

Ophthalmology Application Guide

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New - UPDATES FOR 2023-2024 Season:

- All interviews will be **virtual** during the 2023-2024 cycle.
- A **maximum number of 15 online interviews** will be imposed this year like last year (thoughtfully calculated by AUPO/SFMatch based on historical data).
- All ophthalmology residency programs will be **required to utilize the interview scheduler program through SF match**. This scheduler will allow applicants to schedule a maximum of two program interviews per day (i.e. one AM and one PM session.) Interviews can be canceled to make space for other interviews; however, programs can then fill the newly opened slot.
- The single personal statement essay traditionally required of applicants has been **replaced by a 500-word autobiographical sketch and two 250-word question responses to two of four possible question prompts**. These three essay responses combined will comprise the new “personal statement.”
- Applicants can **upload more than one autobiographical sketch and more than 3 letters of recommendation**, allowing students to personalize and choose which documents they send to programs.
- **The Altus Suite (Casper, Snapshot, Duet) was required for 2022-2023** to be taken by all applicants to promote a more holistic review. **However in 2023-2024 this product/program will not be required.**

When/where to start?

- Start getting to know your ophthalmology department as soon as you think you may be interested in ophthalmology. It is a small field, so getting more face time with the department early will stand out!
- Here are a few ways to get involved early
 - Shadow people in the department! You can either approach this by working with your ophthalmology interest group for shadowing opportunities, emailing faculty that you may be interested in shadowing, or talking to your home program ophthalmology medical student director (at Vanderbilt that is Dr. Janice Law).
 - For Vanderbilt: some good faculty to shadow include: Dr. Sobel in Oculoplastics, Dr. Law and Dr. Cherney in Retina, Dr. Gangaputra in Uveitis/Medical Retina, Dr. Lindsey in comprehensive (She is also the current Residency Program Director), Dr. Longmuir in Neuro-ophth/glaucoma (He is also the Associate Residency Director), Dr. Reddy or Dr. Padovani-Claudio in Pediatric Ophthalmology

- Attend grand rounds or other lectures given by your Ophthalmology department (reach out to the department residency program coordinator or medical student director to find out the dates and times of these conferences.)
- If time allows, and you are interested, get involved in research very early. Attendings and residents will usually have projects that they would like help with. (see research section)
- Try to meet with the department chair or program director once you are sure about ophthalmology. At Vanderbilt Drs. Sternberg and Lindsey are very approachable and like getting to know the Vanderbilt Medical students who are interested in ophthalmology.
- There are several additional resources to get connected early for underrepresented minorities (URM):
 - The American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO) Minority Mentoring Program (M.O.M.), the RABB-VENABLE through National Medical Association, and various diversity-related research opportunities from different institutions that you can learn about through your school's Office of Diversity Affairs

Breakdown by Year

MS1

The important thing in MS1 is to focus on classes and learning the material! This is the only time you will have to dedicate to reading. While many schools are pass/fail, and pre-clerkship grades often are overlooked compared to your clerkship grades, learning the material well during first year will set you up for success on the wards. If you are one of the few people who knows you want to do ophthalmology during your first year, you can start to get involved in small ways if you feel you have a good handle on your coursework. However, remember that there is a whole world of medicine out there, and you should equally give other specialties a chance too!

- Attend grand rounds to show your face and absorb!
- Shadowing (if your schedule permits, you can schedule shadowing either in clinic or the OR even if it's brief)
- Volunteer at your medical school free clinic in ophthalmology (and general medicine/other specialties!) or even start an ophthalmology clinic! Your help is valuable in these settings, and you will get exposure to the field in ways that you would not get through your home department. At Vanderbilt, this is also an opportunity to spend time with the volunteer attendings and residents.

- Become familiar with the faculty and subspecialties at your ophthalmology department. Meet with your medical student director to ask about other learning opportunities or ways to stay updated!
- While absolutely not necessary, consider talking to faculty about research opportunities.

