants the courtesy of letting them know you have accepted a position elsewhere.

**ADVISOR AVAILABILITY & CONTACT INFORMATION
DAY OF SCRAMBLE FEBRUARY 5, 2018:**

DMC: Dr. Kirsten Waarala (Career Guidance):
1:30-4:00 p.m. for drop-in or email
Kirsten.waarala@hc.msu.edu

EL: Ms. Kim Peck, MBA, (Career Guidance):
kim.peck@hc.msu.edu or 517-884-4037

Ms. Dawn Dewar (Career Guidance):
dawn.dewar@hc.msu.edu or 517-432-8806

Ms. Tonya VanOrder (SCS) 517-884-6274
tonya.vanorder@hc.msu.edu

Jon Rohrer, Assoc Dean, Statewide Campus System, 517-884-6271

MUC: Holly Bielawski drop-in or phone & email
Holly.bielawski@hc.msu.edu 586-263-6731

RESOURCES:

Academic and Career Guidance Advisors:
http://com.msu.edu/Students/Academic_Career_Guidance/index.htm

Career Guidance Website:
http://com.msu.edu/Students/Career_Guidance/Index.htm

Careers in Medicine (CiM): <https://www.aamc.org/cim/>
Trish Horn to obtain an Access Code: horn@msu.edu or
ac.guidance@hc.msu.edu

Statewide Campus System: <http://scs.msu.edu/index.php>

NMS: <https://www.natmatch.com/aoairp/>

AOA Opportunities: <http://opportunities.osteopathic.org/>

AOA Post Match:
<http://cf.osteopathic.org/oaapostmatch/index.cfm>

AOA match statistics from 2017
<https://www.natmatch.com/aoairp/stats/2017prgstats.html>

NMS List of participating programs:
<https://www.natmatch.com/cgibin/instdisp.pl>

Find-a-Resident
<https://services.aamc.org/findaresident/>