Central Application Service (CAS)
Applicant Instructions Ophthalmology
Residency Match

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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.

The CAS does not evaluate applicants' credentials or eligibility to apply to any of the participating programs.

SF Match requires applicants to manage their online account information and be responsible for monitoring the status of all required documents. Track the status of your application and required documents frequently.

Applicant Categories

The SF Match system groups applicants into 4 different categories. Check your applicant category and review the instructions for submitting supporting documents to complete your application:

Applicant Category	Description	Instructions for document submission on page
US-MD	Applicants from U.S. allopathic medical schools	Page
US-DO	Applicants from U.S. osteopathic medical schools	Page
CAN	Applicants from Canadian medical schools	Page
IMG	Applicants from medical schools outside U.S. or Canada	Page



All digital documents must be in unsecured .pdf format

Submitting Documents **Instructions for**

US-MD applicants

Online instructions: Applicants have the ability to have *all of the documents for their application submission uploaded electronically. **Please refer to the "Document Submission" table below for each specific upload source.**

Mail instructions: If the letter writer prefers not to upload the letter and it is confidential, please collect the letter of reference from them in their individual sealed and signed envelope. Any documents which are not uploaded should be mailed together to the SF Match office at one time in a single package.

Please be sure to include your applicant ID and specialty match name on all correspondence with SF Match.

Mail package to:

SF Match – CAS department 655 Beach Street
San Francisco, CA 94109
(No weekends/holidays delivery)
Phone: 415-447-0350

Below is a list of documents and upload source for each:

*Document Submission for US-MD applicants	
Documents	**Upload by**
Personal Info	Applicant (completes online)
Required Supplemental Form	Applicant (completes and submits form online)
Personal Statement	Applicant (completes and assigns online)
College Transcript(s)	Applicant (online submission)
USMLE Step I	Applicant (online submission)
Medical School Transcript(s)	Medical school (online submission)
Letters of recommendation	Letter writer (online submission) (applicant assigns)
Updated versions of medical school transcript(s)	Medical school (online submission)
MSPE Letter*	Medical school (online submission)
Additional documents (login to your SF Match account to view the complete list in the "Global" documents page)	Applicant (online submission)

* To comply with the AAMC rules, please note that MSPE letters for seniors will only be distributed beginning September 23rd.

Instructions for US-DO applicants

Online instructions: Applicants have the ability to have *all of the documents for their application submission uploaded electronically. **Please refer to the "Document Submission" table below for each specific upload source.**

Mail instructions: If the letter writer prefers not to upload the letter and it is confidential, please collect the letter of reference from them in their individual sealed and signed envelope. Any documents which are not uploaded should be mailed together to the SF Match office at one time in a single package.

Please be sure to include your 5--digit applicant ID and specialty match name on all correspondence with SF Match.

Mail package to:

SF Match – CAS department 655 Beach Street
San Francisco, CA 94109
(No weekends/holidays delivery)
Phone: 415-447-0350

Below is a list of documents and upload source for each:

*Document Submission for US-DO applicants	
Documents	**Upload by**
Personal Info	Applicant (completes online)
Required Supplemental Form	Applicant (completes and submits form online)
Personal Statement	Applicant (completes and assigns online)
College Transcript(s)	Applicant (online submission)
COMLEX 1	Applicant (online submission)
Medical School Transcript(s)	Medical school (online submission)
Letters of recommendation	Letter writer (online submission) (applicant assigns)
Updated versions of medical school transcript(s)	Medical school (online submission)
MSPE Letter*	Medical school (online submission)
Additional documents (login to your SF Match account to view the complete list in the "Global" documents page)	Applicant (online submission)

* To comply with the AAMC rules, please note that MSPE letters for seniors will only be distributed beginning September 23rd.

Instructions for Canadian applicants

Online instructions: All application documents may be uploaded online electronically. **Please refer to the "Document Submission" table below for each specific upload source.**

Mail instructions: If the letter writer prefers not to upload the letter and it is confidential, please collect the letter of reference from them in their individual sealed and signed envelope. Any documents which are not uploaded should be mailed together to the SF Match office at one time in a single package.

