



**AOA'S COUNCIL OF ORTHOPAEDIC RESIDENCY DIRECTORS (CORD)
RECOMMENDED GUIDELINES/BEST PRACTICES
2021 NRMP Match Supplemental Offer and Acceptance Program (SOAP)**

In this unprecedented Orthopaedic Residency Application cycle during this challenging year, there is a growing concern regarding a busier than average Supplemental Offer and Acceptance Program (SOAP) process. Anecdotal data from program directors and students suggests there may be a large subset of students participating in many more interviews than in years' past.

Acceptance of a larger than normal number of residency interviews is likely due to the decreased time and expense for travel/hotel associated with this year's virtual interview cycle. Unfortunately, this has led to a large number of students in the middle ground with 2 to 5 interviews (lower than what this group would typically have). For the most part, these are solid applicants who, in a normal interview cycle, would likely have significantly more interviews and would not be at risk of not matching during the Match process.

With that in mind, as well as to address concerns for programs that may be unmatched at the end of this cycle, AOA/CORD recommends the following best practices to handle this process more smoothly:

1. While all orthopaedic residency programs maintain access to the **ERAS Data** until Match day, each program should consider **downloading that data** onto a thumb drive, including all the applicants who applied to that program. This will allow the program to quickly access the student's data, if the program determines to interview other students during the SOAP. With the increased number of programs that may be accessing the data, please be prepared for the contingency that the ERAS website could be slower than normal.
2. A contingent of **faculty should clear their schedules** for the Monday and Tuesday of Match week (March 15 and 16) to handle phone calls and paperwork to/from programs regarding the program's match list and to manage the unmatched students' inquiries. Convene a leadership team comprised of the program director, assistant program director, program coordinator, and possibly the vice chair for education.
3. Please review the changes to the Match process available on the NRMP website: <https://www.nrmp.org/soap-fourth-round/>. Below is the major change of note:

"The Supplemental Offer and Acceptance Program (SOAP) is the process during Match Week for the Main Residency Match whereby positions left unfilled after the matching algorithm has been processed are offered to eligible, unmatched and partially matched applicants through a series of offer rounds. Since the 2017 Match, SOAP has included three offer rounds; however, because of the increasing number of unfilled positions that have remained at the end of SOAP in recent years and the uncertainty surrounding the upcoming application and Match season due to the

COVID-19 pandemic, **NRMP has decided to add an additional, fourth offer round to the SOAP process.**

“The additional SOAP offer round will begin at 12:00 p.m. ET on Thursday of Match Week and end at 2:00 p.m. ET. SOAP will now conclude at 3:00 p.m. ET with the posting of the final List of Unfilled Programs in the Registration, Ranking, and Results (R3) system. **Please be aware that all SOAP communication and policies within the Match Participation Agreement will remain in place through the conclusion of SOAP at 3:00 p.m. ET on Thursday of Match Week.**”

Additional NRMP resources for your reference:

[2021 Match Week and SOAP Schedule](#)

[2021 Revised Main Residency Match Calendar](#)

4. **PLEASE READ these similar [recommendations released by the AAMC on December 18, 2020.](#)**

If each program has an adequate leadership team with needed information immediately available, programs should be more than prepared for what could be a larger scramble during Match week. If the process continues to develop and students are mentored to release their surplus of interviews to the middle-ground students, this process could be much smoother.