

Military Guide

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Michigan State University College of Osteopathic Medicine
Academic and Career Guidance

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Military Match: The Basics

Introduction to the Military Match

The Military Match shares many characteristics with the civilian match, with some important differences depending on which branch of the military you are in. The Military Match is early, taking place in December instead of March. The timetable is therefore moved up a bit. (An example of a timetable is included below as a guide). The application process may vary as well. Air Force, Army, and Navy use a system called MODS for the application process however, starting with the class of 2019; students seeking a PGY-1 will use a paper application and submit their documentation differently. Like the civilian match, a CV, Personal Statement, COMLEX Scores, Transcript, MSPE and Letters of Recommendation are included in the application, and information on how to upload these will be sent to you by your branch. After the applications and rank lists are submitted, the Joint Service Graduate Medical Education (JSGME) Board meets in mid-November and ranks the applicants using various criteria including grades, COMLEX scores, research, performance on “audition” rotations, interviews, and prior military service. Candidates are either matched into their number one military residency, matched into a military second choice specialty, “deferred” into a civilian residency (Air Force and Navy only), or matched into a military transitional year.

It is in your best interest to stay in contact with your branch regarding the application process. There are differences between the Army, Navy, and Air Force, and each branch is responsible for their match process.

Active Duty Tours (ADT's)

Your final rank order list for the Military Match will be due in mid-October. With this being said, away electives at potential residency sites should be done before then or at least scheduled to be completed. July to September is the best window to complete rotations for military positions. Setting up the ADT usually consists of calling or emailing the clerkship coordinator at the site and checking availability. Some sites have websites through which you can request rotations but many will rely on you calling. You should set these rotations up as early as you can. If you are having issues with your core rotation schedule, please get in contact with your SSA. Program Directors also look well on in-person interviews (even if you do not do an ADT rotation) and may be open to a few days or week-long visit for interviews if you contact them directly and express interest. There are a limited number of programs, and the directors know each other well, so it is best not to ignore any programs or to act disrespectfully to ANYONE on a rotation.

Army students, keep in mind that your ADTs are 45 days, while rotations are 30, and they cannot overlap. Planning your first ADT in early July-September at what your second choice residency site will be then scheduling a civilian rotation and going back for a second ADT in October at what you think your first choice residency is what many do.

Multiple Navy ADT's cannot be taken in the same fiscal year (fiscal year begins October 1). To do two ADT rotations in the 4th year, one must be done before October 1 and one must be done after October 1 IF you are planning to use your annual ADT. You may do two rotations prior to October 1, however, one will be an ADT while the other is done as a civilian (i.e. you must pay for travel, meals, lodging, etc.).

Like the Army, Navy ADTs are also 45 days, however you have the option of having the “extra” active duty time either before or after your active duty clerkship, allowing you to do back-to-back military rotations in Sept-Oct if the extra time is before your first rotation and after your second.

The military is a very small world so word will get around if you are a good (or bad) applicant no matter what specialty you may be rotating. Certainly, if you are rotating in a different specialty then arrange for interviews with the specialty you want during your ADT. You could also arrange to spend some time with the department you are interested in, for example if you are interested in EM but are only able to get a medicine rotation, arrange to spend an afternoon in the ED. This is a good way to show interest while also getting a good look at your future residency program.

You should go to all ADT's with an updated CV, personal statement, a photo and your appropriate Class A uniform for Army/Air Force, and Summer/Dress Whites for Navy (this is what you will interview in).

Interviews

Air Force applicants are required to interview with one military program in their specialty, and this interview may be by phone. However, it is in your best interest to interview with your top military choice at the latter end of an ADT in person. The program director is only allowed to have your two-page application and your CV by JSGME Board rules.

Similarly, in the Army/Navy, you should interview with as many of the programs as possible, at least interviewing in person with your top 2-3 choices. You can interview over the phone with your other choices. Surprisingly, most programs are rather understanding when it comes to phone interviews; but still, if you are not as competitive as you would like to be then it would be in your best interest to interview in person. Be aware that in the Army there is a deadline by which interviews should be completed. The MODS online forum is very helpful for this and they are very prompt with answering questions. For the Navy, the instructions sent out by the PGY-1 Program Manager are very clear, and they will respond to emails with any additional questions.

Interviews are like civilian interviews for the most part, only you will be wearing your uniform (make sure it is on correctly or you will regret it!). Even if your interviewer says it's not necessary, trust me, it goes a long ways in presenting yourself professionally and they will remember! Another obvious thing is to make sure you use appropriate salutations ("sir," "ma'am," etc.), and prepare thank-you notes to keep yourself fresh in their minds.