Please be sure to include your 5--digit applicant ID and specialty match name on all correspondence with SF Match.

Mail package to:

SF Match – CAS department 655 Beach Street
San Francisco, CA 94109
(No weekends/holidays delivery)
Phone: 415-447-0350

Below is a list of documents and upload source for each:

*Document Submission for Canadian applicants	
Documents	**Upload by**
Personal Info	Applicant (completes online)
Required Supplemental Form	Applicant (completes and submits form online)
Personal Statement	Applicant (completes and assigns online)
College Transcript(s)	Applicant (online submission)
MCCQE 1	Applicant (online submission)
Medical School Transcript(s)	Applicant (online submission)
Letters of recommendation	Letter writer (online submission) (applicant assigns)
MSPE Letter*	Applicant (online submission)
Additional documents (login to your SF Match account to view the complete list in the "Global" documents page)	Applicant (online submission)

* May submit a 4th letter of reference if MSPE letter is not available.

Instructions for IMGs

Online instructions: All application documents may be uploaded online electronically. **Please refer to the "Document Submission" table below for each specific upload source.**

Mail instructions: If the letter writer prefers not to upload the letter and it is confidential, please collect the letter of reference from them in their individual sealed and signed envelope. Any documents which are not uploaded should be mailed together to the SF Match office at one time in a single package.

Please be sure to include your 5--digit applicant ID and specialty match name on all correspondence with SF Match.

Mail package to:

SF Match – CAS department 655 Beach Street
San Francisco, CA 94109
(No weekends/holidays delivery)
Phone: 415-447-0350

Below is a list of documents and upload source for each:

*Document Submission for IMG applicants	
Documents	**Upload by**
Personal Info	Applicant (completes online)
Required Supplemental Form	Applicant (completes and submits form online)
Personal Statement	Applicant (completes and assigns online)
USMLE Step 1	Applicant (online submission)
Medical School Transcript(s)	Applicant (online submission)
Letters of recommendation	Letter writer (online submission) (applicant assigns)
MSPE Letters or 4th letter if MSPE is not available*	Applicant (Online submission)
ECFMG certificate	Applicant (online submission)
Additional documents (login to your SF Match account to view the complete list in the "Global" documents page)	Applicant (online submission)

* May submit a 4th letter of recommendation if MSPE letter is not available.

A few international schools have medical school offices in the U.S. and have access to the SF Match Medical School Portal. If you are an IMG from one of the schools listed below, contact your medical school dean's office so they can upload your **updated medical school transcripts and MSPE letter**:

- Ross University School of Medicine, St. Michael Barbados
- Sackler School of Medicine-New York, Israel
- St. George's University School of Medicine, Grenada
- American University of Antigua / Manipal Education Americas, Antigua and Barbuda

Photos

A photo can be uploaded through your SF Match account. On the Summary tab, click the button next to "Upload Profile Image" on your task list. Programs you apply to will have access to your photo after you have been invited to an interview.

Message Inbox

Programs may send a message to you through the SF Match system. This is optional for programs, not required. If a program sends a message through the SF Match system, you should receive an e-mail (to your user name account) as well as receive the message in your SF Match account inbox. To view messages, select the envelope icon located on the top right hand sided of the page next to your user name.

NOTE: Many e-mail domains have high security settings and may block messages sent from the SF Match domain. The messages are duplicated in your SF Match account. **It is imperative that you remember to login to your SF Match account frequently to ensure no messages are missed and go unread.**

Personal Info:

- Contact – Enter main address and permanent address (if different from main)
- Education – Enter all medical school, undergraduate, graduate (non-medical), internship, residency, and fellowship history.
- Exams/Licenses/Certs - Input exam history, licenses and ECFMG certificate (IMGs) info
- Employment - Add employment history.
- Publications – Select publication type and enter required info.
- Honors/Interests – Add Honors, awards, achievements, other research activities, hobbies and interests.

