



EPILEPSY/CLINICAL NEUROPHYSIOLOGY MATCH FAQs

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A. Background

1. Why do we need a match?

A survey of adult neurology program directors in 2017 found that 78% of program directors felt the current fellowship application process begins too early in the PGY3 year. A survey of graduating neurology residents found that 88% of residents also feel that the application process should start later. In a survey of Epilepsy Program Directors in 2020, 86% of program directors supported the idea of a match. However, because 31% of programs offer epilepsy fellowships in coordination with clinical neurophysiology fellowships, many program directors felt strongly that the match should include both epilepsy and clinical neurophysiology.

2. What organization will sponsor the match?

The match is officially sponsored by the American Epilepsy Society (AES). AES has been working closely with the American Clinical Neurophysiology Society (ACNS) on match planning. In addition, AES has been coordinating its efforts in association with the American Association of Neuromuscular and Electrodiagnostic Medicine (AANEM) and the American Academy of Neurology (AAN) to collaborate with a broad range of epilepsy and clinical neurophysiology program directors as well as with residency program directors.

3. What organization will conduct the match?

After lengthy discussion between the National Resident Matching Program (NRMP) and the San Francisco Match, the decision was made to conduct the match through NRMP because of their flexibility in combining the Epilepsy and Clinical Neurophysiology matches, and because their timeline was felt to be most appropriate for the needs of epilepsy and neurophysiology program directors.

4. What is a letter of intent?

A letter of intent is a letter from leadership within a specialty or subspecialty (here, the American Epilepsy Society Board) that gives information about the intent to participate in the ERAS and NRMP match process, with a list of programs that will be participating with their associated contact information.

B. Applications and Interviews

1. What will the application process be?

The application process will rely on the Electronic Residency Application System (ERAS). ERAS is a separate organization from NRMP whose function is to streamline the application process by collecting application information for fellowship applicants, their letter of recommendation authors, and their program directors.

Typically, an applicant submits their information to ERAS electronically through a portal (MyERAS). Letters of recommendation are also collected electronically through a separate Letter of Recommendation Portal (LoRP). ERAS then sends the fellowship applicants' information and supporting documents to prospective fellowship programs using the Program Directors Workstation (PDWS). PDWS provides tools that allow program directors to filter, sort, and search applicants to identify potential candidates. PDWS also allows program directors to send messages (including bulk messages) to applicants if required.

2. Do most fellowship programs use ERAS?

Most fellowship programs that use a match use ERAS. ERAS processed the applications for 13,501 fellowship applicants for 4,483 fellowship programs in 2021.

3. What documents will be required for fellowship application?

Each fellowship program is allowed to create individual requirements for what ERAS documents should be submitted with a fellowship applicants' MyERAS application. Fellowship programs can list their requirements on the ERAS website to convey their requirements to prospective applicants.

All fellowship applicants will be required to include:

- Personal/biographic information
- Education
- Experience
- Licensure
- Publication List

In addition, typical standard ERAS documents may include:

- Personal statement
- Medical school transcript
- Letters of recommendation (up to 4 per program)
- Medical School Performance Evaluation
- Photograph
- Board Scores
- ECFMG Certificate (IMGs)

Fellowship programs can also require additional non-standardized supplemental forms as part of the application process.

4. If different programs can require different documents/materials for their fellowship applications, how will a program director know when an applicant has submitted the required documents for my program?

The Program Director Workstation (PDWS) allows program directors to create a filter for applicants who have submitted all their required documents/information. This filtered list can be saved for future use.

5. Does ERAS interface directly with Thalamus?

Thalamus is a third-party interview-scheduling tool used for GME interviewing and scheduling. There is nothing that prevents fellowships from using Thalamus to schedule and process interviews, but there is no direct communication between the ERAS, PDWS, and Thalamus

6. When will applications be due? When will the interview process begin?

Applicants can begin application	June 2022
Programs can register, enter, and update information in ERAS	August 2022
PDWS opens for program set up	November 2022
Fellowship applications available in PDWS, interview season begins	December 2022
Rank list deadline for NRMP	May 3, 2023
Match lists announced	May 17, 2023
Fellows begin	July 1, 2024

7. Can programs provide pre-application interviews and site tours for those PGYs who are in town and wish to interview early?

