

SF Match

2011-2012 CAS Instruction Manual

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Overview

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 assures that applications are uniform, complete, and distributed in an orderly fashion.

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

- Completed CAS Application Form (**On-line Submission**)
- CAS Distribution List and Payment (**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 (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 (Dean's/MSPE Letter can be submitted when available, if you are currently a US Senior), send all documents to us in **ONE PACKAGE**. We then process and distribute your application to the programs listed on your CAS Distribution List. With the exception of forms submitted online, you must mail all documents in **ONE PACKAGE** to:

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

PROCESSING TIME

During peak processing times, it takes up to three (3) weeks for your documents to be processed and distributed to the programs. **COMPLETE** applications will be processed and distributed in the order in which they are received. **INCOMPLETE** applications will be 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:

◆ CAS for Ophthalmology Residency → **Thursday, September 1, 2011**

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 program deadlines.

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). It is important to note, however, 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.

STEP I: Gathering Support Documents

IMGs sections are for International Medical Graduates.

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.

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 after November 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 November 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 November 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

OTHER EXTRA 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.

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

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. 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.

STEP II: Completing the CAS Application form

The CAS form is available online in your SF Match account profile. Click the "CAS Application" link to find the form. The CAS application form is savable. Be certain to check your data prior to submitting the application form by selecting the "Preview" button. When the form has been completed, select the "Submit" button. Please note: After the form has been submitted, it will be converted to PDF format so programs can view the application in a standardized format. We include a recommended character limit listed next to each box. 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, or edit appropriately. You must communicate any mistakes you discover on your application after distribution to programs directly.

STEP III: Selecting your programs

Initial CAS Distribution List 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

The program directory contains a list of participating programs in the match. There is a two-step process to apply to programs. 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 my programs” button, which will advance your browser to a page with the selected programs. From this list, choose programs you would like to apply to by selecting the check box in the “apply” column next to each program and click the “apply to programs” button. A confirmation page will appear and allow you to continue with payment.

ADDING PROGRAMS

You may apply to additional programs after your initial CAS distribution list has been submitted. 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

Fees may be paid by credit card (Visa or MasterCard) or check (personal, cashier’s check or money order). 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: *_[Insert name of Specialty]_ Match.*

Please note: Credit card payments are applied immediately upon verification. Check payments take approximately five (5) business days to post to your account profile once received from our Wells Fargo lockbox.

STEP IV: Mailing Your Complete CAS Application 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.).

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.

RETURN OF ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS

We provide free storage for original application documents for one year. **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 not waived).

CONFIRMING RECEIPT OF YOUR CAS APPLICATION PACKAGE

Please log into your SF Match online profile to view the status of your documents. The status of each document will be marked as “received” in our system once we processed your materials. Please allow five (5) business days since the application materials were received by our office to be reflected as “received” in the system. 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. If **ALL** required documents have the “uploaded” status marked, the documents are available to the programs on your distribution list.

CONTACT CAS

Email: help@sfmatch.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:

- 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 CAS application form and distribution list online.

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.