Letters of Recommendation (LoR)

In the Air Force LOR's are limited to two; at least one letter from a military physician or program director is ideal. If not, anyone at school is fine, though department chairs are better than others. The important thing is to have your letters stand out in some way. The more specific, the better you distinguish yourself.

The Army allows up to four LORs, again, with a preference for military doctors. Look for at least one from an Army physician that you worked with on an ADT (another reason to complete your ADTs early). They also allow you to use evaluations from away rotations to upload as "supporting documents". This is likely similar in the other branches, keep in mind your evaluations are a component of your MSPE already.

The Navy does not have limitations on LORs. Follow the guidance of your advisors in the specialty to which you are applying. As always, letters from department chairs and program directors in the specialty you are applying to will be viewed more favorably.

Civilian Deferments

A civilian deferment is where you will complete your residency in a civilian program, this means that like medical school you will just be another resident in the program; meaning no uniform, no increased pay and not many "military demands" placed on you during residency. After completing residency training you will then pay back active duty time you owe as normal.

In the Army, as of now, you are not allowed to rank civilian deferment as one of your choices. In the Navy you are allowed to rank it wherever you would like.

To understand your chances of getting a civilian deferment (if this indeed is your first choice or near the top of your list), it is important to understand how residency spots are decided upon by the JSGME Board. Each branch of the military determines each year how many PGY1 openings it will allow in a given specialty. Each branch handles excess applicants for a given specialty differently, the Army is often the strictest with very few civilian deferments being given out and the Air Force is traditionally more liberal with the use of civilian deferments.

For each branch, they determine how many residents they need to train to satisfy their needs in the future, so if they determine they can train all of the residents that they need for a certain specialty then there will be no civilian deferments in that specialty. On the other hand, if there is a large need for a specialty that exceeds their capabilities to train “in-house” so to speak, then there will be more deferment spots for that specialty.

How does your competitiveness as an applicant play a role? Generally, the Board strikes a balance between 1) any branch wanting to keep the best students in an applicant pool for its PGY1 positions, and 2) honoring applicants’ top choices. If civilian deferment is your top choice, regardless of anything else, you should make your intentions known, both in your personal statement and in your interviews with program directors. The directors will offer you an assessment of where you stand in regard to a deferment. Be honest about what you want, both when speaking to directors and when ranking programs.

The worst thing you can do is to try to “outsmart the system” by leaving program directors unimpressed or sabotaging your application in hopes that you will not be selected for a military residency. You may be very unpleasantly surprised in December.

Transitional Year

For applicants that are not selected into a specific PGY-1 specialty, applicants will be assigned to a transitional year. This is like a general intern year where you spend your time in various departments (medicine, pediatrics, OB/GYN, etc.), similar to third year of med school. Some programs will allow you to re-apply for a residency as a PGY-2 after a transitional year, while others will require you to do their specific PGY-1 year (you would be an intern for a second year). Others then serve as a GMO.

It is important to know what the expectation is for your particular specialty and service. In some of the more competitive specialties, applicants do a transitional year, serve as a GMO, then reapply in their desired specialty. The upside of doing this is that additional time-in service will give you more points when the board meets for residency selection.

For the Navy, GMO tours are much more common. Many people do GMO tours after intern year regardless of what you match into. All Navy interns must reapply for PGY-2 spots. Depending on your specialty, available spots, and number of GMO’s returning from the fleet, you will either match into your residency or an operational tour (GMO, dive, or flight).

A Word about Competitive Residencies

All of the military branches vary by what specialty is competitive and every year is very different concerning what is a competitive specialty. This is because the pool of applicants is much smaller and thus is subject to more swings in popular sentiment.

Traditionally in the military the competitive specialties are: orthopedics, EM, general surgery and surgical specialties; but these even vary depending on the year.

A guide to applying to Emergency Medicine as an HPSP Student:

[Council of Emergency Medicine Residency Directors Guide to applying to Emergency Medicine as a Military Student.](#)

Adapted from the [University of Maryland Military Match Resource Page](#) as well as the [Air Force](#), Army, and [Navy](#) Military Resources

General Guidelines for Military Career Planning

Year 1

- Begin Medical School at MSUCOM
- Be commissioned by your military branch
- Notify the Office of Academic and Career Guidance and the College Registrar's Office of your military scholarship (HPSP) by filling out this form <https://goo.gl/forms/Rmhvvg7Civ6FL68s1>