MS2

- Second-year is clerkship year at Vanderbilt, so this is your opportunity to explore all of the specialties in medicine. Approach each rotation as if you are evaluating whether it is something you are interested in. In clerkship year you will get out of it what you put in. Be present for your patients and read, read, read! Sign up for an ophthalmology elective (at this stage, you can experience up to two 2 weeks electives at Vanderbilt through Surgery rotation or as part of the Peds, OB/Gyn rotations). This will give you a chance to meet the department in a clinical setting.
- Start talking to the department to find out what kind of research you may be interested in. In the spring of MS2 year, you will need to have a mentor identified for your PLAN project for 3rd year. There are many faculty who have worked with medical students in the past, so work with Dr. Law and upper-class students to determine which mentor may be the best fit for you.

MS3

- Fall MS3 year should be dedicated to research. You will have 3-5 months dedicated to research, so this is your chance to be productive and learn more about the exciting field of ophthalmology from a scientific and research perspective. Use the time during research to shadow faculty clinically and make more connections!
- See other courses to take below

What courses should I take and when?

- Ophthalmology: Take advantage of your home ophthalmology rotation if you have one. Some schools offer multiple course opportunities for ophthalmology. At Vanderbilt you can take the 4-week Advanced Clinical Elective (ACE1) and ACE2 (enhanced experience in ophthalmology) in addition to 2 weeks during your clerkship year elective (already discussed).

- When to take it: Taking ophthalmology as MS3 between January - June allows you to get to know the department well before the application process starts as an MS4. The faculty that you meet and work with can be great advocates for you!
- Other things to consider include when visiting students rotate at your institution (if any). Often being on ophthalmology alone gives you more face time with certain key faculty, and allows you to stand out!
- Other tips on taking ophthalmology: At Vanderbilt *Careers in Medicine* allows additional shadowing opportunities outside of formal 2 week electives.
- Other courses: Remember that you are in medical school to become a physician, so take any other courses that you are interested in! Some courses at Vanderbilt that were helpful:
 - Critical illness, Medical Imaging and Anatomy, General Neurology, Anesthesia, Emergency Medicine
- Vanderbilt global health rotations beneficial to ophthalmology include:
 - Aravind global health rotation in India and a medical Spanish course set in Costa Rica.
- Sub-I/Acting Internship: In many schools ophthalmology does not count as your sub-I/AI requirement. You do not necessarily need to take your medicine/surgery sub-I prior to applying. Many take it after the application season is over, unless you would like to get a letter of recommendation. In which case, plan on taking it early enough before the application process.
- November is when the majority of interview are scheduled. As an MS4 applying, it may be helpful (but not necessary) to take a lighter rotation in November. An alternative is to schedule a vacation month in November and the beginning of December. In the 2022-2023 cycles, the first possible interview took place October 31, 2022 and the interview season closed on December 23, 2022. In 2023-2024 cycle: the first possible interview can take place October 23, 2023 and the interview season will close on December 22, 2023.

Away Rotations

- MS3 or MS4 Away rotations: There are many many different opinions on away rotations (also known as visiting or audition rotations)
 - Pros
 - No residency program is the same. You can use away rotations as an opportunity to work with faculty from a different department and learn about their teaching philosophy and training culture.

- This could be your chance to demonstrate to a program your interest in them. Sometimes programs prefer to select a strong and “known candidate” that wants to be at the program. So it is **important to do well and impress!**
 - If you come from a smaller school or ophthalmology department, you can expand your network this way and it can work to your advantage as you interview across the country.
 - It can be fun to live in a new city for a month, and see if you could potentially see yourself living in that city!
- Cons
 - Some will tell you that if you have a good application on paper, away rotations can only hurt you (as it is often difficult to be particularly helpful as a medical student in ophthalmology or stand out, and especially if there have been interpersonal skills concerns in the past.)
 - Visiting rotations can be very expensive. Housing in the city (on top of your home rent) ~\$500-2000 depending on the city, flights can range from \$200-300, VSAS application free ~\$80, etc). See also the article by [Patel and Kelly](#).
 - Coming from a strong home ophthalmology program, you do not need to do an away rotation in order to be “competitive”
 - Some programs may question why you applied for an away rotation in the region but did not rotate with them (have a good answer!) Not all medical school rotation dates align with rotation dates that are offered!
- Review the pros and cons, and talk to your mentors to figure out whether an away rotation is right for you. If you are interested in doing one, here is a rough schedule for applying to away rotations through VSAS

<https://students-residents.aamc.org/attending-medical-school/article/visiting-student-learning-opportunities/>

 - January – Decide where you may want to do an away rotation, many programs will have a deadline for applications (specific program, specific city, or region). Sometimes enrollment is first come first serve.
 - January - If you want to do an away rotation, download the immunization form (from VSAS) and go to student health to have them fill it out. You will need titers, and if any of your titers are low, you will need to get re-vaccinated and retested for titers. This can take more than a month, so get this done early!