Interviews can occur prior to the December 2022 timeline, but the prospective applicants’ information will not yet be available from ERAS to the fellowship program at the time of the tour or interview.

C. Participation in the match

1. What does it mean for a match to be “all in?”

The all in policy is a policy that is optional for specialty matches. The policy states that if you put one of your positions in the match, you must put all positions in the match. It does not allow a program to keep any positions out of the match. It does not require every program to participate in the match. However, for specialties that struggle to ensure that an appropriate number of positions are entered into the match, it can increase the number of positions filled through the match.

2. Will the Epilepsy match be “all in?”

The Epilepsy/CNP Match has not implemented the all in policy. If programs choose to keep positions outside of the match (i.e., CNP-EMG positions), they may do so. However, all programs are strongly encouraged to put as many positions into the match as possible to ensure success.

3. What is the minimum participation needed for the match to be successful? Do unfunded slots 'count' in that participation rate, or only funded slots, as indicated each year?

At least 75% of programs nationally with available programs in epilepsy must be registered in the match for it to be successful. These programs will actively participate by submitting rank order lists of applicants. At least 75% of the available incoming fellowship positions nationally within epilepsy must be in the match. When the NRMP refers to incoming fellows, they refer only to funded positions that the individual programs intend to fill. If a program has a higher number of listed fellowship positions through ACGME than they have funded available positions (i.e., a program has three available fellowship positions approved by ACGME but only has funding for two fellows), that is not counted against the positions requirement.

4. If a program puts at least one slot in the match, are they obligated to put all slots in the match?

Programs are not required to put all their positions into the match (only 75% of positions must be entered). However, the more applicants and positions are in the match, the more successful it will be, resulting in the best possible matches. Programs are strongly encouraged to put as many positions that related to epilepsy and EEG into the Match as possible.

5. When does a program have to commit to participating in the match?

Programs are asked to [submit an MOU](#) for intent to participate in the match by Monday, January 31, 2022.

6. When does a program have to indicate the number of positions they will be recruiting for within a given cycle?

The deadline for submitting the number of positions in each track (*quota change deadline*) is Wednesday, April 19, 2023—two weeks prior to the rank order list certification deadline (the date on which all programs turn in their rank order list).

7. Can this number be changed for each year (i.e., can a program recruit for two positions one year and three positions the next)?

Yes. However, the number of positions (within each track) must be submitted to NRMP by the quota change and withdrawal deadline (Wednesday, April 19, 2023).

8. Is it possible for a program to have some positions in the match and some positions filled through the AANEM portal?

Yes, programs can choose to fill some positions through the match and some positions through the AANEM portal. However, they cannot fill the same position

through both the match *and* the portal; once a slot is entered into the match, it is assumed that the slot will be filled only through the match (it is a binding commitment once a slot is filled through the match.) However, if you have three total CNP slots, you could put two in the match and one in the AANEM portal.

9. What process is available for unmatched candidates and programs with unfilled slots?

After Match Day, a list of unmatched applicants is provided to the programs that did not fill, and a list of unfilled programs is provided to applicants. From there, it is up to programs if/when they fill those unfilled slots. It is up to programs and applicants to reach out to one another to fill any remaining unfilled slots; the NRMP is not involved in that process.

