

SF MATCH

Ophthalmology Residency Central Application Service (CAS) Instruction Manual

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OVERVIEW

The Central Application Service (CAS) is a service provided through the SF Match office that distributes applications to training programs. The use of CAS is mandatory, and assures that applications are uniform, complete, and distributed in an orderly fashion.

Please note CAS is a distribution service. We do not evaluate your credentials, nor do we determine an applicant's eligibility to apply to any of the participating programs.

THE APPLICANT'S RESPONSIBILITY

The CAS requires you to manage your online account information and be responsible for assembling and mailing all support documents. You are required to submit the following documents to consider your application complete:

- CAS Distribution List (On-line Submission)
- Completed CAS Application Form (On-line Submission)
- 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/MSPE (applicable to U.S. 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 (If you are currently a US Senior Dean's/MSPE Letter can be submitted when available), send all documents to our office in **ONE PACKAGE**. With the exception of forms submitted online, you must mail all documents in **ONE PACKAGE** to our office.

MAILING YOUR COMPLETE CAS PACKAGE

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

Note: To ensure delivery of your CAS application materials, we suggest using a form of mail that you can track (FedEx, UPS, etc.).

PROCESSING TIME

Distribution of your complete application may take up to 2 weeks from the time your application is deemed complete. **COMPLETE** applications will be processed and distributed in the order in which they are received. **INCOMPLETE** applications are held until all required documents have been received.

CAS TARGET DATES

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

Wednesday, September 3, 2014

The target date is not a deadline. 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 include the target date in order for you to assess when to submit your application in order to meet **MOST** of the programs' deadlines.

SELECTING YOUR PROGRAMS

The program directory contains a list of participating programs in the match. While viewing the program directory, select the check box in the upper left hand corner of each program that is of interest. After choosing the program(s), click the "Add to programs" button, which will advance you to a page with the selected programs. A confirmation page will appear and allow you to continue with payment.

INITIAL CAS DISTRIBUTION LIST FEES

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

<u>Number Of Distributions</u>	<u>Fees</u>
1-10	\$60
11-20	\$10 per program
21-30	\$15 per program
31-40	\$20 per program
41+	\$35 per program

ADDING MORE PROGRAMS

You may apply to additional programs after your initial CAS distribution list has been submitted. The supplemental distribution fee is \$35 per program; **therefore, it is to your advantage to submit your entire list once rather than adding programs later.**

PAYING YOUR CAS DISTRIBUTION FEES

Distribution fees may be paid only by a Visa or a MasterCard.

PROGRAM DEADLINES

Most training program deadlines are listed in the program directory. If a program's deadline is unlisted, please contact the program directly. For best results, submit the complete CAS application three (3) weeks prior to the earliest deadline you would like to meet. CAS does not stop processing applications because a program's deadline has passed. A complete CAS application will be distributed to all programs you request no matter how late it arrives (prior to rank list deadline). However, it is important to note that applications that arrive to the programs after their deadline may not receive the same priority from the programs' review committees as applications received on time.

UPDATE MY PROFILE AND ACADEMIC INFORMATION

Your online account has two boxes near the top of the page "My Profile" and "Academic Information". Be certain to fill out the details relating as training programs are able run searches based on your information. Update your account when new information becomes available.

CAS APPLICATION FORM

The CAS form is available online in your SF Match account profile. Go to the "Application" tab and click the "View/Edit" button in the "CAS Application Form" box. You are able to save the CAS application form while working on it. Prior to submitting the application form, be certain to check your data by selecting the "Preview" button. When the form has been completed, select the "Submit" button (located on the Research & Activities Tab).

After the form has been submitted, it will be converted to PDF format so programs can view the application in a standardized format. Because the data is transferred to PDF, there is also a line limitation. No substitutions/corrections can be made once your application has been distributed to programs. Please use the "Preview" button to ensure no text is omitted and edit appropriately.

You must submit the CAS application form before we can continue processing your supporting documents that you have mailed to the SF Match office.

Any mistakes you discover on your application after distribution has occurred must be communicated to programs directly.

Note: The CAS Application form is supported on Internet Explorer (IE9) and up. It is strongly recommended that you use a supported browser to avoid encountering access and display issues.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS DESCRIPTION:

COLLEGE TRANSCRIPTS

Please provide your college transcript(s). The transcripts may be official copies OR student issued copies of the official transcript.