- Background check – Vanderbilt should send you a link to complete a background check. Other schools may have something similar, but check with your medical school.
- Important things to consider for visiting rotations: other program rotation schedules may not align with your home schedule. Specifically, Vanderbilt’s clinical schedule is different from many other schools because of the immersion weeks, so you may need to take a flex (vacation) month or consider a 2 week rotation (only a few exist) in order to fit in an away rotation.
- Check out Rotating Room (<https://rotatingroom.com/>) if you are doing an away rotation and want to try to save some money. This is a website that is geared toward medical students looking for housing for away rotations. You can either list your own apartment while you are gone, or you can find someone’s apartment for less than you may be able to find an AirBnB.

USMLE: Step 1 and Step 2

For 2022-2023 application cycle, most (not all) applicants will be reporting 3-digit Step 1 scores depending on what year they were eligible for the exam.

For 2023-2024 application cycle and later, most (not all) applicants will be reporting pass/fail scores depending on what year they were eligible for the exam. It may be beneficial to take Step 2 soon after to show a strong traditional 3-digit score.

Step 1 changed to pass/fail scoring in 2022. It is an important aspect of the ophthalmology application cycle as a passing score is required to be a competitive applicant. Given the long-standing importance of USMLE scores in interview selection and the applicant ranking process by programs ([Pershing, et al.](#)), it is unsurprising that a majority of ophthalmology PDs indicated there will be an increased emphasis on Step 2 CK scores ([Hamdan, et al.](#)). TexasStar also has a list of de-identified applicants with their score information. It is important to note that many of these self-reporting sites are biased toward those who have high scores, so take this test seriously and ask for help when you need, but do not fret if your score is not as high as some of the people who post their scores on these sites.

Step 2 is still not mandatory to take prior to applying even in the 2022-2023 cycle when it changed to USMLE 1 Pass/Fail scoring. The SF match application does require applicants to upload a Step 1 score report; however, uploading a Step 2 score report is optional. Some programs may ask for an updated Step 2 score at time of interview, but most do not. There are several different strategies on how to approach Step 2

- People tend to do better on Step 2 than Step 1, so if you have time to dedicate to studying for it and feel confident about your performance, go ahead and take it early whenever it is convenient for your scheduling (some like to schedule Step 1 and 2 back to back to keep the content fresh and momentum strong)
- If you did not score as well on Step 1 when a numeric score was given (Test year 2021 and earlier), Step 2 is your chance to show that you can perform well on standardized tests. Study hard for Step 2 and take it before you apply to show that you can improve your score significantly (more than 10 point increase because Step 2 mean is already 10 points higher than Step 1 mean)
- Timing: there is a “sweet spot” for taking Step 2 where you are unable to report your score at the time of submitting your application when results are not back yet. You can elect to send it as an update once you get your score returned if it is good. You can also elect to not send it as an update if it is not what you hoped. This is generally 2-3 weeks before you plan to submit your

application. Be careful, because there is an area where you list what date you took the exam. It might come up in interviews (though rare), so be prepared to explain it if you take it in this “sweet spot”.

- Some elect to take it after matching (if their school requirement is late enough). You do not need it to match into ophthalmology, but you may need a passing score in order to get ranked by certain internship programs.

AOA/GHHS

Alpha Omega Alpha (AOA) Honor Society and Gold Humanism Honor Society (GHHS) are two honors given out usually during 3rd or 4th year of medical school that can be listed on SF Match. AOA is often a representation of academic achievement while GHHS is a representation of excellence in clinical care, leadership, compassion, and service. Of the two awards, AOA is the most recognized in ophthalmology. Though these awards are prestigious and can help your application, they are only a small part of the application as a whole. The selection process varies depending on the school. Some schools elect junior members during MS3 year and then again during MS4 year, while others only select during MS4 year. There are several schools that don't offer AOA (there is a place in SFmatch to indicate if this is the case). Vanderbilt University School of Medicine made the determination to discontinue AOA in spring of 2022 academic year along with several other medical schools. However, if you attend a school that recognizes AOA and you have received notice that you have been selected **after your residency application** has been submitted, you can send in your acceptance nomination as a supplemental letter or email the programs you want to know.

