

MATCH DAY FAQ

Each year on the third Friday of March at noon Eastern Standard Time medical students across the United States [celebrate Match Day](#) and learn which medical residency program they will train at after medical school. Medical students across the country open their envelopes or receive their official [Match Day results](#) electronically.

The [Anne Burnett Marion School of Medicine at Texas Christian University](#) celebrates its students with some of the most [unique Match Day Celebrations](#) in the country. [Match Day](#) is a momentous event for medical students that determines where they will continue their medical training as [resident physicians](#).

Does Every Medical School Have Its Own Match Day Celebration/Ceremony?

While Match results are released simultaneously nationwide, most medical schools host their own Match Day ceremonies where students open envelopes revealing their residency placement. Each institution often has unique traditions for celebrating the milestone.

Who Decides Where You Match?

Residency matches are determined by a computer algorithm used by [The National Resident Matching Program \(NRMP\)](#). Both applicants and residency programs submit rank order lists based on their preferences after interviews. The algorithm then pairs applicants and programs based on these rankings.

What is the Matching Algorithm?

The NRMP uses a variation of the deferred acceptance algorithm, originally developed by economists [Lloyd Shapley](#), Ph.D. and [David Gale](#), Ph.D. This algorithm prioritizes applicant preferences while ensuring stable matches between applicants and residency programs. Shapley later received the 2012 Nobel Prize in Economics for work related to matching theory.

Are There Different Types of Matches?

There are two types of other matches: Military and Couples Matches.

Military Matches:

[Medical students who are active-duty officers in the U.S. military participate in a separate residency matching system.](#)

This process is managed through the Joint Graduate Medical Education Selection Board (JSGMESB) and includes applicants from the U.S. Army, U.S. Navy, and U.S. Air Force. Applicants can match at a military hospital, receive a civilian deferment to train at a civilian residency program, or occasionally receive civilian sponsorship for training.

Couples Matches:

The [Couples Match](#) allows two applicants to link their rank order lists in the NRMP system so that the algorithm attempts to place them in programs within the same geographic area or compatible locations. Couples submit paired rankings of programs, and the algorithm attempts to match both applicants according to those combined preferences.

Although commonly used by romantic partners, the system technically allows any two applicants to participate if they choose.

What Happens After You Match?

After Match Day, medical students typically complete their final months of medical school, graduate (usually in May or June), relocate to their residency program and start residency training in late June or early July.

What is Graduate Medical Education (GME)?

[Graduate Medical Education \(GME\)](#) refers to the training physicians receive after graduating from medical school, including residency and fellowship programs. Completion of at least some [GME](#) is required in the United States before a physician can obtain an unrestricted license to practice medicine independently.

What is a Resident?

A [resident physician](#) is a medical school graduate who is completing supervised training in a medical specialty, according to the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC). Residents practice medicine while training under licensed physicians and typically hold a restricted or training medical license depending on state regulations.

Residents are often identified by their Postgraduate Year (PGY) level:

- **PGY-1:** First year of residency training
- **PGY-2, PGY-3, etc.:** Subsequent years of specialty training

After completing residency, physicians may become attending physicians, pursue fellowship training, work as hospitalists or enter other clinical practice settings.

How Long is Residency?

According to the [AAMC](#), residency program lengths vary depending on the medical specialty. However, most programs last three to seven years.