



## Society of Breast Imaging Guide to the Breast Imaging Fellowship Match

Congratulations! You have decided to pursue a career in breast imaging. Practicing breast imaging allows you to have a true impact on the lives of the patients you serve. You will engage in meaningful patient interactions and impact patient mortality, which combine to create a very fulfilling career. Now that you have made the decision, which steps should you take to prepare for fellowship applications and interviews? Please see the timeline and Frequently Asked Questions below for guidance.

### June/July:

- Begin researching breast imaging programs. A directory of all SBI Fellowship Match Programs can be found on the SBI website [here](#).
- Refine your wants and needs by:
  - Program specifics (types of studies, volume, general call, procedures)
  - Type of practice (academics, community-based)
  - Research and teaching opportunities
  - Location
- Create a running document of breast imaging programs that interest you, requirements for each program, contact information, visa-specific details if applicable, and specific materials required for submission. Please note that some programs utilize the [SBI Universal Application](#), while others utilize an institution-specific application form. Please check each program's individual website to determine what documentation is needed to apply.

### August - October:

- Begin gathering all necessary documents (i.e. medical school transcript, USMLE score reports).
- Prepare your CV and personal statement. Suggested topics to include in your personal statement include:
  - Why you are interested in breast imaging.
  - What you have done to show your commitment through leadership activities, research, and other extracurricular activities.
  - What your career goals are in breast imaging.
  - Why the specific program interests you.
- Identify 3 faculty members who can write letters of recommendation on your behalf. Most programs require one letter to be from your residency program director. Reach out to these

faculty members and provide them with a list of instructions on how the letters of recommendation are to be submitted, your CV, and your personal statement. Oftentimes, letters can be submitted by your program coordinator on behalf of your letter writers.

Instructions for submission should include:

- Whom to address the letter to
- Method of submission (email, mail)
- Specific requirements (i.e. written on official letterhead, signed, and scanned in).
- By compiling this information for your letter writers, you can save them time and energy and help ensure that the letters are submitted in their requested forms.

#### **November:**

- Prepare and submit your applications beginning November 1.
- Send a gentle reminder to the faculty members who will be writing your letters of recommendation about any upcoming deadlines.
- Respond promptly to correspondence from programs about interview dates. When scheduling, please note that interview times are often offered in the AM or PM on the same interview date. Please be aware that according to SCARD guidelines, interviews can begin on January 8, 2024 and should be completed by March 31, 2024.
- If you need to cancel or reschedule an interview, do so professionally and as quickly as possible so the program can plan accordingly.

#### **November - December:**

- Preparing for interviews (Fall)-
  - Read [SBI Tips for Residents: What Program Directors Look for in Desirable Candidates](#).
  - Review your CV and past projects.
  - Prepare responses to commonly asked interview questions such as why you chose breast imaging and why you are interested in a particular program.
  - If given the names of interviewers ahead of time, be familiar with their background and research interests, which can often be found on departmental websites.

#### **January – March:**

- During interviews (Winter)-
  - As interviews will be virtual, double-check technical and electronic aspects prior to the actual interview.
  - Dress in professional business attire for your interview.
  - Ensure the room you are sitting in has proper lighting.
  - Sit in front of a plain background or bookshelf.
  - Write thank you notes to interviewers. Email is satisfactory.
  - Begin to formulate your rank list as you interview.
- After interviews (Spring)-
  - Finalize your rank list.
  - Register for the Match on the NRMP website ([nrmp.org](http://nrmp.org))

#### **April - May:**

- Enter your rank list on the NRMP website.
- Certify your rank list before the rank list certification deadline. If you change the order of your rank list, make sure to recertify your rank list.

**June:**

- Check your email inbox or the NRMP website at noon EST for your Match results. Congrats!

### Frequently Asked Questions

**1. Are all breast imaging fellowship programs in the NRMP Match?**

No, not all breast imaging fellowships participate in the NRMP Match Program. The majority of programs do participate and these are listed on the [SBI website](#). For those not participating in the Match, the Society of Chairs of Academic Radiology Departments (SCARD) has suggested embargo dates. Below is a table with important dates for programs participating in the Match and programs not participating in the Match.

	<b>Applications may be accepted beginning</b>	<b>Interviews may begin</b>	<b>Interviews Completed</b>	<b>Acceptance Date</b>
<b>Match Programs</b>	November 1, 2023	January 8, 2024	March 31, 2024	MATCH DAY Mid-June, 2024
<b>Non-Match Programs</b>	November 1, 2023	January 8, 2024 (No fellowships may offer acceptances before January 15, 2024)	March 31, 2024	If a program chooses not to participate in a Match for an external applicant, no offer to a candidate can be made until 12 weeks prior to the Match date.