10. What are the steps in participating in the Match?

- Applications register in MyERAS and submit required documents, information to MyERAS (June 2022)
- Fellowship programs set up accounts in ERAS (August through November 2022)
- Fellowship programs receive and review via PDWS (through ERAS) (December 2022)
- Applicants are interviewed (December 2022)
- All participants sign the match participation agreement
- Each hospital/university institutional official activates its institution and program for the match
- Rank order list opens: programs can begin to create/submit rank order lists
- Prior to the quota change deadline (Wednesday, April 19, 2023): each program/track confirms the number of positions it will be filling in the match
- Rank order list deadline (Wednesday, May 3, 2023): each program certifies its finalized rank order list
- Match Day (Wednesday, May 17, 2023): the finalized match list is allowed

D. Tracks:

1. Can a program offer multiple tracks? Can a program submit five different tracks (each with a different blend of curriculum, sites, duration, patient age group)? Are there limits on the number of tracks that can be offered?

You may enter multiple tracks for different training programs within the match. Programs may have a wide variety of different training tracks (i.e., one year epilepsy, one-year CNP, two year combined CNP/epilepsy, pediatric epilepsy, adult epilepsy, etc.) If your program offers separate tracks, you must create separate rank-order lists of applicants who are interested in each of the tracks.

You must be very clear with applicants regarding which training track is which, so that they may rank the training track in which they are interested. Information can be provided on the ERAS website to help candidates distinguish between different tracks.

If you have specific questions or concerns about how to set up tracks within the match, NRMP is happy to provide guidance to individual programs

2. If multiple tracks are offered and a separate match list is submitted for each track, can a program put the same candidate on the match list for multiple tracks?

Yes, you may put the same applicant on multiple rank lists.

3. If multiple tracks are offered, can those tracks be changed from year to year?

Yes, tracks can be changed from one year to the next depending on funding, program interest, etc. However, if no changes are made, the tracks will roll over without change from year to year.

4. What is the deadline for submitting tracks to NRMP?

Tracks must be submitted before ranking begins (i.e., before rank lists are submitted). However, the number of positions in each track must be submitted prior to the quota change deadline (two weeks before the rank list deadline).

5. If an institution has funding for a set number of total slots divided between epilepsy and CNP, but normally shares this funding between the two programs, (i.e., a program can fund three fellows, which can be three CNP, three epilepsy, two CNP/one epilepsy, or one CNP/two epilepsy) can the match accommodate this flexibility?

One of the ways that NRMP allows flexibility between programs is through a process known as reversion. Reversions allow programs the opportunity to donate unfilled positions in one program track to another program track during the matching process (i.e., as the algorithm is running.) With reversions, if a donor program (i.e., the program that you think may not fill) does not fill its quota during the running of the algorithm, a designated number of positions can be moved over from the donor track to a recipient track to try and fill those positions in the recipient track. This offers some degree of protection against the possibility that positions will remain unfilled when the algorithm is processed. In general, programs should revert positions to the training type that they think is most likely to fill or to the training type that they most want to offer.

If, for example, you have two programs, each with two positions: a one-year epilepsy track, which is the receiver program, and a two-year epilepsy-CNP track which is the donor program. The donor two-year track is designed to revert its two positions to the one-year epilepsy track if its positions go unfilled. If the algorithm filled only one of the two-year epilepsy-CNP track positions, the second position would be potentially unfilled. However, because of the reversion, the one-year epilepsy track could then fill three positions. If there were three available candidates in the one-year epilepsy track, the Match algorithm would result in one candidate matched to the two-year epilepsy-CNP track, and three candidates matched to the one-year epilepsy track. However, all four positions have been filled.

It should be noted that programs can revert positions to multiple tracks within the same institution. However, only the donor program can create a reversion, and no circular reversions are allowed (i.e., you cannot set a CNP track to donate unfilled positions to an epilepsy track, and simultaneously set the epilepsy track to donate unfilled positions to the CNP track). All reversions must be approved by the institutional officer within your facility.

6. What is the deadline for submitting a reversion request?

Reversions can be added, changed, or deleted until the Rank order list certification deadline (Monday, May 23, 2023).

7. Are programs required to have reversions?

No. Reversions are an option to increase the flexibility of programs that offer multiple tracks, but programs are not required to offer reversions at all.