NOTE: Your Personal Info can be dynamically updated anytime during the match cycle.

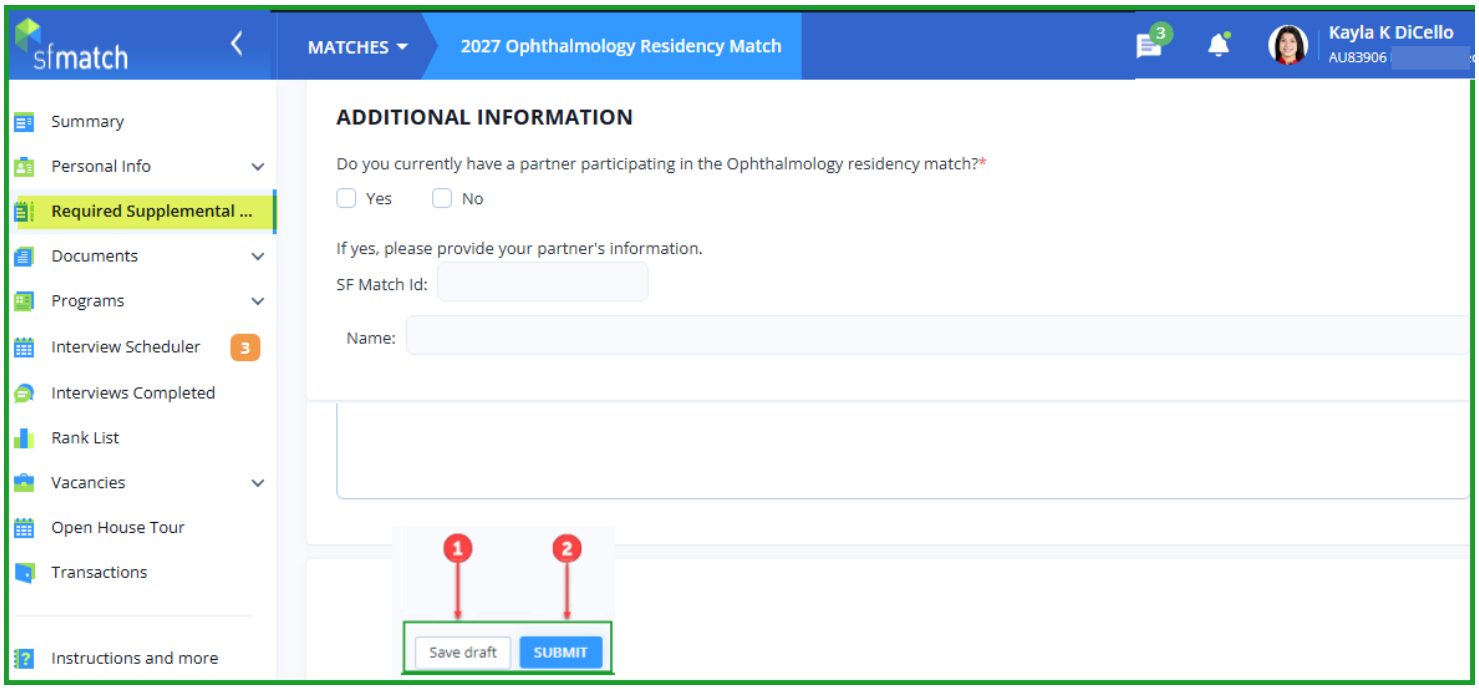


Required Supplemental Form:

You must submit your required supplemental form before your application is considered complete. This includes career objectives, specialty electives and related activities, public services and activities. Be sure you take the time to carefully review your information **prior** to submitting the form. Submit only after you have thoroughly reviewed your completed application form and are satisfied with the formatting and content. Once submitted, the form is converted into a Portable Document Format (PDF) so programs can view the application in a standardized format in this **final and uneditable** version.

