

# Top 6 Red Flags in Your Recruitment Process

(And What to Do About Them)



Recruitment is one of the most important functions of your program — yet many programs unintentionally make the process harder than it has to be. Here are six common red flags we see, why they matter, and what you can do instead.

<p><b>1. You Don't Know What Kind of Graduate You Want</b></p> <p><b>Why It's a Problem:</b> Without clarity on the qualities your program is trying to cultivate, you risk chasing “strong” applicants who don't align with your mission.</p> <p><b>What to Do:</b> Define your ideal graduate using your program aims. Build interview questions and evaluation rubrics around those qualities.</p>	<p><b>2. Technology Without Insight</b></p> <p><b>Why It's a Problem:</b> ERAS and Thalamus make logistics easier, but programs often miss the chance to analyze meaningful data (acceptance rates, candidate drop-offs, alignment with aims).</p> <p><b>What to Do:</b> Track and review recruitment metrics annually. Use data to refine your process, not just to run it.</p>
<p><b>3. Your Program Story Isn't Clear</b></p> <p><b>Why It's a Problem:</b> If applicants hear different messages from the PD, coordinator, and faculty, they'll lose trust.</p> <p><b>What to Do:</b> Align your leadership team on a shared narrative. Every contact should reinforce your program's mission, priorities, and culture.</p>	<p><b>4. Engagement Begins on Interview Day</b></p> <p><b>Why It's a Problem:</b> Programs that wait until the interview to connect with applicants miss opportunities to stand out. ERAS restricts post-interview contact, so the pre-interview period is your best chance to build connection.</p> <p><b>What to Do:</b> Offer virtual open houses, resident Q&amp;A panels, or pre-recorded program welcome sessions so candidates arrive informed and connected.</p>
<p><b>5. Aims Written, But Not Lived</b></p> <p><b>Why It's a Problem:</b> Many programs draft aims for compliance, then shelve them. If your aims don't drive recruitment, they're a missed opportunity.</p> <p><b>What to Do:</b> Revisit aims before recruitment season. Use them to frame your program description, interview questions, and applicant evaluation criteria.</p>	<p><b>6. Interviews Without Structure</b></p> <p><b>Why It's a Problem:</b> Unstructured interviews are unreliable and often biased. Faculty “gut feelings” can derail fair evaluation.</p> <p><b>What to Do:</b> Use structured interviews with behavioral-based questions. Train interviewers to probe consistently and record data systematically.</p>

## Final Takeaway

If two or more of these red flags sound familiar, your recruitment process may not be serving your program — or your applicants.

Addressing these areas doesn't just improve recruitment outcomes; it strengthens culture, faculty alignment, and resident satisfaction.

Contact Partners® today to learn how we help programs design recruitment strategies that are mission-driven, data-informed, and sustainable.