Year 2

- Meet with the Office of Academic and Career Guidance for required Career Planning Meeting to discuss the military match process and other resources
- Select a Base Hospital
- Study for COMLEX (military students do not need to take USMLE)
- Schedule your military training (DCC, BOLC, COT) for the summer between year 2 and 3
- Sit for COMSAE; take COMLEX (usually late May to accommodate your training)
- Attend branch specific officer training in the summer between 2nd and 3rd year

Year 3

- Begin Clerkship
- Complete COMLEX Level 2CE and COMLEX Level 2PE
- Schedule audition rotations (preferably at military hospitals)
- Obtain Letters of Recommendation
- Begin filling out ERAS application (Army Students do not need to complete ERAS)
- Complete Military Match Application in MODS

Year 4

- Submit ERAS application (Army students exempt)
- Attend audition rotations
- Interview for residency positions
- Participate in Military Match (results released in December)
- If unmatched in Military Match participate in AOA/NRMP Match in February/March
- Graduate!
- ARMY ONLY: Complete BOLC post year 4 prior to residency

Military GME Application Timeline Class of 2019

Prior to January of 3rd year:

- Discuss with your Advisor: initial specialty choice/plan for interviews and application strategy
- Review competitiveness of specialty to realistically assess your qualifications
- Register & schedule COMLEX Level 2 exams
- Build and/or update your CV

February – April

- Draft your personal statement
- Continue researching residency programs
- Start preparing for residency interviews

May - June

- Recommended Deadline 1 June:** CV and initial personal statement draft should be complete
- Continue to research residency programs & look for service specific information on available positions
- If applicable, MyERAS® opens to begin entering application information (early June)
- If applicable, Registration for other early match programs (e.g. San Francisco match, Urology match)
- Review the information on your MSPE Letter
- Complete early Military Audition rotations
- Identify & contact attending physicians (ideally your specialty and service) to request letters of recommendation

July-August

- Your specific branch will send you a PGY-1 paper application by July 1st
- JSGMESB Application opens in Medical Operational Data System (MODS) (1 July)
 - Critical Deadline 31 Aug:** Preliminary application due in MODS
- Complete military residency interviews & interview rotations
- Continue to request letters of recommendation
- Continue to work on civilian residency applications (if applicable)

September

- Follow up on requested LORs to ensure they have been received by the Office of Academic and Career Guidance and sent to your branch
- Send in all service specific information to your branch
- Recommended Deadline 15 September:** All LORs due to Academic and Career Guidance
- If applicable, start applying to civilian residency programs through ERAS (6 Sept)
 - Civilian residency programs start receiving applications through ERAS (15 Sept)
 - Check email frequently for interview invitations & schedule interviews quickly
- If applicable, Register for the National Resident Matching Program (NRMP®) (15 Sept)
- MSPEs finalized and uploaded by Dean's Office

October

- 1 Oct: MSPEs released to civilian residency programs in ERAS®
- 7 Oct: Military Program Director & Consultant interviews must be completed and uploaded into MODS
- Critical Deadline 15 Oct:** All application documents due in MODS; final day training location rank changes



November

- Joint Services Graduate Medical Education Selection Board (JSGMESB) Application Scoring (typically 1st week of Nov)
- JSGMESB convenes and makes selection decisions (typically last week of November)
- Continue civilian residency interviews
- Early registration for NRMP® closes (30 Nov)

December

- JSGMESB selection results released** (likely 12 December)
- Continue civilian residency interviews if applicable
- Withdraw application from ERAS and NRMP if applicable
- Sign military residency contract (USAF)

January-February

- Army JSGMESB Rebuttal Board (early Jan)
- Sign military residency contract (USA, USN)
- Continue civilian residency interviews if applicable
- Finalize rank order list for main NRMP match (mid-to-late Feb deadline)

March

- Supplemental Offer & Acceptance Program (SOAP) for those who didn't match
- Match Day on Friday of Match Week

