

APPLICATION INFLATION AMONG IMGs IN INTERNAL MEDICINE

The Bottom Line

- International medical graduates (IMGs) who broadly apply to programs without consideration of application criteria and visa sponsorship options experience high, avoidable application costs.
- Valuable information can be gleaned from program websites (e.g. resident rosters listing medical schools), FREIDA Online, and other resources.
- Programs that have minimum application criteria, including visa sponsorship, likely exclude without further review those applications that do not meet criteria.
- Application inflation – over-applying to programs despite not meeting published program criteria for consideration – increases application waste as measured by time spent, monetary costs, and educational disruption for programs and applicants.

Application Inflation (ERAS and NRMP Data)

While the number of IM categorical positions in the Match has risen 33% between 2012 to 2016:ⁱ

- There was a 7% increase of IMGs applying to IM categorical programs from 2013-2016.ⁱⁱ
- The average number of applications for IMGs climbed each year in this same period despite a 64% increase in the percentage of IMGs that matched.ⁱⁱⁱ
- Historically, IMGs have submitted more than twice the applications to IM categorical programs than US and Canadian medical graduates (USMGs).
- The average number of applications per IM categorical program has increased by **15% overall** between 2013 and 2016 to an average over 3,000 applications per program.

Application Waste

For Applicants

Monetary –Based on 2016 ERAS fees, an applicant that submits 77 applications for IM categorical programs will incur a cost of \$1,601. One-half of IMGs apply to more than 77 programs.

Travel-related costs carry an additional financial burden.

Time – Applying to a considerable number of programs involves spending excessive time preparing application materials.

Educational – Applying and interviewing disrupt medical school education and research endeavors.

For Programs

Monetary – Application waste increases recruitment costs because programs need to interview more applicants per position.

In the 2016 Match, IM programs needed to rank more applicants per position available in the Match than ever before to fill their spots (6.7 ranked applicants per position).

Time – The increasing number of applications wastes staff and faculty resources required to evaluate and interview applicants.

Educational – Administrative and faculty time involved in reviewing applications and interview day activities takes away from opportunities to teach. Residents involved in recruitment also experience disruption in learning.

What to Do: Tips for Residency Program Directors

- Make minimum application requirements and typical characteristics of invited and matched students readily accessible and transparent on your website. Characteristics include average USMLE scores or range, research/publications, class quartile, visa sponsorship, etc.
- Include medical school of graduation in your online resident rosters to guide IMGs.
- **Complete all program data fields in the American Medical Association’s FREIDA Online**
- Do not extend more interview invitations than the number of interview positions available.
- Clearly communicate the expectation that an applicant must respond to an interview offer within two to three business days or risk the interview spot being given away.
- Do not require a supplemental application or charge any type of additional fee.
- Inform all applicants of their status (invited, on hold, rejected) once a decision is made.

What to Do: Tips for IMGs

- Research each program’s application criteria using online tools, such as AMA FREIDA Online and program websites.
- Access and use application, interview, and match data on recent graduates from your medical school to facilitate comparisons of your competitiveness for specialties and specific residency programs based on graduates with similar characteristics (grades, test scores, research, leadership, etc.)
- Do not apply to programs that you have no intention to join.
- Do not accept offers to interview at more than one program on the same day.
- Respectfully and quickly decline interview offers from a program that you do not want to attend.
- Respond (either positively or negatively) to a program’s interview offer within two to three business days.
- Provide at least one week’s notice prior to cancelling a scheduled interview to allow programs to offer this valuable opportunity to another applicant.

More resources available at www.im.org/inflation

Download fact sheet for US applicants
Tips for residency faculty and staff
Application and Match Data

Tips for medical schools
AAIM statement on application inflation
AAIM statement on supplemental applications

ⁱ NRMP data come from: <http://www.nrmp.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Main-Match-Results-and-Data-2016.pdf>

ⁱⁱ ERAS data is taken from: <https://www.aamc.org/services/eras/stats/359278/stats.html>

ⁱⁱⁱ This increase is also ascribed to the 2013 NRMP’s “All-In” policy disallowing programs to partially fill positions.