8. Can you have a track that includes an ACGME-equivalent year of training or a non-ACGME accredited year of training?

Yes, you may create separate tracks with an ACGME equivalent year of training; it would need to be listed in a manner that allowed it to be distinguished from other tracks, and you would need to be forthright with applicants about the fact that one year is not ACGME accredited, and the applicants would need to understand the nature of the training that they would receive.

9. Can you have multiple tracks within clinical neurophysiology to appeal to fellows with different clinical interests (i.e., a "CNP-EEG track with 80% EEG, 20% IOM and mixed-CNP with 50% EEG, 50% EMG)?

Yes, you may create separate tracks with different curriculum or clinical foci (see question #1). You would need to find a way to list/identify these tracks that allowed

applicants to easily distinguish between these different tracks (i.e., Clinical Neurophysiology/Mixed-EMG-EEG versus Clinical Neurophysiology/EEG.)

10. Do trainees have flexibility in applying to different tracks (i.e., can they apply to multiple tracks within the same program)?

Yes, trainees can apply to and rank multiple tracks within the same program when they create their individual rank list. Trainees can rank as many programs/tracks as they choose, although there are fees if they rank more than 20 tracks in total.

11. Can a program create two separate tracks for adult and pediatric programs? Are programs required to create separate tracks for adult and pediatric programs?

Yes, programs may create two separate tracks for adult and pediatric programs. However, if a program combined adult and pediatric training, it would not be **required** that the adult and pediatric programs be listed on separate tracks (i.e., you may create a single rank list with a mix of pediatric and adult applicants).

12. For programs utilizing two-year tracks, can the order of tracks be reversed (i.e., fellows can match for CNP followed by epilepsy or epilepsy followed by CNP?)

Yes. Ultimately, if you designate a track as "Epilepsy-CNP-two-year," then the decision about the order in which fellows are trained (i.e., CNP then epilepsy or epilepsy then CNP) once they match into a program can be determined by the program. The NRMP does not dictate the specific order once the fellow has matched.

13. If you have one position and could offer the fellow two options for tracks depending on their needs, can you create two tracks? Or does that imply two positions?

This would require two positions. You cannot have a track with a quota of zero. You must have at least one available slot in each track.

14. For programs offering the option for one year vs. two years (where the second year is a separate fellowship such CNP followed by epilepsy), how will this be handled? Are these two different matches/tracks?

If a program has both a one-year and a two-year program, these would be listed as separate tracks; however, a program may agree to accept an applicant for both years if they match to a two-year program.

15. How are different tracks displayed on the ERAS website?

Individual tracks with their associated NRMP program code can be displayed on the ERAS website. Program requirements and more detailed information about the

tracks can be published on the website and can be edited at any time prior to a fellow applying to the program.

E. Match Penalties and Withdrawal

1. What are the penalties for a match violation by a program?

See here: <http://www.nrmp.org/reporting-investigation-violations/>

2. Are there any consequences for a candidate who commits a match violation by accepting a position with a program outside of the match?

Yes. An applicant who accepts a position outside of the match but does not withdraw from the match can be barred from accepting or starting a position in any program sponsored by a match-participating institution. They or their program may be barred from participating in future NRMP matches. They would also be identified within the R3 system as a match violator.

Further details on the consequences of match violations can be found here: <https://mk0nrmp3oyqui6wqfm.kinstacdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/2021-Sanctions-Guidelines.pdf>

3. If a fellow changes their mind about the second year of a fellowship, is that considered a match violation?

No. Once a fellow matches to a program, they are only required to stay in the program for 45 days. If they withdraw from the program after that time, it is not considered a match violation.

4. Can programs or applicants withdraw from the match? What happens, if so?

A program can withdraw up to the quota change deadline (Wednesday, April 19, 2023). The institutional official at your hospital or university must approve your withdrawal. If any applicants have ranked your program, it will be skipped in the algorithm. Applicants have until the rank order deadline (Wednesday, May 3, 2023) to withdraw from the match. Similarly, if a program ranks an applicant who withdraws from the match, the algorithm will skip over that applicant. The program does not need to change its rank list in any way.

