
AAMC Policies Regarding The Collection, Use, and Dissemination of Resident, Intern, Fellow, and Residency, Internship, and Fellowship Application Data:

The AAMC recognizes its responsibility to treat with care the information it collects about individuals involved in medical education, and to respect their privacy relative to sensitive data concerning them. To meet this obligation, the Association has developed policies to prevent the exposure of truly confidential personal data without the permission of the individual involved, to limit the distribution of sensitive data to those situations which require it, and to permit distribution of non-sensitive, directory information wherever a useful purpose can be served.

Through the Electronic Residency Application Service (ERAS), we facilitate the transfer of information relevant to a residency, internship, or fellowship application to the programs to which the applicant designates the information to be sent. We retain the data entered by the applicant on their ERAS application, but hold supporting documents transmitted through ERAS for one application season following the original application year only for legal purposes, after which these documents are purged.

Medical schools and the National Residency Matching Program (NRMP)[®] provide information to us that we use to develop records on the participation of individuals in graduate medical education programs. These programs verify and update this information. Such information permits us to maintain accurate records of the number of residents and fellows and their mobility and allows programs to use the information to fulfill requirements of accrediting bodies and others.

We publish information on residents, interns, fellows, and applicants to residency, internship, and fellowship programs in the form of aggregate statistics in various AAMC studies and reports. We consider certain information about residents, interns, and fellows to be directory information, for example, the names and program level of those participating in these training programs. Except for such directory information and communications with the programs as a part of the application and record-keeping processes, we do not normally share information about residency applicants, internship applicants, fellowship applicants, residents, interns, or fellows with anyone in a way that would permit individual identification.

We allow one exception to the above-stated policy: exchanges with certifying boards, licensing bodies, and other organizations involved in medical education to ensure that credentials are attributed to the proper person. To facilitate this process, we sometimes exchange information on birth date and social security number with these organizations to accompany directory information. We conduct these exchanges on a confidential basis and in a way that prevents a permanent transfer of this information to the recipient organization.

We do not sell mailing lists, email addresses, or other contact information on residency, internship or fellowship applicants, or on residents, interns, or fellows to commercial vendors. However, we may enter into arrangements with commercial and noncommercial firms to verify that someone is a resident, intern, or fellow, in order to establish eligibility for products or services that the person has sought.

We use data submitted as part of an application to a residency, internship, or fellowship, or on residents, interns, or fellows, in analyses aimed at improving the quality of our products and services. We also use these data to support worthwhile research projects that help to inform policy in medical education. We support or conduct such research only after an independent institutional review board reviews the research proposal and establishes that the rights of these individuals are safeguarded. We share data submitted by students and graduates of osteopathic medical education programs, or by any applicant to an osteopathic residency or internship program, with the American Osteopathic Association, for their own policy analyses and research on trends in osteopathic medical education.

On occasion, we agree to support researchers outside of the Association who are interested in contacting residency, internship, or fellowship applicants, residents, interns, or fellows for the purpose of surveying them on issues that are important to medical education. We do this infrequently, and only by notifying the individual by email of the opportunities to participate in such research. We do not provide the email addresses of residency or fellowship applicants, residents, or fellows directly to these researchers.

If you have any questions about these policies or procedures, please contact us at privacy@aamc.org.