

SF Match

2009-2010 CAS Instruction Manual

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Introduction To CAS

OVERALL CAS SERVICE

The Central Application Service (CAS) is a service provided through the San Francisco Matching Program (SFMatch) that distributes applications to training programs. Applicants pay an additional fee for this service. The use of CAS is mandatory and it assures that applications are both uniform, complete and distributed in an orderly fashion.

We provide free storage for original application documents for one year only. **Paper documents will be destroyed after one year.** Applicants are strongly encouraged to fill out a “Return of CAS Document Form” after the match has concluded for the return of original documents. There is a \$20 fee for this service (letters of reference are only returned if access is retained).

CAS is only a distribution service. We do not evaluate your credentials nor do we determine your eligibility to apply to any of the participating programs.

THE APPLICANT’S RESPONSIBILITY

The CAS procedure makes you (the applicant) responsible for assembling ALL support documents. You are **REQUIRED** to submit the following documents to consider your application COMPLETE:

- Completed and signed CAS Application Forms
- CAS Distribution List and Payment
- College Transcript(s)
- Medical School Transcript(s)
- USMLE Scores or equivalent score reports
- ECFMG Certificate (applicable to International Graduates)
- Three (3) letters of reference
- Dean’s letter (applicable to Graduates)

Applicants are strongly advised to include the following **OPTIONAL** documents (if applicable):

- AOA Election letter (*Only applicable to US applicants*)
- Foreign Specialty Program Certificate

Once the necessary documents have been gathered (except the Dean’s Letter if you are currently a US Senior), you will send all documents to us in **ONE PACKAGE**. We then process and distribute your application to the programs listed on your CAS Distribution List. You must mail all your documents in **ONE PACKAGE** to:

**CAS – SF Match
655 Beach Street
San Francisco, CA 94109**

PROCESSING TIME OF CAS

The CAS processing and distribution of your application takes time. At peak processing times, it takes up to three (3) weeks for your documents to be processed and shipped to the programs. COMPLETE applications will be processed and distributed in the order in which they are received. INCOMPLETE applications will be held until they are completed.

CAS TARGET DATES

CAS does not set deadlines. We will process and distribute your application up until the match deadline. We do suggest, however, that you submit your application to our office before the following TARGET dates:

- ◆ CAS for Child Neurology Residency → Wed., August 28, 2009
- ◆ CAS for Ophthalmology Residency → Wed., September 4, 2009

Again, these TARGET dates are NOT DEADLINES. Submitting your CAS application to our office by the suggested target date does not guarantee that you will meet all of the individual deadlines set by each of the programs. We recommend the target date so that you may easily assess when to submit your application in order to meet **MOST** of the program's deadlines.

PROGRAMS DEADLINE DATES

It is your responsibility to contact each program for individual deadline dates and to have your application submitted to us three (3) weeks prior to whichever deadline you would like to meet. CAS does not stop processing applications once a program's deadline has passed; we will distribute your file to whichever programs you request no matter how late it arrives. It is important to note, however, that applications that arrive to the programs after their deadline may not receive the same attention from the programs' review committees as applications received on time. Some programs choose to list their deadlines in the online directory listing. If a program's deadline is not listed, please call the program directly.

STEP I: Gathering Support Documents

IMGs sections are for International Medical Graduates.

COLLEGE TRANSCRIPTS

You will need to provide us with your college transcript(s). The transcripts may be official copies OR student issued copies of the official transcript.

If you attended more than one college, please include the additional transcripts if the courses you have taken counted towards your undergrad degree and if they do not appear on your main transcript.

IMGs → We understand that many international graduates did not attend college prior to medical school. If this is your situation, write a brief explanation note on an **8 ½” x 11”** paper stating this. DO NOT submit high school transcripts as they will not be distributed.

MEDICAL SCHOOL TRANSCRIPTS

Eventually you will need to provide us with an official copy of your most current medical school transcript. Have the transcript sent directly to you if possible. We do accept student issued transcripts with the initial application. If you submit an unofficial copy of your transcript, an official copy should be included with the Dean’s letter, expected after November 1st.

U.S. Seniors: Please note that programs are aware that your medical school transcripts may be missing grades. You must send your most recent transcript with your CAS application package. Updated medical transcripts can be distributed later as a supplemental document.

IMGs → You do not need to provide the original transcript if doing so is too difficult. A legible **8 ½” x 11”** photocopy is acceptable. All transcripts must be submitted in English, translated copies must be professionally notarized. DO NOT send us copies of your non-translated transcript, as they cannot be distributed. If your school does not provide transcripts (list of all courses taken, grades and dates), you may submit a copy of your translated diploma.

