

## **Board of Specialty Societies (BOS) / OTA Fellowship Committee**

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Note: By agreement among the BOS Fellowship Committee representatives and their affiliated fellowship programs, the following Code of Conduct applies to orthopaedic fellowships participating in the single match. The Code of Conduct may be used as a guide for those fellowships outside of the single match.

### **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMS PARTICIPATING IN THE SINGLE MATCH PROCESS**

#### **Orthopaedic Fellowship Programs:**

##### **Regarding Applications Process:**

1. Advise all applicants of receipt of their completed application by email, phone, or mail.
2. Extend interview invitations, rejections or wait list status to applicants within 30 days of the application close date.

##### **Regarding Interview Process:**

3. Provide a fair interview process for all applicants in attendance. The interview process should include an overview of the program and the opportunity to meet the faculty involved with the fellowship program and any current fellow(s).
4. Do not, prior to the match, guarantee that an applicant will match at that program.
5. Provide contact information for current and former fellows if requested.
6. Never demand, imply, or mandate a pre-interview or post-interview visits by an applicant as a necessary component in the fellowship selection and/or evaluation process.

##### **After the Interview:**

7. Do not contact applicants after the interview.
  - Please do NOT send thank you notes and emails to applicants.
8. Do not communicate with an applicant by mail, email, or phone to inquire about or influence how the applicant will rank the program.
9. Do not communicate with faculty or others at the applicant's current program regarding the applicant's rank, or to provide feedback regarding the applicant's rank at the fellowship program after the interview.

##### **Regarding the Fellowship Match Process:**

10. Once a vacant fellowship position is offered and accepted (by oral agreement, email or other written acceptance by the program and applicant, and/or a signed contract), it becomes a binding commitment between the applicant and the fellowship program, subject to any terms and conditions of the fellowship.
11. Fellowship programs may request a waiver from a match with a fellowship applicant if fulfilling the commitment would cause undue hardship or if there has been a substantial change in the fellowship program. Timelines and other process requirements for waivers, and all decisions regarding waivers, will be determined by the applicable specialty society match committee.
12. Vacant fellowship positions (i.e. positions that are unfilled after the match) may be filled by direct negotiations between the fellowship program and unmatched fellowship candidates. It is the fellowship program director's obligation to ask whether the applicant has a binding match agreement elsewhere, prior to extending an offer.

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13. If a fellowship program violates this Code of Conduct, it will cooperate with any investigation into the alleged violation. Additionally, if multiple specialty societies are impacted by the alleged violation, the specialty societies' match committees will communicate and cooperate in any investigation and will try to reach consensus on an appropriate sanction(s) for the violations. The AAOS Fellowship Committee will be informed of ongoing investigations by the specialty societies.
14. Sanctions proceedings may be filed by the applicable specialty society's(ies) committee(s), subject to the specialty society's(ies) procedures and rules.
15. Sanctions imposed against a fellowship program may include:
  - Ban from participating in the match for one (1) year;
  - Ban of any faculty of the offending fellowship program from presenting at the Orthopaedic Trauma Association annual meeting for one (1) year;
  - Ban of the fellowship program from receiving research funding from the Orthopaedic Trauma Association for one (1) year);
  - A written reprimand or other letter outlining concerns, which may be filed with the American Board of Medical Specialties, the American Board of Orthopaedic Surgery, and/or the ACGME, or the equivalent certifying body for DO candidates or any other entity or individual specialty society(ies) deemed relevant; and/or
  - Any other sanction the Orthopaedic Trauma Association deems relevant and proper.

The Orthopaedic Trauma Association is responsible for investigating and imposing any sanctions in accordance with its policies or procedures.

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**CODE OF CONDUCT FOR APPLICANTS TO ORTHOPEDIC FELLOWSHIPS  
PARTICIPATING IN THE SINGLE MATCH PROCESS**

**Regarding Application and Interview Scheduling Process:**

1. Recognizing that only a limited number of interview slots are available at any given fellowship, applicants should only accept interviews at programs in which they are very interested. Once accepted, an interview should not be cancelled unless, based on subsequent interviews, the applicant is no longer interested.
2. If an applicant needs to cancel an interview, then the applicant should notify the fellowship program as soon as possible. At least two weeks' notice of cancellation is appreciated so that the program may invite another applicant with sufficient time. Confirm that the program has received notice of your cancellation by via email or a phone call.
  - Applicants should be aware that the fellowship program, at its discretion, may communicate with the applicant's residency director if the fellowship program considers that the cancellation was given without sufficient notice or for an unacceptable reason.
3. Applicants should ask all fellowship program-related questions at the interview to avoid post-interview communication.

**After the Interview:**

4. Do not ask the program director, faculty or attendings how you will be ranked at any time or contact the fellowship program to express an interest in the program after an interview.
  - Please do NOT send thank you notes and emails to the program and/or faculty.
5. Applicant questions regarding program logistics and due diligence which come up after the completion of the interview should be directed to the program coordinator, not to the program director, faculty, or attending physicians. Prohibited topics include applicant interest in fellowship program and rank placement.
6. It is also discouraged for the applicant's residency program faculty to contact the fellowship program's faculty after the interview has occurred to express interest on behalf of the resident, or to solicit information on the applicant's rank status.

**Regarding Fellowship Match Process:**

7. If an applicant accepts a position outside of the match during the interview process, the applicant must notify the appropriate match entity (SF Match or NRMP) and the programs to which the applicant has applied of the intent to withdraw from the match. As a courtesy, advise all applied programs of your immediate plans.
8. Once a vacant fellowship position is offered and accepted (by oral agreement, email or other written acceptance by the program and applicant, and/or a signed contract), it becomes a binding commitment between the applicant and the fellowship program, subject to any terms and conditions of the fellowship.
9. Applicants may request a waiver from a match with a fellowship program if fulfilling the commitment would cause undue hardship or if there has been a substantial change in the fellowship program. Timelines and other process requirements for waivers, and all decisions regarding waivers, will be determined by the applicable specialty society match committee.
10. If an applicant violates this Code of Conduct, the applicant will cooperate with any investigation into the alleged violation. Additionally, if multiple specialty societies are impacted by the alleged violation, the specialty societies' match committees will communicate and cooperate in any

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investigation and will try to reach consensus on an appropriate sanction(s) for the violations. The AAOS Fellowship Committee will be informed of ongoing investigations by the specialty societies.

11. Sanctions proceedings may be filed by the applicable specialty society's(ies) committee(s), subject to their procedures and rules.
12. Sanctions imposed against an applicant may include:
  - A written reprimand or other letter outlining concerns, which may be filed with the applicant's residency program director, the American Board of Medical Specialties, the American Board of Orthopaedic Surgery, and/or the ACGME, or the equivalent certifying body for DO candidates or any other entity or individual specialty society(ies) deemed relevant; and/or
  - Ban from participating in the match for one (1) year;
  - Any other sanction the Orthopaedic Trauma Association deems relevant and proper.

The Orthopaedic Trauma Association is responsible for investigating and imposing any sanctions in accordance with its policies or procedures.

### **Oversight-of Fellowship Match Process**

All match related comments and complaints should be submitted to the AAOS ([bos@aaos.org](mailto:bos@aaos.org)) and the specialty society which manages the match in question.