NOTE: No substitutions/corrections can be made after your required supplemental form has been distributed to the programs. Any mistakes you discover on your required supplemental form after distribution has occurred cannot be reversed and must be communicated by you to programs **directly.**

HELPFUL HINT: You are not required to fill out the entire application at one time. Use the "Save" **(1)** button (frequently when you are logged in. **IMPORTANT: Remember to submit" (2)** after carefully reviewing your answers. Your application is considered **"incomplete"** unless you **"submit"**.



Description of Documents:

Global - Global documents are seen by every program that you apply to. Click the "Upload" button and choose the appropriate file to upload. **The documents should fit within the frame of the preview screen prior to confirming upload.** If it does not fit within the preview frame, please re-scan to a smaller size. The documents that you have permissions to upload will be presented to programs exactly in the size as your view displays. Documents uploaded should be 8 ½ x 11 format (not legal sized/oversized formats). Every document you upload must be scanned into an unsecured pdf file. MS Word documents will not be accepted and must be converted by you into an unsecured pdf document prior to upload. The file must not be password protected or exceed 5mb in size.

NOTE: Once your document has been submitted to a program, no substitutions or corrections can be made. If you discover any mistakes after applying to a program you will need to contact the program(s) directly.

Helpful tip: Do NOT use your smart phone to take pictures of your documents and upload them. Remember, the programs reviewing your application receive the exact version of the digital file that you upload and often print out these documents. Therefore, it's in your best interest to present professional, clean documents.

The following Global documents are required to be received before your application is considered complete:

College transcript(s):

SF Match does *not* require "official transcripts". College transcript(s) may be official copies OR student issued copies of the official transcript. Use the "Upload" button for college transcript and select the corresponding file. 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.

HELPFUL TIP: Applicants with multiple transcripts must scan and save them together as one file prior to uploading it into your SF Match account.

Medical school transcript(s):

Applicants in the following categories should request your medical school dean's office to upload your medical school transcript into their SF Match account:

- US – MD: Applicants from US allopathic medical schools
- US-DO: Applicants from US osteopathic medical schools
- IMGs from the following schools:
    - Ross University School of Medicine, St. Michael Barbados
    - Sackler School of Medicine-New York, Israel
    - St. George's University School of Medicine, Grenada
    - American University of Antigua / Manipal Education Americas, Antigua and Barbuda

Canadian and International applicants from schools not listed above may upload their own medical school transcript.

Special Note to International Medical Graduates (IMGs): *All transcripts must be submitted in English; translated copies must be professionally notarized. DO NOT submit copies of the non-translated transcript.*

Medical licensing exams:

Applicants from US allopathic schools and international schools are required to upload USMLE Step 1 report/transcript(s) as part of the initial application.

Applicants from US osteopathic schools must upload COMLEX 1 report/transcript(s). Canadian

applicants must upload English version of MCCQE 1 report/transcript(s).

Upload the medical licensing exam score report or transcript.

Personal Statement(s): (3 required components)

Applicants will write an autobiographical sketch (summary of your life, who you are and your aspirations) not to exceed 500 words AND answer 2 of 4 of the essay questions below (essay question answers not to exceed 250 words each).

DISCLOSURE REGARDING THE UTILIZATION OF AI

If you utilize AI or AI-assisted technologies in your writing process, you must properly disclose it adding an AI statement at the end of your personal statement. This statement must include details about the AI tool or service used, the reason for its use, and an acknowledgment of your full responsibility for the content post-review and editing. It is not necessary to include an AI statement disclosure for the utilization of basic tools such as those for grammar, spelling, references, etc.

Personal Statement (4) Essay Questions: (choose 2)

In addition to the autobiographical sketch portion, each applicant should also respond to 2 essay questions from the following list:

1. What does resilience mean to you? Describe a situation in your personal or professional life where you have demonstrated resilience.