MS4: APPLY!

This is the year you prepare all pieces of your application. It is exciting and nerve-wracking, but you are ready for it! The rest of this guide is geared toward putting together all the pieces of your application.

APPLICATION SEASON 2023-2024

Important dates

Below is a table with updated deadlines and information dates. You can find this [here](#).

Timetable: 2024 Ophthalmology Residency Match

Monday, July 3, 2023 Applicant Registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicant registration opens Please note that although registration is open until the rank list deadline, applicants are encouraged to register as early as possible to allow time to apply and for interviews.
Friday, September 1, 2023 CAS Target Date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applications are released to programs Applicants may upload supplemental documents and additional applications as available. This is NOT a deadline. Programs can accept applications after this date. It is the applicant's responsibility to contact training programs for individual deadline dates.
Wednesday, September 27, 2023 MSPE letters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medical School Performance Evaluation (MSPE) letters are released to programs.
Monday, October 9, 2023 First Day for Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First date that interviews can be extended.
Monday, October 23 - Friday, December 22, 2023 Interview Period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interview Period. All interviews are VIRTUAL.
Thursday, January 4, 2024 @ 12:00 PM (noon) PT Program Rank List Deadline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program rank list submission deadline. All programs' rank lists must be submitted by 12:00 PM PT.
Friday, January 5 - Thursday, January 25, 2024 Open House Tours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Optional visits to programs.
Tuesday, January 30, 2024 @ 12:00 PM (noon) PT Applicant Rank List Deadline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicants rank list submission deadline. All applicants' rank lists must be submitted by 12:00 PM PT.
Tuesday, February 6, 2024 @ 5:00 AM PT Match Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Match results are made available to programs, applicants, and US medical schools through the SF Match system. A login is required to view results.

How many programs to apply to?

The average number of applications submitted per matched individual has slowly increased from 52 in 2011 to 79 in 2021. The point of diminishing return (where more

applications does not result in more interviews) appears to be around 40 applications **for an average applicant**. While ophthalmology positions offered have increased by 7.6% from 2011-2020, the match rate has remained between 74-78%. ([SF match report 2021](#)). The number of programs you apply to will largely depend on how competitive your application is or how specific you want to get with your geography. Getting a sense of this is very challenging as you are just starting, so ask your mentors in ophthalmology medical education to help gauge how many applications you should apply to. At Vanderbilt, Dr. Law, Dr. Sternberg, and Dr. Lindsey are great people to talk to about this.

While several reports indicate that around 40 applications submitted at some point have diminishing returns - if you apply to less than 40, it is important to have a strong understanding of what programs are good matches for you. **TALK TO DR. LAW BEFORE YOU DO THIS!** Interview skills and good communication will be very important in this process.

Some factors to consider as you are narrowing down the programs to apply to:

- Number of residents in the training program
- Number of residents in neighboring programs (will there be enough patient volume?)
- Geographic preferences during training and post training (fellowships and job) ie. want to get a job in SoCal after residency, consider California programs
- What type of research you want to get involved in or continue
- What fellowships you are interested in (does the program have a fellowship or have a history of matching into strong fellowships)
- Where do residents go after graduating (geographical, how many comprehensive/ fellowships, jobs?)
- Are there known faculty or mentors you want to train with?
- Are there training satellites like the VA hospital?
- What kind of patient populations do they serve? Underserved? Global health?
- What is the cost of living in that region? Are you comfortable in that community or climate?
- What is your learning style - Do you like almost full autonomy, lots of time for lecture and oversight, or a mix of both.

SF match will cost \$100 to start your application, then there is a fee structure as follows:

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

(Taken from the Central Application Service (CAS) Applicant Instructions Ophthalmology Residency Match)

Helpful tip: as a Vanderbilt student, there are many many faculty who are happy to advocate on your behalf for one or two programs if they know you well. Just remember to use this sparingly and only if you are definitely interested in a specific program! You don't want to burn any bridges by not following through.