USMLE SCORES & PERFORMANCE PROFILE

You will need to provide us with your USMLE Step I Score Report or transcript. (You should also include Step 2 and Step 3 Score Reports/Transcripts if they have been taken and passed). If available, please include the performance profiles page listed on the back of the original score reports. A clear photocopy of your original student score report with the performance profile is acceptable, but the original is preferred. If your original report is not available you will need to request a transcript from the USMLE (subsequent official transcript will not include the performance profiles and they are not required by CAS). If you did not take the USMLE, but previously passed an equivalent exam (i.e. NBME, Flex or VQE), include copies of these instead.

LETTERS OF REFERENCE

You must submit three (3) ORIGINAL letters of reference for review by the programs. **No more, No less.** It is recommended that residency applicants provide one letter from a core rotation. If you have requested a confidential letter, please indicate so on your CAS application and ask the author to return the letter to you in a sealed envelope. **DO NOT** open the sealed envelopes. Non-confidential letters can be included in your application open faced.

IMGs → We understand that, at times, it is very difficult to obtain original letters of reference from overseas. For this reason, we do accept photocopies of the original letters. Photocopied letters will be marked as “copy” and may need to be explained at an interview. All letters must be submitted in English on **8 ½” x 11”** paper. Translated copies must be professionally notarized.

NOTE: Letter writers can address their letters to either “Dear Program Director” or “Dear Review Committee”.

DEAN'S LETTER/ CHAIR'S LETTER

U.S. Graduates should ask their Dean's office to send YOU a signed, sealed copy of your letter to be included with your initial CAS package. If you used your own copy of your medical school transcript with your initial application, also ask to have an official copy of the transcript included with the Dean's letter. CAS is aware that some Dean's office wait until November 1st to release Dean's letters even if you are a graduate. If this is your case, just follow the same instructions for U.S. Seniors below.

U.S. Seniors: Your Dean's Office makes Dean's Letters available to training programs on November 1st. CAS will make arrangements with your Dean's office to distribute your letter. You must notify your Dean that you are applying to the early. You are at liberty to request separate distribution of your Dean's Letter by your Dean's Office but training programs expect to receive Dean's letters from CAS.

IMGs → Most international graduates are unable to obtain a Dean's letter. In this case, submit an equivalent letter if at all possible. Otherwise, we will accept a fourth letter of recommendation in place of the Dean's letter (e.g. from the Director of a pre-residency or foreign specialty program).

ECFMG CERTIFICATE (applicable to IMGs only)

International Medical Graduates must have a valid ECFMG Certificate prior to starting any medical residency training in the U.S. If your ECFMG certificate is not available at the time when you submit your initial CAS application packet, you **MUST** include an explanation note instead. Address the explanation letter to "Dear Program Director" and explain the missing document. It is recommended that you list the exams you have taken, the dates of scheduled exams and when you expect to receive your certificate.

EXTRA SUPPORT DOCUMENTS

Only the following additional documents are accepted:

- ECFMG
- Additional College Transcript
- Additional Medical School Transcript
- AOA Election Letter
- Prior Residency Completion Certificate
- Foreign Specialty Program Certificate

OTHER EXTRA DOCUMENTS

If a particular program requests that you provide them with an additional document, mail it directly to the program.

APPLICANT EVALUATION STATUS LETTER (CALIFORNIA)

Programs in California require that International Medical Graduates submit an Applicant Evaluation Status Letter issued by the Medical Board of California. Please note that submission

of this letter is only applicable to programs in California and is not distributed by CAS. Applicants must send non-CAS documents directly to the programs.

EXAMPLE OF DOCUMENTS NOT DISTRIBUTED BY CAS

These are other examples of documents not distributed by CAS:

- CVs and Resumes
- Identification Cards/Documents (Green Card, Marriage Certificate, Driver's Licenses)
- High School Diplomas
- Photos
- Additional letters of reference

NOTE: Do not add pages to your 6-page CAS form as they will not be distributed.

MISSING DOCUMENTS

If you are unable to provide a document, state the reason on a separate page. Without this note, your file is **INCOMPLETE** and will **NOT BE DISTRIBUTED**. This statement of explanation will be included in the distribution of your file to the training programs. There should be a separate explanation note for each missing document. Example: If your USMLE score report is not available when you submit your application, address a note to "Dear Program Director" and explain why the document is not being included and when the program can expect to receive it. Once you receive the document, forward it to CAS to be distributed as a supplemental document to all programs listed on your CAS distribution list.

All materials received by CAS are processed in the order in which they are received. Processing of a supplemental document may take up to three weeks to be processed. We strongly encourage you to submit a **COMPLETE** application to be processed to avoid delays. Some programs may not be able to review your file until all documents are received.

