2025–26

Coordinated Interview Release Process FAQs

Association of University Professors of Ophthalmology

sfmatch
Residency and Fellowship Matching Services

Coordinated Interview Release Dates for the 2025–2026 Ophthalmology Residency Match

In past match cycles, interview invitations could be extended at any time during a two-month period. Feedback from ophthalmology programs and applicants underscored several challenges with this process and presents an opportunity to enhance it for all stakeholders. Programs report that late-season invitations lead to cancellations and a time-intensive scramble to find replacement interviewees for the vacated slots. Applicants also note significant disruptions to their medical school clinical rotations and training, stemming from the need to constantly monitor and respond to invitations that may arrive at any point during the two-month period. Furthermore, applicants often hold on to offers they might otherwise release if they received all of their interview invitations earlier in the process. The inconsistency and unpredictability of the invitation process create scheduling inefficiencies and can limit opportunities for other candidates.

To address these challenges, the 2025-26 ophthalmology residency match will feature a series of four coordinated interview release dates. Interviews will be released in batches on each of the four predetermined release dates: October 15, October 22, October 29, and November 5. These distinct release dates minimize training disruptions for medical student applicants and give programs ample time to accommodate changes or cancellations that will largely occur around these four dates. Unlike other medical specialties that have opted for a single release date, four dates were selected to provide programs with flexibility in their review processes and the timing of their interview invitation releases. The proposal aims to enhance efficiency and effectiveness for all stakeholders throughout the application cycle, ultimately improving the quality of the selection process.

1st date batch interviews can be released by programs: 10/15/25 at 12:00 PM PST

2nd date batch interviews can be released by programs: 10/22/25 at 12:00 PM PST

3rd date batch interviews can be released by programs: 10/29/25 at 12:00 PM PST

4th date batch interviews can be released by programs: 11/5/25 at 12:00 PM PST

Q **How will this change the current application process for programs?**

A Instead of applicants receiving program decisions at any time over a two-month period, program invitations will be released on four distinct dates and times, allowing applicants to plan their schedules and accept invitations. We recognize the challenges that some programs may face, especially those that traditionally extend interviews early or late in the typical two-month interval. Significant consideration and discussion were given to the challenges this may create for programs, hence the recommendation for four distinct interview dates, rather than a single batch release of all applications.

SFMatch Interview Scheduler Queue Logistics:

Programs will utilize the SF Match Interview Scheduler Queue system to rank applicants in their preferred order and select from the available invitation release dates. Programs can list as many candidates as they choose, although SFMatch will not distribute more invitations than the number of available interview slots listed for each program.

After each batch release, no additional invitations will be extended until the next release date. If interview slots remain unfilled or an applicant cancels their interview, the program may use the Interview Scheduler Queue to send additional invitations on a future coordinated release date. After the November 5 release date, the SFMatch Interview Scheduler Queue will be available at any time for programs to fill vacancies as they arise.

Q **Does SFMatch have a formal waitlist function?**

A No, SFMatch currently does not have functionality to label or notify applicants of their place in the SF Match Interview Scheduler Queue.

Q **Are October 15, October 22, October 29, and November 5 the only dates when residency programs can release interviews?**

A Yes, these are the only dates to release interviews. We recommend programs publish their intended interview release dates to applicants on both their program SFMatch profile and on their program websites.

Q **Can a residency program batch release interviews on more than one date?**

A Yes, programs may select one, multiple, or all four dates for batch release interviews.

Q **Are programs allowed to opt out of the coordinated interview release dates?**

A No, to ensure consistency for both programs and candidates, all programs will participate.

Q **How will programs fill vacancies from unaccepted invitations or cancellations after the four release dates?**

A If an applicant declines or cancels the interview slot after initially accepting, programs may offer the opening to other candidates on their waiting list or utilize the SFMatch Interview Scheduler Queue. The Interview Scheduler Queue can be automated, allowing invitations to be automatically extended to the next applicant listed on the program's list, or programs may choose to manually extend invitations via the Interview Scheduler Queue.

Q **If programs have unfilled or cancelled spots between October 15 and November 5, do they have to wait until the next release date to fill them?**

A Yes. Between October 15 and November 5, interviews will only be released on the coordinated release dates (October 15, 22, 29, and

November 5). After November 5, interviews can be extended at any time for unfilled or cancelled interview slots using the same process in prior match cycles.

Q: What is the process to extend additional invitations for unfilled or cancelled interview slots?

A: Additional interviews may be extended using the Interview Scheduler Queue process. **Detailed instructions are available online.**

Q: Are there any changes to the process for scheduling interviews on the SFMatch site?

A: No, the process for setting interview dates and scheduling interviews remains unchanged.

Q: How will this affect the SFMatch Interview Scheduler Queue process?

A: There are no changes to the functionality of the SFMatch Interview Scheduler Queue process.

Q: Why four coordinated release dates?

A: Unlike other specialties that opted for a single release date, allowing programs to invite applicants on any of four dates over an extended period gives programs flexibility in their timelines and processes. Special consideration was given to the challenges that a shortened invitation window could create for some programs that traditionally extend invitations late in the two-month window. The dates were selected to mirror the historical periods when the vast majority of programs extended invitations. Consideration was also given to the Medical Student Performance Evaluation (MSPE) release date to ensure programs have sufficient time to review the MSPE.

Q: Will the deadlines change for the candidate to accept the interview invite?

A: The default deadline to respond with an acceptance remains the same, which is a minimum 48-hour window. Programs may choose to extend this window at their discretion through the Interview Scheduler Queue.

Q: What if we want to add additional invitation slots during the match process?

A: The process to select the number of interview invitations remains unchanged. Programs determine the number of interview invitations to extend, and may add additional slots at their discretion, similar to past years.

Q: Will this change affect an applicant's chance of being interviewed by a program?

A: No, the coordinated release dates will not impact the evaluation process.

Q: Will the coordinated release dates affect applicants doing a visiting rotation at that institution later in the cycle in different ways from past match cycles?

A: No. Just like previous match cycles, students can do visiting rotations at any point during the academic year. The coordinated release dates do not alter the impact on students in visiting rotations compared to past match cycles.

Q: Will programs and applicants have an opportunity to provide feedback for future interview release formats?

A: Yes, we are dedicated to enhancing the match experience and will continue requesting stakeholder feedback throughout the application cycle to assess and refine our interview release processes for upcoming match cycles.