Letters of Recommendation

You will be asked to get at least three letters of recommendation. **New in 2022, you can upload more than three and choose which letters you are sending to each program.** This allows you to personalize a letter from a faculty that was an alumn at that institution or explain why you may want to prioritize Boston due to a significant other.

Who to ask for letters of recommendation: It is key to get a recommendation letter from someone who knows you well enough to write a personal and strong recommendation letter. **One of which must be from an ophthalmologist if possible.** Many will recommend getting at least two letters from ophthalmologists. This is because ophthalmology is a rather small field, and so many ophthalmologists you interview with will know and trust the letters written by their colleagues. The final letter can also come from an ophthalmologist, but there are benefits to having a letter outside of ophthalmology to highlight other strengths that may be harder to speak on as an ophthalmologist. This could be from someone who has seen you work on a clinical team. Any additional letters may be people who know you well that may have specific ties to certain programs that you think will be able to write a strong letter of support. Remember, you will only be able to assign 3 official letters total per program.

How/when to ask for a letter of recommendation: Start thinking about who you want to get your letters of recommendation from as early as MS3 year. It is important to give your letter writers plenty of time to write a strong letter prior to submitting your

application, thus it is important to give them at least 4 weeks (preferably more) to write the letter. Some may even recommend asking for a letter soon after you worked with the person, so that they have an opportunity to take some notes from their experience with you while it is still fresh. It is important to ask (either in person or via email) whether that person would be able to write you a STRONG letter of support. While it may seem awkward to ask this at first, it is important to find out and ask someone else if the original person hesitates in any way. Once you get a resounding yes to that, you should prepare and follow up with an email with your formalized request, some key things you learned or key experiences while you worked with that specific person, important deadlines for the letter (perhaps give a deadline 2 weeks prior to the real deadline), and attach your personal/autobiographical statement and updated CV. As an example, if applications are released to programs on September 1st, **consider asking letter writers in late May or June. This should mirror the timeline of drafting personal statements.**

Most programs for the 2022-2023 application cycle have an integrated or joint internship. If you are applying to any program that continues to follow the traditional format, you will likely need to apply for a separate intern year via ERAS. This application is due later than the ophthalmology application and your letters of recommendation could be used for those programs as well. If you want to use the same letters, you should ask your letter writers to change the letter very briefly to be more specific to an intern year in preparation for ophthalmology (after they have submitted them to SFMatch to avoid confusion). If you prefer to get an additional letter from internal medicine or surgery, you can definitely do so, but it is not mandatory. However, note that ACGME has mandated all ophthalmology residency programs in the US convert to the joint or integrated format by July 1, 2023.

Autobiographical Sketch

This is truly the opportunity for you to show your character and personality and to show the person reviewing your application your interest in ophthalmology. The key is to start early and to have people that you trust review it. This is your story.

See the full tweet-thread here. It's well worth the read:

<https://twitter.com/gradydoctor/status/1263916918135758849>

Dr. Kimberly Manning's tips for writing a personal statement (@gradydoc on twitter):

“Becoming is better than Being’ - Carol Dweck. A story of how your experience standing on top of Mt. Everest will never be as interesting as the story of the climb.

She says that stories of being are reflected in your CV. The personal statement is where you talk about how you got there. The main ingredients should be an inventory of your strengths and what is important to you!”

Recipe

- Paragraph One
 - Grab us. A story, an experience, something that tells who you are and makes us want to hear more
- Paragraph Two
 - What they must know and what you're proud of
- Paragraph Three
 - Specific strengths to the specialty and leadership
- Closing paragraph
 - What you are looking for and what they can expect.

Dr. Manning's list of five things that PDs don't like seeing in a personal statement

- Not personal at all
- Too long (keep it to 1 page!!)
- Boring/cookie cutter
- Too much time talking about the field
- Noncommittal

Here's another good tweet-thread on personal statements by Dr. Gabriel Bosslet, fellowship director @gbosslet

<https://twitter.com/gbosslet/status/1158463541667606528>

Expenses

In 2022-2023 cycle, all ophthalmology residency interviews will be virtual. However, application season can still be expensive, so take a few things into consideration before starting. The majority of the expenses will come from submitting your application. To give you an estimate, applying to ~85 programs amounted to \$1700 in application fees. Here are some tips for this year and future years where interviews may be conducted in-person once again:

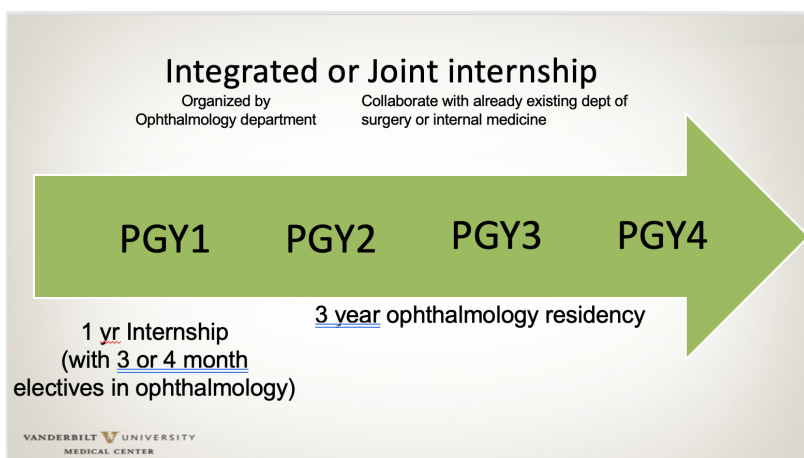
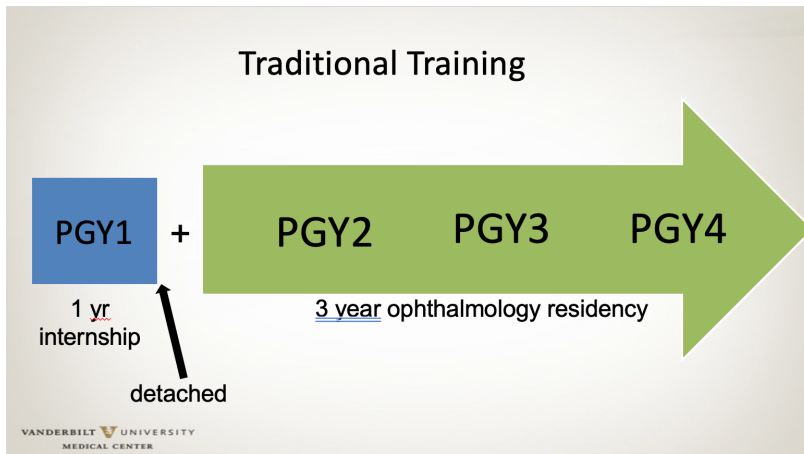
- If you are not taking maximum loans, try to take out that maximum for the fourth year.
- Open a rewards credit card for traveling ~3-4 months prior to interview season.
 - If you live in a city that is a hub for a specific airline (ie. Nashville is a Southwest hub) consider getting a credit card for that airline. Do your research on what points and rewards you get! Some credit cards will have travel insurance or rental car liability insurance included. The Southwest card comes with an annual fee of between \$69-\$99. There are several more perks to the \$99 one, and you get an annual point bonus equivalent to the fee you pay in the Southwest credit card, so if

you are interested in the Southwest card, you should go with the higher costing one.

- Many people like Chase Sapphire Preferred/Reserve, because travel points can be used on any airline. The Chase Sapphire Reserve comes with a much larger fee, but there are significantly more perks.
- The Costco credit card actually has 3% back on all travel related purchases, which when you convert points to dollars comes to about an equivalent amount. If you have the Costco credit card, this may be a great way to get cash back.
- Consider renting a car for places that may be further away from the airport. Often you can rent a car for less than \$100 for two days, which may be cheaper than a \$40 Uber/lyft each way to and from the airport, and Ubers to and from the interview. Often programs will provide free parking, but make sure to confirm with the program coordinator. If you elect to drive, make sure you leave for your interview earlier so that you can find parking.
- Try to contact friends or alumni in the cities to save on hotel prices. If you've met people at previous interviews, sometimes you can even coordinate a hotel with that person at a future interview!

Integrated internships vs. Joint internships vs. Traditional programs

Ophthalmology as a whole is undergoing a transition from traditional, detached internships + 3 years of ophthalmology residency (1+3) to having either integrated or joint internship programs. By July 1 2023, the ACGME accreditation organization has mandated that all programs become integrated or joint.