STEP II: Completing the 6-page CAS Application

The CAS form is available online in editable PDF format. You must have Adobe Reader 7.0 or higher or Adobe Acrobat installed on your computer. To download the latest version of Adobe Reader for free, please visit the Adobe website at www.adobe.com.

NOTE: The 6-page CAS form has added Adobe extensions which will allow you to download and save the form to your computer. You do not have to be online and fill out the form at once. Save the form to your computer and be sure to check your data prior to sending your application. No substitutions/corrections can be made once your application has been scanned and/or distributed to the programs. Mistakes on your application must be communicated to the programs directly. **DO NOT** add pages to your CAS application as they will not be distributed.

STEP III: Selecting your programs CAS Distribution Forms and Fees

With your completed application materials, you must submit your online distribution list and the appropriate distribution fee. Distribution fees increase progressively as follows:

# of Distributions	Fees
1-10	\$60 total
10-20	\$10 per program
20-30	\$15 per program
30-40	\$20 per program
41+	\$35 per program

You may download the CAS Distribution form at www.sfmatch.org. Select your specialty from the Home Page. The Distribution List can be found under the “Central Application” and “Shortcut to All Forms” buttons.

ADDING PROGRAMS

If you wish to apply to more programs after your initial CAS distribution, you must indicate on the Distribution Form that you have previously submitted a distribution list. Check the box located on the top-right hand corner of the form below the email field. Supplemental Distribution fee is \$35 per program. It is therefore to your advantage not to submit your list in stages.

NOTE: Our system is set up to automatically reject duplicate Initial Distribution Lists. When submitting your Supplemental Distribution Request, be sure to check the box.

The image shows a screenshot of the SF Match CAS Distribution List form. At the top left is the SF Match logo with the tagline 'Residency and Fellowship Matching Services'. The title 'CAS Distribution List' is centered. Below the title is an 'Email:' field. A red arrow points to a checkbox located below the email field, with the text 'Please check box if you have previously submitted a distribution list' to its left. Below the checkbox are fields for 'Name:' and 'Match Registration Number: ()', with a note '(5 digits received in email confirmation letter)' under the registration number field. At the bottom, the text 'APPLICATION FEE' is visible, followed by a partially obscured line of text.

FILLING OUT THE CAS DISTRIBUTION LIST

You must have Adobe Reader or Adobe Acrobat 7.0 or higher to download the CAS distribution form. Follow the instructions provided on the website and form and submit your choices online.

PAYING YOUR CAS DISTRIBUTION FEES

Within 2 business days after you submit your CAS Distribution list online, you will receive email confirmation listing your choices. Links to payment options will be available on the email. Fees may be paid by check (personal, cashier's check or money order) or by Visa or MasterCard. Checks must be mailed separately accompanied by check coupon to:

**SF Match
c/o Wells Fargo Lockbox Services
SF Matching Program Dept #34059
3440 Walnut Ave., Bldg A, 2nd Floor
Fremont, CA 94538**

Please make checks payable to: *_Specialty_ Match.*

STEP IV: Mailing Your Complete CAS Application Package

**CAS – SF Match
655 Beach Street
San Francisco, CA 94109**

Please allow 3 business days after arrival of your application before calling to confirm receipt.

RETURNING APPLICANTS

We have digital copies of files submitted to us since Fall 2001. If you are a returning applicant, you can choose to reuse some of the documents already available at CAS. You at least fill a new 6-page CAS application form. Include any new documents along with a letter to CAS listing the all documents from your previous CAS file that you wish to use. You must also submit a new distribution list and payment.

CONFIRMING RECEIPT OF YOUR CAS APPLICATION PACKAGE

You may include a self-addressed stamped postcard/envelope along with your application materials. We will return the postcard to you as soon as we open your CAS package so as to confirm receipt of your application. If you wish to call our office to confirm receipt of your documents, please allow 2 business days after we should have received them.

CONTACT CAS

Email: help@sfnmatch.org

Phone: 415.447.0350

Fax: 415.561.8535

CAS CHECKLIST

Before mailing your CAS package, be sure that you have included all the following REQUIRED items:

- Completed and signed 6-page CAS Application Forms
- College Transcript(s)
- Medical School Transcript(s)
- USMLE Scores or equivalent score reports
- Three (3) letters of reference
- Dean's letter (if already graduated)
- ECFMG (applicable to International Graduates)

! Don't forget to submit your program choices using the CAS Distribution Forms available at www.sfnmatch.org.

If you are missing documents and would like your application to be distributed to programs as is, be sure to write an explanation note for each missing document, otherwise your application will be placed on hold until your missing document arrives.