**2. How can I find out more information regarding specific programs?**

A directory of all fellowship programs in the Match can be found on the [SBI website](#). Using this list, an internet search for the individual programs should yield the individual program’s website which will contain further details of the program. Additionally, asking colleagues, faculty or mentors about programs can also be helpful.

**3. Are there combined (e.g. breast-body) imaging fellowships? Are they part of the Match?**

Yes, some fellowships do offer a combination of different areas of radiology and are participants in the Match. All breast imaging fellowship programs are required to include at least 6 months of breast imaging training. How the remainder of the year is allocated is program specific. The majority of breast imaging fellowship programs, however, offer a full year of breast imaging.

**4. How many programs should I apply to?**

There is no magic number. There are several more breast imaging positions available than applicants. However, some programs may be more competitive than others based on location or reputation, so consider these factors when deciding how many programs to apply to.

**5. How many interviews should I go on?**

There is no magic number of how many interviews to schedule. There are several more breast imaging positions than applicants, so the odds are in your favor. As interviews will be virtual, you will save both on time and money. This may provide you the opportunity to interview with more programs. In a survey of applicants who matched in 2019, the greatest percentage of respondents interviewed at 5-10 programs.

**6. What are the fees associated with applying to breast imaging programs and the Match?**

The fees are listed on the NRMP website ([nrmp.org](http://nrmp.org)). The current applicant fee is \$70, which allows you to rank up to 20 programs. There is a late registration fee.

**7. What information should I include in my personal statement?**

A personal statement should be used to set you apart from other applicants. It should give insight into you as a person and what has driven you to be successful. It can be used to authenticate your true interests. It should highlight your attributes even if some of the content may already be included in your CV. Also, it can be used to expand upon certain activities on your CV with more detail on your role and experience.

**8. What information should I include and not include in my CV?**

A CV should include details of personal data, education, honors and awards, leadership roles, research experience, professional society memberships, pertinent employment experience, extracurricular activities including volunteer experiences, publications and presentations. Personal interests and unique skills can also be included. Include details that make you unique.

Education prior to undergraduate should be excluded. Employment experience not medically related may be omitted unless it speaks to your breadth of experience. Avoid anything that is

not true. Also, avoid including anything you would not wish to discuss in the interview. Be prepared to discuss anything on your CV at your interview.

**9. What kind of applicants are fellowship programs looking for?**

Programs are looking for applicants who are enthusiastic and motivated to learn. Strong letters of recommendation from faculty members with whom you have worked are impactful. Evidence of prior engagement and leadership on your CV is valued. In addition, communication skills assessed at the time of interview play a large role.

**10. How important is it to do research to be a competitive applicant?**

While research may be valued by some programs, authenticity is most important. Pursue what is of interest to you. That passion will come through on your CV and in your interviews.

**11. What can my mentor do to facilitate the application process?**

There are several ways that your mentor can facilitate the process for you. First, they may be able to recommend programs which would be a good fit for you. A mentor can review and provide feedback on your application/personal statement prior to submission. They can also email directors of fellowships to advocate for you. All of these can have a positive impact.

**12. My top choice program did not offer me an interview. Is there anything I can do as an applicant to improve my chances of getting an interview?**

Yes! Email both the program director and the program coordinator to let them know of your interest in the program and why you are interested. This frequently will get you an interview.

**13. How can I prepare for my fellowship interviews?**

Do research on each program prior to the interview. Be knowledgeable on what makes each program unique. Know your CV well and be prepared to discuss any details listed on your CV and in your application. If you are given the names of interviewers prior to the interview day, do a literature search and see if any of your interests overlap.

**14. What are some “smart” questions to ask the interviewers about the program at the interview?**

While the interview should feel more like a natural conversation with you giving information about yourself, you are expected to ask specific questions about the fellowship. By doing so, you are showing enthusiasm and genuine interest in the program. For sample questions, please refer to the [SBI Tips for Residents: Questions to Ask at a Fellowship Interview](#).

**15. What are good ways to assess whether I would fit in well with a program, especially considering the use of virtual interviews this year?**

This year, virtual interviews will be the best way to assess a program and your potential fit as a future fellow. In addition, reach out to current and former fellows. Both the program director and program coordinator should be able to pass on their contact information.

**16. How many programs should I rank to successfully match?**

There is no magic number of how many programs to rank. As with the Match for residency, you have the potential to be matched with any program you rank. Be sure that you would want to be a fellow at all the programs that you put on your rank list.

**17. Once I have decided on my rank list, what are the best ways to express my level of interest to my top programs? Should I email the fellowship program director to state my interest?**

Emailing the program director is the best way. It is very important to be honest in all communications. Do not tell a program you are ranking them first if you are not 100% sure.