NOTE: If you attended more than one college, you may include additional transcripts if the courses taken counted towards the undergraduate degree and the information does not appear on the main transcript.

International Medical Graduates (IMGs)

IMGs: It is understood that many international graduates did not attend college prior to medical school. If this is the case, 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

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 October 1st.

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

IMGs: A legible 8 ½" x 11" photocopy of the medical school transcript is acceptable. All transcripts must be submitted in English, translated copies must be professionally notarized. **DO NOT** submit copies of the 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

Submit the USMLE Step I score report or transcript (Also include Step 2 and Step 3 Score Reports/Transcripts if they have been taken and passed). If available, please include the performance profile page listed on the back of the original score reports. A clear photocopy of the original student score report with the performance profile is acceptable. If you did not take the USMLE, but previously passed an equivalent exam (i.e. COMLEX, Flex or VQE), submit those score reports.

LETTERS OF REFERENCE

Three (3) ORIGINAL letters of reference are required 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 form 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: It is understood 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/MSPE LETTER

U.S. Graduates should request the medical school Dean’s office to send YOU a signed, sealed copy of your Dean’s/MSPE letter to be included with your initial CAS package. If you used a student issued 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/MSPE letter. CAS is aware that some Dean’s offices wait until October 1st to release Dean’s/MSPE letters even if you are a graduate. If this is the case, just follow the same instructions for U.S. Seniors below.

U.S. Seniors: Medical school Dean’s Offices release Dean’s/MSPE letters on October 1st. CAS will make arrangements with your Dean’s office to receive your Dean’s/MSPE letter. To ensure the Dean’s/MSPE letter is received by our office, we recommend you to notify the Dean’s office of your participation in the Ophthalmology Residency Match. You are at liberty to request separate distribution of your Dean’s/MSPE letter by your Dean’s Office but training programs expect to receive Dean’s letters from CAS.

IMGs: Many 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 (only applicable to IMGs)

International Medical Graduates must have a valid ECFMG Certificate prior to starting any medical residency training in the U.S. If the ECFMG certificate is not available at the time you submit the 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

PHOTOS

You have the ability to upload a photo of yourself in our system. In the "My Profile" box in your account click the "Edit Profile Picture" link. Then click "Choose File" and select your photo. The photo will be displayed once it has been uploaded. A program will only have access to your photo after you have been invited to an interview.

OTHER DOCUMENTS

If a particular program requests that you provide them with an additional document, send 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.

DOCUMENTS NOT DISTRIBUTED BY CAS

These are examples of documents not distributed by CAS:

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

MISSING DOCUMENTS

If you are unable to provide a document, write a note stating the reason on a separate page. Without this note, your file is **INCOMPLETE** and **WILL NOT BE DISTRIBUTED**. This letter of explanation will be included in the page file available to the training programs. There should be a separate explanation note for each missing document. For 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 the results. 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. A supplemental document may take up to three weeks to be processed. We strongly encourage you to submit a **COMPLETE** application to avoid delays. Some programs may choose not to review applications until all documents are received despite included letters of explanation.

RETURNING APPLICANTS

We have digital records of files submitted to our office since Fall 2001. If you are a returning applicant, you can choose to re-use some of the documents already available at CAS. Include any new documents along with a letter to CAS listing the specific documents from your previous CAS file that you wish to use.

CONFIRMING RECEIPT OF YOUR CAS APPLICATION PACKAGE

Please log into your SF Match online profile to view the status of your documents in the “Application” tab. The status of each document will be marked with a date in the “Received” column. Please allow five (5) business days from the time the application materials are received by our office, to show as “Received” in your profile. If your application materials have not been logged into the system after five (5) business days, feel free to contact our office to check the status of your documents.

CONFIRMING DISTRIBUTION OF YOUR CAS APPLICATION

A confirmation E-mail is sent to you when your CAS application has been distributed to the programs on your distribution list. You may also view the status of your application in your SF Match profile online. In the “Application” Tab, under the status column, “Distributed” will appear next to each document that programs have access to.

CONTACT CAS

Email: help@sfnmatch.org

Phone: 415.447.0350

Fax: 415.561.8535

COMPLETE CAS APPLICATION CHECKLIST

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

- CAS Distribution List (On-line Submission)
- Completed CAS application form (On-line Submission)
- 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)

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.