2. Describe an important mentor and relate how that person has been helpful to you.

3. Describe any unique attributes that you bring to your residency class.

4. If you were to start an ophthalmology residency program, what would be the three core values you would base it on?

PRO TIPS FOR COMPLIANCE:

TIP 1: Each Personal Statement you create must contain all three mandatory essay components on one document (Autobiographical sketch and 2 essay questions) and should be saved as one file. DO NOT make the mistake of creating 3 separate files for each essay question. The system will only allow you to upload one personal statement document to each program you apply to.

TIP 2: Remember to copy and paste the two essay questions you'll answer onto the same personal statement document that contains your autobiographical sketch.

TIP 3: You can create and save multiple personal statements, however you can only assign one version to each program you apply to. Save each personal statement you create with an identifiable file name and refer to this file name when assigning the statement to programs.

TIP 4: Once you have applied to a program with an assigned personal statement, you may NOT make any substitutions after it has been successfully delivered through the SF Match system. IMPORTANT: Double check your list before you press apply to ensure you have assigned the correct personalized statement to the desired corresponding program.

HELPFUL TIP: If you intend to copy and paste your Personal Statement or other information created from a word processing application, use plain text ONLY. The online application form will NOT always recognize nor accurately convert special formatting features (e.g. bold, italics, different font size, etc.) that are created in MS Word (or other similar applications), and then copied and pasted onto the Application Form. Instead, after your copied data has been pasted in **plain text**, these text formatting special features such as bold, italics and underline can be used **within** the online form.

Letters of recommendation (LOR):

Three (3) letters of recommendation are required for review by the programs. **No more, no less**. **At least one letter of recommendation from an ophthalmologist is required.*

You may request your letter writers to upload the letters of recommendation directly into the SF Match system. Go to the "Documents" tab in your SF Match account and select "LOR". Enter the letter writer's contact information to submit the request. An e-mail will be sent from SF Match to the author including a hyperlink that allows them to upload the letter of reference in .pdf format into the SF Match system. After you have submitted the request to the authors, make sure you remember to follow-up with them directly to ensure they have received the e-mail from SF Match and are able to upload the letter.

NOTE: There is no limit to how many letters of recommendation you can request, however you can only assign three letters to each program you apply to and changes cannot be made after you've applied.

Medical School Performance Evaluation (MSPE or Dean's Letter):

*MSPE is not required as part of the initial application and must be uploaded by the designated Dean's office. As per the AAMC rules, MSPEs will be released to programs on September 23, 2026.

Instructions for U.S. Seniors: To ensure the MSPE letter is electronically received by our office and distributed to the programs you are applying to, **you must** contact your Dean's office. **Inform your medical school Dean's office that you are participating in the ophthalmology residency match and they will upload it to your profile in September. IMPORTANT:** This is NOT something they will automatically transmit to us on your behalf. The request AND the authorization for this distribution must formally be made by you. In order to comply with the AAMC rules, MSPE letters will not be distributed until **September 23.**

Instructions for U.S. Graduates: Contact your medical school dean's office to request your MSPE letter to be uploaded *or* if you have a copy already available, mail it to the SF Match/CAS office. MSPE letters for graduates can be included in the initial application to programs or distributed at a later time as a supplemental document.

Instructions for International Medical Graduates (IMGs) and Canadian Graduates:

If you have a copy available, upload the MSPE letter into your SF Match account. *You may submit an equivalent letter or a 4th recommendation letter. If the letter is confidential, mail the hardcopy to the SF Match office in a sealed envelope.*

Additional/Expected documents

Applicants are required to include the following documents (if applicable):

- Additional medical licensing exams results received **must** be reported and uploaded (e.g. USMLE Step 2 CK, CS, 3, COMLEX Step 2 CE, PE, 3, etc.)
- ECFMG certificate (applicable to international graduates) is not a required document but should be provided to SF Match as soon as it becomes available.

HELPFUL TIP: If available, please *include* the performance profile page listed on the back of the original score reports. If you have taken additional exams, please look for those listed in "Additional Documents" to find the links to upload those documents.

