

SF Match 2008-2009

Spine Surgery Fellowship

Central Application Service (CAS) Instruction Manual

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Introduction to CAS

SERVICE DESCRIPTION

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

The CAS form is available online for download in PDF format. You must have the free Adobe Reader version 7.0 or higher to download PDF documents. Visit the Adobe website at www.adobe.com to download the Adobe Reader for free. Adobe Reader allows users to edit the form while online. Users with full Adobe Acrobat will be able to save and edit the form offline.

Please check your data prior to sending your application. Substitutions/corrections can not 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.

CAS provides free storage for original application documents for one year only. **Paper documents will be destroyed after one year.** Digital copies will be stored in pdf format for 3 years. Applicants are strongly encouraged to fill out a “Return of CAS Document Form” - accessed by clicking “Shortcut to all Forms” button on the left navigation bar. There is a \$20 fee for this service (letters of reference are only returned if access is retained).

CAS is limited to distribution services. We do not evaluate your credentials nor do we determine eligibility to apply to participating programs.

The use of CAS is mandatory when applying for the Spine Surgery Fellowship Match.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

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 & Payment
- Medical School Transcript(s)
- USMLE Scores or equivalent score reports
- ECFMG Certificate (applicable to International Graduates)
- Three (3) letters of reference
- Dean’s Letters (IMGs can submit a 4th letter in place of Dean’s Letter).
- Copies of Medical License(s).
- Updated C.V.

Once the necessary documents have been assembled 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:

SF MATCH – CAS for SPINE
655 Beach Street, San Francisco, CA 94109

PROCESSING AND DISTRIBUTION OF APPLICATIONS

Processing and distribution of applications containing all required materials is generally completed within 14 - 21 days. COMPLETE APPLICATIONS (containing all required materials) containing all required materials will be processed and distributed in the order in which they are received. INCOMPLETE applications will be held until all required materials are received.

Applications will receive an email confirmation when all required materials have been received.

CAS DISTRIBUTION LIST

All applicants must complete a **Distribution List** specifying the programs to receive their application and materials. The form is available at www.sfmitch.org.

Applicants can use Adobe Reader to fill out the form and submit it electronically. Your application will be distributed simultaneously to the programs you select. Use your login information (the one sent with your Match Registration Confirmation) to access the online directory of available programs. Please do not use any materials that are not published by our office to fill out our forms.

Applicants will receive an email confirmation including a list of programs within 2 business days after distribution choices are submitted online. CAS distribution fees can be paid by check (personal, money order or cashier's check) or by Visa or MasterCard. Please wait for your CAS distribution confirmation email to access the links to payment options.

If you are paying your Distribution fees by check, please make check payable to **SPINE SURGERY FELLOWSHIP MATCH** and mail it with check coupon (link to coupon will be provided on your CAS Distribution confirmation email) to:

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

CAS FEES

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

NOTE: Applications will not be distributed until all required materials have been received. The SF Match system is set up to only accept one Initial Distribution List per applicant. Subsequent Initial Distribution Lists are automatically rejected by our system.

Supplemental Distributions

Applicants who desire to distribute applications to additional programs after submission of an initial distribution list should use the same form and check the box that indicates you have previously submitted a distribution list. This box is located at the top-right hand corner of the Distribution form. The fee for supplemental distribution is \$35 per program.

CAS TARGET DATES AND DEADLINES

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 date:

◆ Central Application for Spine Surgery → Mon., September 17, 2008

Please note that this TARGET date is NOT A DEADLINE.

It is the applicant's responsibility to contact each program for individual deadline dates and to submit materials to CAS at least 2 weeks prior to anticipated deadlines. 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.

DESCRIPTION OF REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

IMGs sections are for International Medical Graduates.

MEDICAL SCHOOL TRANSCRIPTS

Provide an official or a copy of your Medical School Transcript. If you have attended more than one medical school, include the additional transcripts with your application.

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, Step 2 and Step 3 Score Reports/Transcripts. If available, please include the performance profiles page listed on the back of the original score reports. A clear photocopy (8 ½" x 11") of your original student score report with the performance profile is acceptable. 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 **Residency Training Program Director**. 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 **A4 or 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

Ask your Dean’s office to send YOU a signed, sealed copy of your letter to be included with your initial CAS package. Copies of Dean’s letters are acceptable and will be labeled as “COPY” by our office.

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).

MEDICAL LICENSE

Submit copies of all your Medical Licenses.

ECFMG CERTIFICATE (applicable to IMGs only)

International Medical Graduates must provide copy of valid ECFMG certificate.

CV

Provide a copy of your updated C.V. Please do not attach photo with C.V.

EXTRA SUPPORT DOCUMENTS

Only the following additional documents are accepted:

- 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.

EXAMPLE OF DOCUMENTS NOT DISTRIBUTED BY CAS

These are other examples of documents not distributed by CAS:

- 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 CAS form as they will not be distributed.

MISSING DOCUMENTS

If you are unable to provide a document, state the reason on a separate. 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.

CAS CHECKLIST

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

- Completed and signed CAS Application Form
- Distribution List Form & Payment (submit Distribution List online)
- Medical School Transcript(s)
- USMLE Scores or equivalent score reports
- Three (3) letters of reference
- Dean's Letter
- Medical License(s)
- ECFMG (applicable to International Graduates)
- CV

CONTACT CAS

Phone: 415.447-0350 ext. "0"

Email: help@sfnmatch.org

