

AAMC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR INVESTIGATING REPORTED VIOLATIONS OF RESIDENCY/FELLOWSHIP APPLICATION STANDARDS

PURPOSE

The Electronic Residency Application Service (ERAS®) along with FindAResident (FAR®), services of the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), strive to promote integrity in the application processes associated with entry into residency and fellowship training programs, and to encourage high standards during application submission. The policies and procedures, defined under the ERAS Integrity Promotion Program, have been developed to advance this purpose by addressing suspected dishonest application activity which may arise while using ERAS and FAR services while ensuring the rights of all concerned parties.

POLICIES

AAMC requires applicants to provide complete, accurate and current information when submitting their application as well as supporting documentation, and during all phases of the application process for residency or fellowship training programs. It is the policy of AAMC to investigate discrepancies in the application as well as other materials submitted by the applicant or on his behalf; attempts to subvert the application process; and any other irregularities which may occur in connection with application activities.

Reporting of Investigation Findings

AAMC will prepare and issue a Final report documenting the nature of a confirmed case and any attachments provided by the applicant in accordance with the procedures outlined below. *With the issuance of a Final Report, we make no judgment as to the culpability of any person with respect to matters reported and do not assess the suitability of an individual to study or practice medicine.* Rather, AAMC strives to communicate complete and accurate information to legitimately interested parties. Evaluation of this information is the responsibility of the recipient of the Report.

PROCEDURES

Investigation Proceedings

Applicants, school officials, and training programs using ERAS or FAR may report suspected violations of the ERAS Integrity Policy. Violations and all communications relevant to an investigation must be sent in writing to:

Amy Mathis, Senior Director
Electronic Residency Application Service 655 K
Street N.W. Suite 100
Washington, DC 20001
Fax: (202) 828-1129
E-mail: erasinvestigations@aamc.org

AAMC will contact the applicant and may contact other parties named in the complaint as well as others who may have knowledge relevant to the suspected violation. These parties may be asked to provide a statement providing information from their perspective relating to the activity under review. Based on the information collected during the course of the investigation, a Preliminary Report is created that outlines the findings of the investigation.

The applicant is given two weeks to review and respond to the Preliminary Report proposed for distribution to interested parties prior to issuance. Unless otherwise requested by the applicant, the Final Report will include a statement by the applicant responsive to the investigation.

Every effort is made to investigate any allegation(s) in a timely manner while ensuring accuracy and completeness of the Final Report; however, a pending investigation may interrupt the processing of application materials with questionable validity.

The Appeals Process

Prior to the issuance of a Final Report, the AAMC offers the option and reserves the right to request arbitration for the following reasons:

1. The applicant concludes that the Preliminary Report unfairly characterizes the matter under investigation;
or
2. An agreement between parties on the content and language of the report cannot be reached.

Arbitration must be requested prior to the conclusion of an investigation and the issuance of the Final Report. Arbitration shall be conducted by a neutral arbitrator selected by the American Arbitration Association in Washington, DC. The arbitrator acts solely based on a written record submitted by both parties, and no hearing or oral arguments are held. The sole issue for arbitration shall be whether the AAMC acted reasonably and in good faith in making its decision.

The arbitrator will have final authority to conclude whether: (1) the report should be distributed as written; or, (2) the report should be modified in accordance with the arbitrator's directions before distribution; or, (3) no report should be distributed. All costs associated with arbitration are borne by the party incurring them, unless otherwise determined by the arbitrator.

Final Report Recipients

The Final Report will be issued to the applicant, the applicant's designated dean's office (if applicable), and all residency or fellowship programs to which the individual applied or matriculated during the current cycle, as well as all residency or fellowship program(s) to which the applicant applies in the future.

Payment of ERAS Fees

An investigation initiated by AAMC resulting from a claim of fraudulent application activity does not relieve the applicant of the responsibility for payment of all ERAS or FAR processing fees. No refunds will be given for application materials transmitted through the ERAS or FAR system, regardless of the outcome of an investigation.

CONSEQUENCES OF A CONFIRMED VIOLATION OF THE ERAS INTEGRITY PROMOTION POLICY

When the findings of an AAMC investigation reveal that there has been a violation of the ERAS Integrity Promotion Policy by an applicant, the following shall occur:

1. The Final Report, including the applicant's response if appropriate, will be delivered to:
 - a. The ERAS contact for the applicant's medical school of graduation as well as the Dean of the applicant's medical school of graduation if the applicant is a student/graduate of a U.S. medical school.
 - b. The ERAS contact at the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG) if the applicant is a student/graduate of an international medical school.
 - c. The ERAS contact at the Canadian Resident Matching Service (CaRMS) if the applicant is a student/graduate of a Canadian medical school.
 - d. The ERAS Fellowships Documents Office (EFDO), if the applicant is a fellowship applicant.
 - e. The Program Director of the program in which the applicant is currently training, if appropriate.
 - f. The ERAS program contacts at every training program to which the applicant applies via the ERAS system.
2. Should the applicant apply to training programs using the ERAS service in the future, the Final Report will remain on file and will be distributed to the ERAS program contact at every training program to which the applicant applies in subsequent seasons.
3. The Final Report will be distributed to the FindAResident™ service, a sister program of ERAS, and a product of the AAMC, for distribution to every training program to which the applicant applies using FindAResident in the current application season, as well as any subsequent seasons.

NOTICES

Any notice or other communications required by this policy shall be in writing and shall be delivered to the physical address and/or electronic mail address provided in the ERAS application or ERAS database system. The communications shall be sent either by regular USPS mail, certified mail, return receipt requested, express mail or electronic mail (e-mail), as determined by ERAS. Notices are deemed received when indicated by appropriate tracking systems. E-mail transmission will be deemed received when sent and no return notice is received back to ERAS.