April

- Sign civilian residency contract if applicable



Military GME Application Resources

1. Service Specific Information
 - a. Websites
 - i. [Air Force Physician Education](#)
 - ii. [Navy Graduate Medical Education](#)
 - iii. [Army Graduate Medical Education](#)
 - b. Contacts
 - i. Air Force: HQ AFPC/DP2NP
Chief: Col Michael Forgione
Deputy: Mr. David Zemkosky
Email: AFPC.DP2NP.PhysicianEducation@us.af.mil
Phone: 210-565-5701
 - ii. Navy:
Director: CAPT Eli McGuigan
Deputy Director: Mr. Bill Robinson
PGY 1 Program Manager: LT Andrew Neville
Email: Andrew.m.neville.mil@mail.mil
Phone: 301-400-3781
 - iii. Army:
Deputy Director: COL Christine Lettieri/ COL Kent Dezee
PGY1 Program Manager: Ms. Patricia Norman
Email: patricia.g.norman.civ@mail.mil
Phone: 703-681-4804
2. MODS: On-line application tool used by all three services. Each service has its own unique link. The following addresses were used during the last application cycle:
 - a. [Air Force](#)
 - b. [Navy](#)
 - c. [Army](#)
3. [Medicine + The Military](#)
 - a. A resource for students who are pursuing a career in medicine while also being a member of the military.
4. Military Application
 - a. Although you won't be able to access MODS without being on a DOD computer, you can still have access to the paper application. In most cases, your branch will email you a paper copy of the application around July 1st but if you'd like to see what you'll be filling out please take a look at [this year's application](#).
5. Sending in your application and materials
 - a. The Office of Academic and Career Guidance would be happy to help you send in your application materials to your branch. Please submit your letters of recommendation, board transcripts, paper application, MSPE, official MSU transcript, and any other necessary documents to com.acguidance@msu.edu.

Military Mentors

Each year, our office compiles a list of recently graduated students to help current students as mentors. If you'd like to be matched with a military mentor from your branch, email our office at com.acguidance@msu.edu with your branch and specialty choice.

Match Processes

Air Force (can apply for Military and Civilian positions)

GME applications are submitted through the [Medical Operational Data System \(MODS\) website](#). However, throughout the 2018 GME application cycle, MODS will not be accessible from computers that are not on the military network. Applicants will not be able to access MODS via personal or school computers at this time. Additionally, Medical School Officials and non-military Letter Writers will not be able to access MODS.

For applicants that are not able to access MODS, a [fillable PDF application](#) and a PDF CV may be submitted to the Air Force Physician Education's organizational email (AFPC.DP2NP.PhysicianEducation@us.af.mil) from 1 July 2018 - 31 August 2018. If applicants will have access to a computer on the military network between 1 July 2018 - 31 August 2018 (e.g., during an ADT), they are encouraged to submit their application and CV during this time through MODS and not via email.

Medical School Officials and non-military Letter Writers may submit LORs, transcripts, licensing exam scores, and MSPEs via the Air Force Physician Education organizational email (AFPC.DP2NP.PhysicianEducation@us.af.mil).

More information and links found at this link: <http://www.airforcemedicine.af.mil/Organizations/Physician-Education-Branch/Application-Instructions/>

Army (can only apply for civilian positions in General Surgery and Orthopedics)

HPSP students will submit all required supporting documents directly to the OTSG GME office (patricia.g.norman.civ@mail.mil). If also submitting an application to the NRMP through ERAS, please reference ERAS for further direction on document submission.

Navy (can apply for Military or Civilian positions)

The MODS is no longer accessible to users outside of a DoD domain (i.e., from personal computers). It must be accessed from a computer on a military facility with DoD network access. Applicants who will not have access to a military facility between 1 July 2018 and 31 August 2018 must submit a paper application. The Navy GME Office must e-mail the paper application to all PGY-1 applicants (USUHS, HPSP, and HSCP) on 1 July 2018. PGY-2+ applicants must contact the Navy GME Office at usn.bethesda.navmedprodevctrmd.list.nmpdc-gme-sb@mail.mil to request a paper application. All paper applications must be submitted by 31 August 2018. Applications can be 5 BUMEDNOTE 1524 29 Jun 2018 submitted via the Army Aviation and Missile Research Development and Engineering Center (AMRDEC) safe access file exchange (SAFE) Web site <https://safe.amrdec.army.mil/safe/Welcome.aspx> or via e-mail to the Navy GME Office. The Navy GME Office will input application information into MODS and seek verification of information from each applicant via e-mail. Any changes to the application need to be requested via e-mail to the Navy GME Program Director. Changes must be requested by 15 October 2018. All supporting documents must be e-mailed to the Navy GME Program Director by 15 October 2018. Medical schools will not have access to MODS. All documents from medical school officials can be e-mailed to usn.bethesda.navmedprodevctrmd.list.nmpdc-gme-sb@mail.mil and will be uploaded to the respective application. All documents containing personally identifiable information (PII) can be sent to the Navy GME Office via the AMRDEC SAFE Web site, <https://safe.amrdec.army.mil/safe/Welcome.aspx>. PGY-1 applicants who are on an active duty training (ADT) are encouraged to submit their application while on a military facility. If submitting your application while on ADT, follow the instructions for applicants with access to a computer on a DoD network and enclosure.

If selected for military PGY-1 positions, students registered for the NRMP Match must immediately withdraw their application from the NRMP.