

Recommendations  
Voluntary Sub-specialty Fellowship Application Process for 2008-2009  
Association of Pathology Chairs

*The Council of the Association of Pathology Chairs endorses the following:*

- Standardized Application Form  
This form is the initial form to be submitted to programs. Programs can request a supplemental form. Currently, a "standardized" form is available on the CAP Residents Forum website. The goal is to have such a form available on the APC website, in the future.  
*One revision* is recommended: inclusion of an "ethical" statement above the signature line. For the time being, the ethical guidelines are as given below in these Recommendations.
- Standardized dates for applications and interviews ("months before matriculation" given in parentheses):

December 1	(19 months before)	Receipt of Standardized Form by Program
January 1	(18 months before)	Receipt of Letters of Recommendation
February 28	(16 months before)	Completion of Interviews

*At any time, programs have the option of informing a Candidate that they are NOT under further consideration. In addition, during the "interview season", programs may discuss favorable inclinations frankly with the Candidates, but formal offers and formal acceptances should await March 1.*
- Standardized date for issuance of offers  

<b>March 1</b>	<b>(16 months before)</b>	<b>Issuance of Offers</b>
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Recommended timing: 12:00:00 PM, Eastern Standard Time, is the "start" time.  
*It is our hope to have a roster available for "available programs" by that date, so that Candidates will know what programs are already filled, i.e., through "exceptions".*

The recommended sequence is:

  - Program: telephone and/or e-mail notification of proffered position.  
*Note: a "holding time for the offer" (e.g., 24 h) is not yet recommended.*  
*Individual Programs can make arrangements with Candidates for "time-for-consideration".*  
*Individual Programs can also inform other Candidates whether they are on a "wait-list".*
  - Candidate: telephone and/or e-mail acceptance/refusal of position offering.
  - Program: written pdf/fax/mail of letter of offer to verbally-accepted Candidate.  
*Letter of offer can include two statements along the lines of:*
    - *"Agreement to this offer means that you are accepting only one offer (this one)." AND*  
*"Acceptance of this offer means that you will forego all other offers."*
  - Candidate: written pdf/fax/mail acceptance of offer.
  - Program (ASAP): notify APC of filling of position (instructions to follow).
  - Candidate (ASAP): notify other programs that s/he has accepted a position elsewhere.
  - Final issuance of contract-for-employment to Candidate is as per local Institutional guidelines.

The APC Council did NOT endorse regulated oversight of "March 1" for the 2008-2009 year.

The reason is that a database for "transparency", and a mechanism for dealing with candidate prioritization is not yet available. Hence, APC Council recommends a voluntary application "season", but will leave March 1 unregulated at this time.

"Penalties" for lack of adherence to this system are not being considered; only transparency in which programs are and are not adhering to these voluntary guidelines.

*The APC Council also endorses:*

- Fellowship programs to declare their voluntary participation in this application process.
  - Participation (or not) is to be declared to candidates at the outset of the "application season".

- This declaration will include adherence to ethical principles (see below).
- The "ICPI Directory of Programs" listing renewal form for the 2011-2012 directory will include a question: "Are you a participating program in the voluntary application process?" Yes/No answers will be included in the directory listings.

*Note: this directory does not include all Fellowship programs.*

*The following are exceptions to the application deadlines:*

- Applicant is already enrolled in a training program in the same institution
- Applicant is being considered for a multi-year sequence at the same institution, in which case the "follow-on" position can be excluded from these guidelines. This includes both a "residency → fellowship" sequence and a "fellowship → fellowship" sequence. *The first position is still subject to mandatory deadlines (Residency/eRAS) or voluntary deadlines (the "1<sup>st</sup>" Fellowship).*
- Applicant is on a training cycle >1 month out of the "July 1 - June 30" cycle.
- Program starting date is > 1 month out of the "July 1 - June 30" cycle.
- The Fellowship position has not filled despite following the voluntary guidelines.
- There is joint jurisdiction over the Fellowship (although participation is still encouraged) (Dermatopathology, Forensic Pathology, Molecular Genetic Pathology)

*Tasks before the APC, with the 2009-2010 application season as the target completion date, include:*

- Building/maturing an "F-PRODS" (Fellowship Program Directors) listserv and "association"
- Building the necessary database for "transparency", and real-time tracking of available positions
- Examining legal considerations for anything more strict than this voluntary system

The vexing issue of "timing/candidate prioritization" on the March 1 "offer" date remains, and is not yet solved. For this reason the March 1, 2009 is unregulated. The fate of March 1, 2010 is undetermined.

*Ethical Principles underlying participation in this voluntary system.*

*Fellowship Programs:*

- Programs should not knowingly consider a candidate who has accepted a position elsewhere.
- Programs should not pressure a candidate to make an on-the-spot decision at time of interview.
- Only one offer should be made at one time, per available position.
- Although the "time-for-consideration-of-an-offer" is not yet decided and will not be specified for 2008-2009, the specific interaction between program and candidate should honor any arrangement for "time-for-consideration".
- The program should honor commitments to multi-year sequences.

*Candidates:*

- Candidate may accept only one offer.
- Candidate should notify other programs of non-available status.
- Acceptance of an offer is acceptance of a professional position. The assumption is therefore that:
  - The candidate should not continue shopping for a "better" fellowship position.
  - The candidate should not then seek a permanent job position, vacating the fellowship position.

The outcomes of the 2008-2009 application season will be reviewed by the APC, and modifications made as appropriate for the 2009-2010 application season.

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