

Note on Preference Signaling

There has been a change to the application process for all orthopaedic fellowships this year, including trauma and fracture fellowships. The AAOS Board of Specialty Societies has elected to proceed with signaling this cycle through the SF Match. This process is similar to the residency applicant process where applicants can signal a certain number of programs to indicate a specific interest in that program.

This year applicants to any orthopedic fellowship have the ability to signal up to 10 programs. There is no cost to the applicants to do so. There is no obligation of any fellowship program utilize the system, but fellowship programs will be told that you either did or did not signal them as part of your application.

- Each applicant is allotted 10 signals to use.
- This is 10 to use across all sub-specialties that they are applying to.
- The signal is used at the time of application submission.
- Programs will see that they have been signaled by an applicant, but will not know anything about the applicant's other signals.
- Programs can choose to use signaling information however they choose.

Each applicant can signal up to 10 programs regardless of specialty. That means that applicants that are only applying to trauma can signal up to 10 trauma programs. Alternatively, an applicant with a split interest may signal programs in different specialties for a total of 10 signals. For example, someone might apply broadly in trauma and arthroplasty, with 5 signals for trauma programs and 5 signals for arthroplasty programs.

Programs will only be notified if they were signaled or not. Programs will not receive data on which other programs an applicant has signaled.

This system will likely be in place over the next 2 to 3 years. We will be surveying you as applicants as well as the programs to see how it is received. Will be sharing your input with the AAOS Board of Specialty Societies as they decide if this will become a permanent feature of the fellowship match.

The goal of signaling is similar to that in the residency match. Applicants can signal programs to indicate a special interest in that program. You do not need use signals if you do not want to, but many programs may choose to utilize this to determine who to interview or how to rank applicant. **A signal indicates that you have a particular interest in your program (you are saying they are in your top 10!).**

We suggest you discuss signaling programs during their information sessions. We have asked Program Directors to address signaling specifically. Some programs may choose not to use signals as part of their selection process. That said, there is no harm in using your signals. **I would recommend you use all 10, with a focus on those programs you would really want to match at.**

We will be discussing signaling further at the program directors meeting at the annual meeting in Phoenix. I welcome your feedback. We will also be including questions about this in future post-match, fellow, and program director surveys.

I congratulate you on choosing trauma as your future career! Good luck in the upcoming match cycle.

Please feel free to reach out to me directly with any questions at mjweaver@bwh.harvard.edu.

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OTA Fellowship Committee Chair