

## **FAQS FOR RISING FELLOWS AND FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMS DAY OF INTERVIEW AND POST-INTERVIEW COMMUNICATIONS**

### **Resources For Applicants**

#### **Thank You Email Expectations**

Routine thank you notes or emails are not expected. Most programs would prefer that thank you notes or emails not be sent, as these add to the myriad of communications that faculty receive on a daily basis. Learners are encouraged to ask clarifying questions about the program and should refrain from sending “thank you” notes.

#### **In-Person Second Looks**

Optional in-person visits as part of the interview process can serve as a means for applicants to best evaluate their options when selecting a program, as an institution’s customs and a city’s culture will help learners determine their fit and ability to thrive. Further, program-sponsored second looks are also a tool for institutions in smaller cities to showcase both their educational offerings and their town’s aesthetics.

AAIM encourages fellowship programs to employ a voluntary ROL lock process, which will allow programs the option of securing their ROL and then allowing interviewed applicants to visit the program, confident in the knowledge that visiting (or not) will not impact their ranking on the list. Separation of program and applicant ROL deadlines will permit time for applicants to participate in optional in-person second look visits (during the gap period between those due dates) without fear of added bias, since the applicant’s visit would not influence a program’s rank order list.

AAIM strongly recommends that programs commit to their GME office by submitting their rank lists before holding any in-person second looks. To that end, the ideal would be that programs who choose to offer open houses or second looks structure them so that applicants meet with current fellows or other faculty who were not involved in developing their program's rank list. This would set applicants' minds at ease, as well as expose them to other faculty and staff who can provide additional perspective about the program.

#### **Communicating Ranking Status**

It is not expected or necessary that applicants email fellowship programs to inform them of their ranking status (i.e., how high a fellowship program is on their rank order list). It is advisable to refrain from sending such types of communication, as this will not impact an applicant’s standing.

Conversely, if a fellowship program inquires – whether verbally or through written correspondence – how their particular program was perceived and/or ranked, applicants should decline responding and communicate the uncomfortable situation. Further, learners are

encouraged to communicate such violations to the NRMP Policy office at [policy@nrmp.org](mailto:policy@nrmp.org), 202-400-2235.

### **Sample Responses:**

*Interviewer Question:* Where did you rotate for your Sub-Is and how would you rank them against this program?

*Sample Applicant Initial Response:* I'm still in the process of gathering information about programs, so I can't answer that question right now.

*Sample Applicant Response Should Interviewer Continue to Press:* Honestly, my understanding of NRMP (or AAIM) rules is that we shouldn't be talking about this.

*Interviewer Question:* How would you rank our program compared to others? or What other programs are you ranking?

*Sample Applicant Initial Response:* I'm still in the process of gathering information about programs, so I can't answer that question right now.

*Sample Applicant Response Should Interviewer Continue to Press:* Honestly, my understanding of NRMP (or AAIM) rules is that we shouldn't be talking about this.

### **Application Updates**

ERAS application updates should not impact a learner's standing. However, it is the applicant's responsibility to inform programs of any modifications to their personal, educational, or professional experiences should it impact their ability to commence fellowship training at the appointed time.

### **Family Planning**

Applicants can voluntarily disclose any future, personal plans. However, fellowship program faculty and administrators are prohibited from inquiring about personal matters (i.e., marital status, family planning, etc.). Furthermore, programs will not factor a learner's plan to start a family when assessing applicants. At an applicant's request, programs can provide benefits and parental leave policies.

### **Sample Responses:**

*Interviewer Question:* I see that you are in a couple's match. Are you planning to have a family soon?

*Sample Applicant Initial Response:* Yes, we're in a couple's match, but our decision about whether or not to start a family won't affect my training.

*Sample Applicant Response Should Interviewer Continue to Press:* Honestly, my understanding of NRMP (or AAIM) rules is that we shouldn't be talking about this.

*Interviewer Question:* I see that you are married. Are you planning to have kids?

*Sample Applicant Initial Response:* Yes, we are thinking about kids, but I do not anticipate this will influence my performance during training.

*Sample Applicant Response Should Interviewer Continue to Press:* Honestly, my understanding of NRMP (or AAIM) rules is that we shouldn't be talking about this.

### **Communicating Interview Status**

Fellowship programs are prohibited from inquiring where else an applicant has interviewed. The [NRMP Code of Conduct for Programs](#) stipulates that "Program directors and other recruitment team members may freely express their interest in a candidate, but they must not request an applicant disclose ranking preferences, ranking intentions, or the specialty or locations of other programs to which the applicant has applied or may apply".

#### **Sample Response:**

*Interviewer Question:* Where else have you interviewed?

*Sample Applicant Response:* My understanding of NRMP (or AAIM) rules is that we shouldn't be talking about this.

### **Couples Matching**

Please share this information with the program and indicate this, as well, in the ERAS application. This should also be disclosed during the interview day.

### **Violations to the NRMP Code of Conduct**

If you suspect any violations to the NRMP Code of Conduct, please contact the NRMP Policy office at [policy@nrmp.org](mailto:policy@nrmp.org), 202-400-2235.

### **Additional Examples of Applicant Responses to Inappropriate Interview Questions**

*Interviewer Question:* What was the worst thing that happened to you during an away rotation? Where was the away rotation?

*Sample Applicant Response:* Thanks for asking. I had really positive experiences during my away rotation. OR Thanks for asking. I was really lucky to be able to do "x" during my away rotation.

*Interviewer Question:* What geographical areas are you considering?

*Sample Applicant Initial Response:* I'm keeping an open mind about locations. Ultimately, I want to find a program that matches my needs and interests, which is more important to me than just the location.

*Sample Applicant Response Should Interviewer Continue to Press:* Honestly, my understanding of NRMP (or AAIM) rules is that we shouldn't be talking about this.

*Interviewer Question:* Is there anything about your religion that would keep you from performing your clinical duties?

*Sample Applicant Initial Response:* I can't think of any. In fact, my faith makes me a better doctor.

*Sample Applicant Response Should Interviewer Continue to Press:* Honestly, my understanding of NRMP (or AAIM) rules is that we shouldn't be talking about this.