



Standardized Acceptance Process (SAP): Frequently Asked Questions for Program Directors

What is the SAP policy?

In an effort to allow candidates and programs adequate time to interview, and to allow candidates adequate time to receive offers from all interested programs, the General Preventive Medicine/Public Health (GPM/PH) residency directors have designed a Standardized Acceptance Process (SAP) which was implemented for the first time during the 2016-2017 recruiting season. Based on experience and feedback from the first year of the program's operation, a series of changes has been made to the program. Key provisions of the 2017-2018 SAP are that:

1. By 12:00 pm Eastern Time on Wednesday, January 17, 2018, participating candidates and programs must submit rank lists to ACPM (SAP@acpm.org). These rank lists will be used to identify any mutual first-choice matches. 'First choice' candidates for a given program will be defined based on the number of slots a program is offering. For a program with three positions to offer, for example, the top three candidates will be considered first choice candidates. If any of these first choice candidates rank that program as #1, then the program will be notified by ACPM and allowed to immediately make an early offer to that/those candidate(s) between January 17 and January 19 (5:00 pm Eastern Time).
2. For all remaining open positions and candidates, the earliest date and time at which offers may be extended is the **fourth Monday of January at 12:00 pm ET**. The SAP offer date for this season is **January 22, 2018**.
3. Programs must give candidates at least six hours to accept or decline an offer, though candidates are encouraged to do so as early as possible. After six hours, the program may (but is not required to) rescind the offer.
4. When a candidate accepts an offer, all other offers to that candidate are considered rescinded.
5. When an offer is declined or rescinded, the program may immediately offer that spot to any candidate who has not yet accepted an offer from another program.
6. A candidate accepting an offer from a participating program may not accept any subsequent offers.

Which types of programs are covered under the SAP?

The SAP applies to non-military, categorical programs in General Preventive Medicine/Public Health. The term "categorical" here refers to programs that do not combine GPM/PH training with training in another specialty.

If programs are making offers directly to candidates, why are programs being asked to submit a rank list?

Based on experience, a subset of candidates typically receives offers from a substantial number of programs. By allowing some of these candidates to secure a spot in their most preferred program early, less time is wasted by other programs awaiting a negative response from these candidates. This allows for more efficient allocation of spots during the main SAP offer period (beginning January 22, 2018).

If only first-choices of candidates and programs are being ‘matched’ prior to the offer date, why are programs being asked to submit a full rank list?

There is significant interest in moving toward a true ‘match’ system administered by ACPM. The real-world data gathered from these rank lists will allow the SAP Task Force to design a match system and simulate its performance before it is actually implemented in future years. In doing so, no candidate name or contact information will be shared outside of ACPM or the SAP Task Force.

Does the SAP policy apply to off-cycle residents?

This process applies only to residency positions beginning June 1 through August 31.

How will participating programs know if a candidate has accepted an offer from another participating program?

Participating programs are to notify ACPM immediately (SAP@acpm.org) when a candidate accepts their offer for a residency position. Notification is to occur by email, and the candidate accepting the offer should be copied on the email. Once ACPM receives notification, the accepting candidate’s first, middle, and last name will be posted with the appropriate program on a web page accessible only by participating programs. Participating programs should check this web page before making offers.

What if my program is participating in the SAP and I want to make an offer to a resident who is not registered?

The candidate registration process simply allows for better communication about the SAP with candidates. You can still make an offer to unregistered candidates. When you make the offer, you should ensure that the resident is aware of the deadline for notifying the program of their decision (minimum 6 hours). If the offer is accepted, you should still notify SAP@acpm.org. If the resident is not registered, they will of course be unable to submit a rank list. Therefore, it would be advisable to make sure that any candidate your program plans to rank as a first choice is registered for the SAP.

How will I know if a candidate is registered for the SAP?

A list of registered candidates will be posted on the participant-only section of the SAP website.

Does the policy apply to candidates who only require one year of training?

Yes

What does it mean that the SAP is an ‘all-in’ policy?

All positions a program plans to offer should be offered through the SAP; they should be represented on the SAP website. Participating programs should not offer any of their available positions in a way that would violate the SAP rules.

If my program makes an offer after the week of January 22 and the offer is accepted, should we report that acceptance to SAP@acpm.org?

Yes - Candidates may still use the SAP website to determine which programs have openings. By helping keep the website up-to-date, you can avoid unnecessary inquiries from candidates when you have no available positions.

What are programs allowed to discuss with candidates?

Anything except the program’s intentions or plans regarding ranking or making offers. You should not make statements such as “We definitely plan to make you an offer”, or “You’re our top choice”.

Can candidates apply to SAP-participating and nonparticipating programs?

Yes

Will programs electing not to participate in the SAP be included in ACPM’s online listing of residency programs?

No

Under what circumstances can a program rescind an accepted offer?

A program may rescind an accepted offer a) If the candidate fails to satisfy prerequisite requirements for beginning the residency including admission to the program’s partner school of public health or completion of prerequisite clinical training, b) If the program is unable to fund salary or other expenses related to the position, or c) if the candidate is found to have interviewed with other programs after an acceptance has been registered with ACPM.

What if my program’s funding situation changes prior to the offer date?

Notify ACPM (SAP@acpm.org) of the situation, and the number of positions listed on the SAP website will be modified accordingly.

What if my program’s funding situation changes after an offer is made?

This is one of the scenarios in which programs may rescind offers, even if already accepted.

Can programs participating in SAP make early offers to military applicants with permission to pursue civilian residency training? (Recently added)

Yes. In mid-December each year, military candidates may receive permission from their respective service branches to accept a residency position in a civilian residency program ('out-placement'). These candidates must notify the military whether or not they will accept this out-placement around the end of December. Accordingly, civilian programs may offer positions to

those military candidates once they receive out-placement permission in mid-December. These candidates do not need to register for SAP.

Recommended practices for programs

- Email offers to candidates, and request read receipts.
- In addition to emailing offers, call candidates and/or send text messages.
- Once offering has begun, check the SAP website frequently to see if
 - A candidate to whom you are preparing to make an offer has already accepted an offer from another program
 - A candidate to whom you have already made an offer has accepted an offer from another program. If that is the case, your offer is considered withdrawn, and you may immediately offer the spot to another candidate.
- Require candidates accepting offers to demonstrate proof of having withdrawn from NRMP if the candidate's ERAS or other application indicates they have registered for NRMP.
- Confirm that any candidates whom you plan to rank as first choices are registered for the SAP. Otherwise, that candidate will not be submitting a rank list.

What if I still have questions about the SAP?

Check the homepage of the ACPM SAP website (www.prevmedsap.org) for the full text of the SAP policy and for updated FAQs. A town hall webinar for Preventive Medicine residency applicants held in November will review details of the SAP and offer programs a chance to pose questions about the process. The webinar will be archived at www.prevmedsap.org. Schedule details and a link for the archived webinar will be posted on the ACPM SAP website and emailed to program directors.

If you still have questions, send them to SAP@acpm.org