Breast Imaging Fellowship match program FAQ’s

Q. Will our fellowship program automatically become an ACGME fellowship programs?

A. No. The breast imaging fellowships can participate with the National Resident Matching Program because your institution’s residency program is ACGME accredited; the fellowship is not required to be ACGME accredited only affiliated with an ACGME residency program. This is their (NRMP) requirement for participation but it will not automatically make the fellowship ACGME accredited.

Q. Does the ACGME DIO control my match program?

A. The Designated Institutional Official does have oversight of the program's Match participation. The DIO is responsible for activating the institution and program in the Match, approving any program changes and are billed at the conclusion of the Match.

Q. Will there be a single application?

A. At this time the SBI has not developed a single application process or software like Eras. Our main goal is to ensure participation in the match. This will be explored late down the road.

Q. Problems in the past have included non-compliance, i.e. Cheating by telling candidates early, how will this be prevented?

A. Compliance is based on the honor system and personal integrity. When you sign a commitment to abide by the rules of the Match, the expectation is that you will. It is easy to try and go around the system and rules in place however the purpose of the match is even the playing field for our residents. There will be cases where compliance is an issue and they will be handled accordingly.

Q. How will SBI handle programs that do participate in the Match and violate the rules of offering under the table?

A. Programs not participating in the match will not be included in the SBI Breast Imaging Fellowship Directory; this has been a very useful tool for residents for many years and the upgraded search function has been enhanced to provide more information for the residents. When you sign a commitment to abide by the rules of the Match, the expectation is that you will. Compliance is based on the honor system and personal integrity – those who violate the rules will be handled accordingly.

Q. There will be programs that will take residents outside of the match, regardless of whether they participate in the match or not. How will this be handled?

A. There will be some programs that will not participate in the Match, in the beginning. We feel that this program will be very attractive for the candidates because of its benefits; leveling the playing field and an equal and fair opportunity for positions.
Q. What is the expected timeline for interviewing?

A. There is not a designated timeline for interviews. Programs will set their own schedules. The interviews will be arranged through each program.

Q. Current fellows have indicated that the timing of the match will coincide with studying for board exams. This will be added stress for candidates, how will this be managed?

A. The breast imaging fellowship match is following the Radiology match timeline. There is an opportunity in the future to change the timeline, however to initially kick off the Match we will adhere to this timeline. Unfortunately, there will always be a conflict with timing. However the SBI feels that this is an important issue that needs to be resolved and now is the time.

Q. How are in-house candidates handled? Do they still have to participate in the Match?

A. Yes. If a program is participating in the match and is interested in their own candidates, they still must include this position in the ROL (Rank Order Lists). The institution and the candidate should rank each other first. SBI is in the process of instituting an All In Policy, which states that any program that participates in the Match, must put all of their positions into the Match. In other words, if your program is participating in the Match and you have four positions, you must put all four positions into the Match.

If you have internal candidates that you want to give positions to, then do not take outside candidates for interviews unless that outside candidate has a fair and reasonable opportunity of being selected.

Q. Can we offer spots to our own residents outside of the match?

A. No. Per the match agreement and the All In Policy all positions must be included in the rank order lists and residents must match through the system, even if they are internal and you know you plan to select them. The process must remain fair and open for all.

Q. How is an internal candidate guaranteed a position?

A. There is no guarantee. The internal candidate will have to participate in the Match just like everyone else. If you are certain you want your internal candidate, rank them first in your Rank Order List and they should rank your institution first as well.

Q. Does the match program apply equally for women’s imaging and breast imaging programs? 6/6 and 9/3 programs?

A. Yes. They would be able to participate the same way that 12 month programs do but we would indicate via a track that the program is a 6/6 body imaging for example. The other fellowship director
would have to accept the candidates from the breast imaging Match. The Program Directors should work together to interview and craft the rank order list so that they have a say, but in the end, the breast imaging Program Director would be responsible for certifying the final list in the system and ensuring the applicant has a full course of training. It’s actually not that different from how some of the advanced/preliminary programs work together in the Main Residency Match.

Q. Please provide more information about a Quota change?

A. The programs’ quota is how many positions they would like to fill in the Match. That number will be pre-filled into the system each year but if a program needs to change it, then they need to submit a quota change in the system. There is a deadline to make any changes to the quota, join, or withdraw from the Match.

Q. Under what circumstance would the NRMP allow for a waiver?

A. Waivers are given under limited circumstances for the applicants due to hardships, change in specialty (this must be submitted by December 15th of the match year), and postponement of the completion of residency. For programs, waivers may be granted for loss of funding, loss of accreditation, or hardship. All waivers must be requested and granted by the NRMP only – no exceptions.

Q. The Match was tried previously and was not successful. Why does SBI think it will be successful now?

A. There is an increase interest in programs participating now mostly because the process has become so unorganized and difficult as applicants apply earlier and earlier in their residency, a lot of pressure is placed on residents to make decisions immediately, and many have not had the adequate exposure to breast imaging before making a decision about their careers. This will make the process more streamlined and efficient for the Program Directors and the residents applying. There is more support this time around from many programs and from many of the SBI Fellows.