F. Costs and Fees

1. What is the cost of participating in the match for programs? (For example, if a program accepted two CNP and one epilepsy fellow, what would the anticipated cost be?)

Institutions must register at the rate of \$250 per match. In addition, there is a program registration fee of \$60 per track, and then each program pays \$60 per applicant that matches to their program. If a program has two tracks (one CNP and

one epilepsy) and matched three fellows, their total cost would be $\$250 + (\$60 \times 2 \text{ tracks} = \$120) + (\$60 \times 3 \text{ applicants} = \$180) = \$550$ total.

2. Are the fees and registration costs annual, or are they one-time fees?

The fees are annual fees.

3. What are the fees for applicants in the match?

Applicants are charged \$85 for participating in the match. This allows them to rank up to 20 fellowship program tracks. If they want to rank over 20 fellowships, they are charged an additional fee of \$30 per rank.

4. How much does ERAS cost fellowship programs?

Fellowship programs do not pay for their use of ERAS.

5. How much does ERAS cost fellowship applicants?

The cost depends on the total number of programs that the fellow applies to. Fellowship applicants pay \$115 to apply to up to 10 programs. After that, they pay \$16 per program for each additional program above 10 (up to 20 programs), then \$18 per program for each additional program above 20 (up to 30 programs), then \$26 per program for each program above 30 programs.

In addition, for programs requiring USMLE or COMLEX-USA transcripts, applicants will pay an additional one-time \$80 fee.

G. Communication and keeping up with the match

1. How can I stay up to date about the match process?

Updates about the match, including timelines/deadlines for fellowship programs and fellowship applicants, will be posted on the American Epilepsy Society website. However, fellowship program directors should also make sure that they are on the program directors' listserv. If you would like to be added to the AES program directors' listserv, please contact Eileen Murray at emurray@aesnet.org.

H. Miscellaneous Questions

1. Is there a couple's match?

If both members of the couple are participating in the epilepsy/CNP match, the NRMP match can coordinate a couple's match. However, they cannot accommodate matches with other specialties.

2. If you have a strong internal candidate, why not them out of the match, rather than having them go through the match?

Allowing internal candidates to participate in the match is considered *trainee centered* and allows then the potential to evaluate all their available options and rank them accordingly. Additionally, for the match to be successful, as many positions as possible should be submitted.

3. Can programs agree with internal candidates that they will accept them, and sign an agreement with the fellowship applicant prior to the formal open application and interview period?

Although there is nothing that prohibits a program from offering a position to an internal candidate prior to the opening of the match, allowing prospective fellowship applicants to participate in the match gives them more flexibility and allows them to evaluate all their available options. The overall success of the match is also dependent on programs making at least 75% of fellowship positions available through the match.

4. Is there a plan to revisit how the process is going, if some program directors are unsatisfied?

The Match will be monitored closely and dialogue with program directors and AES will be ongoing. Match agreements with NRMP are signed every year, so if the decision is made to stop participating in the NRMP match, that could take place. However, once trainees become accustomed to using a match, abrupt discontinuation of the match may be a source of confusion among trainees.

5. Where can I find the most recent webinars from NRMP and ERAS?

The most recent ERAS webinar is available here:

<https://aesnet.zoom.us/rec/share/qoUzEnK7tSxyYnXaznKgtqc0NoDja1dZgGhxzYfUujKMvg1DVed7g8djSakpCnA6.5CkUIFk5YhJOUInt>

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The most recent NRMP webinar is available here:

https://aesnet.zoom.us/rec/share/7gkmfhjs8UjNCHmrbfIQV5Qros0IG-MMM2ZcX3lhkcfdeFgjm2LZv3Bfl_eIastz.6iY5o4MP6KFeDNBH

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