Program Deadlines

Most training program deadlines are listed in the program directory, however, please be aware that CAS does NOT set program application deadlines or requirements. In addition, CAS is not always notified of program changes, therefore we always recommend that you contact the program directly to confirm this information. For best results, submit the complete CAS application one (1) week prior to the earliest deadline you would like to meet.

NOTE: 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). Please be aware that applications which arrive to the programs after their deadline may not receive the same priority from the programs' review committees as applications received on time.

Applying to Programs

The program directory contains a list of participating programs in the match. While viewing the program directory, select the "Save" button for each program that is of interest. After choosing the program, the program will be added to "Saved" tab. When you have chosen the programs to apply with, select the "Apply to Selected" button to continue with confirmation and payment. We strongly encourage applicants to contact each program prior to applying in order to be certain that the program eligibility requirements can be met.

Program Signaling

Program Signaling also known as Preference Signaling, is a component of the ophthalmology residency match process allowing applicants to communicate heightened interest in specific programs. While signaling a program can enhance visibility and express increased interest, it does not guarantee an interview. The discretion to extend interview invitations rests with individual program directors, who consider various factors beyond signaling. Before applying, applicants must carefully determine which programs to signal, as signals cannot be modified or added once the application is submitted. Each applicant is permitted to signal up to **15** programs.

Application Fees

Initial CAS distribution fees

After submitting your completed application materials, you must submit your online distribution list and pay the appropriate fees.

Distribution fees increase progressively as follows:

Number of Distributions Fees:

Number of Distribution	Cost
1-10	$60 (flat fee)
11-20	$10 per program
21-30	$15 per program
31-40	$20 per program
41+	$35 per program

NOTE: *The fee structure is designed to encourage applicants submit their list of programs to apply to once rather than in stages. The cost to apply to programs rises to $35 per program after your first initial list submission* ***(even if only 1 program is selected for your initial distribution).*** *It is to your advantage to submit the list one time, unless you apply to more than 40 programs on your initial list, where the cost would be the same moving forward.*

Applying to additional programs

You may apply to additional programs after your initial CAS distribution list has been submitted. Supplemental distributions cost **$35 per program** regardless of how many programs you have selected on your initial distribution; **therefore, it is to your advantage to submit your entire list once rather than adding programs later.**

Paying for CAS distribution fees

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

Assigning Documents

Assign three letters of recommendation and one personal statement to each program you apply to.

Instructions for Assigning Personal Statements and Letters of Reference By individual program:

- Click on the **Assign Documents to Program** button for the individual program then click on **Assign Documents** after making your selection(s).

In Bulk:

- Select the programs you wish to assign the same personal statement and/or same letter of reference(s) by checking the boxes next to each program ID and Name.
- Click on **Assign to Selected**, then click on **Assign Documents** after selections are made.

Interview Scheduler

When you are notified of an interview invitation, go to the Interview Scheduler page. You will see the calendar dates available to accept a date to interview at a program. You can accept or decline an interview invitation

Note: The interview scheduler will allow you to accept as many as 2 interviews per day (if the times of the interviews do not overlap). Applicants will be limited to accepting no more than 15 interviews.

WHAT MAKES YOUR APPLICATION COMPLETE?

Complete Your Personal Information

Try to complete your Personal Information sections before applying to programs. Your personal information is displayed to the program after you apply.

Submit Required Supplemental Form

You can save the data on your required supplemental form but you MUST remember to **submit** your required supplemental form before your application is considered complete.

Upload All Required Documents

Upload all of your required documents. Please note that some documents may need to be uploaded by your Medical School. Please refer to your Global Documents page.

Assign Personal Statements and LORs

You may assign different personal statements and LOR's to each program. You must assign the required amount to each program for your application to be complete for that program.

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 can also look at the programs listed under the Completed section on your Programs page, Applied tab.

Contact SF Match

SF Match
655 Beach Street
San Francisco, CA 94109
Phone: 415-447-0350
Fax: 415-561-8535
Email: help@sfmatch.org
https://www.sfmatch.org

Monday – Fridays 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM (Pacific Time)