The SF Match website contains an export-able Excel sheet of all programs and designates the training sequence of each (traditional, joint, or integrated). We have pulled this information and included it below. As of January 2023, all programs are now Joint or Integrated. Programs are listed in alphabetical order. The joint programs are indicated in white and integrated programs are indicated in green:

Program Name	Training Sequence	Program Name	Training Sequence
Albany Medical College	Residency Joint	SUNY - Downstate	Residency Joint

Albert Einstein CoM	Residency Joint	SUNY Stony Brook	Residency Joint
Ascension Macomb-Oakland Ophthalmology	Residency Integrated	SUNY-Buffalo /Ed.Consort.	Residency Joint
Baylor College of Medicine/Cullen Eye Institute	Residency Joint	Temple U - Philadelphia	Residency Joint
Beaumont Health Ophthalmology, Royal Oak Program	Residency Joint	Texas A&M HSC Baylor Scott & White	Residency Joint
Beaumont Health Ophthalmology, Taylor Program	Residency Joint	Texas Tech University	Residency Integrated
Boston University	Residency Joint	The University of Texas at Austin Dell Medical School Ophthalmology	Residency Integrated
BronxCare Health System	Residency Joint	Tufts/New England Eye Ctr	Residency Integrated
Broward Health	Residency Integrated	Tulane University	Residency Integrated
Brown University	Residency Joint	U Alabama - Birmingham	Residency Integrated
Case Western Reserve U	Residency Joint	U Arizona	Residency Integrated
Cleveland Clinic - Cole Eye Institute	Residency Integrated	U Arkansas	Residency Integrated
Columbia U / Harkness	Residency Integrated	U California - Davis	Residency Integrated
CPMC - San Francisco	Residency Joint	U California - Irvine	Residency Joint
Dartmouth - Hitchcock	Residency Integrated	U California - LA	Residency Joint
Duke University	Residency Integrated	U California - San Diego	Residency Joint
Eastern Virginia MS	Residency Joint	U California - SF	Residency Joint
Emory University	Residency Joint	U Cincinnati	Residency Joint
Geisinger MC	Residency Integrated	U Colorado	Residency Joint
George Washington U	Residency Joint	U Florida - Gainesville	Residency Joint
Georgetown U/Wash Hosp	Residency Integrated	U Iowa	Residency Joint
Harvard Medical School - Mass. Eye & Ear Infirmary	Residency Integrated	U Kansas - Kansas City	Residency Joint
HCA Healthcare/USF Morsani College of Medicine GME: Regional Medical Center Bayonet Point	Residency Joint	U Kentucky	Residency Integrated

Ophthalmology Program			
Henry Ford Hospital - Detroit	Residency Joint	U Louisville	Residency Joint
Howard U - Wash, DC	Residency Integrated	U Maryland	Residency Joint
Illinois Eye and Ear Infirmary	Residency Integrated	U Miami / Bascom Palmer	Residency Joint
Indiana University	Residency Integrated	U Michigan	Residency Joint
Kettering Health Network Ophthalmology	Residency Joint	U Minnesota - Mpls.	Residency Joint
Kresge Eye Institute / Wayne State University	Residency Integrated	U Missouri - Columbia	Residency Integrated
Larkin Community Hospital Program	Residency Integrated	U Missouri - Kansas City	Residency Joint
Loma Linda University	Residency Joint	U Nebraska	Residency Integrated
Loyola U / Hines VA Hosp.	Residency Joint	U North Carolina	Residency Joint
LSU - Shreveport	Residency Joint	U Oklahoma-Oklahoma City	Residency Integrated
LSU New Orleans	Residency Integrated	U Pittsburgh	Residency Joint
Mayo Clinic	Residency Integrated	U Puerto Rico	Residency Integrated
Med C Georgia	Residency Joint	U South Carolina	Residency Joint
Med C Wisconsin	Residency Integrated	U Tennessee - Memphis	Residency Integrated
Med U South Carolina	Residency Joint	U Texas - Houston	Residency Integrated
Nassau University MC - NY	Residency Joint	U Texas - San Antonio	Residency Joint
Nazareth Hospital Ophthalmology Residency	Residency Joint	U Texas/ Methodist -Galveston	Residency Joint
New York Eye & Ear Infirmary	Residency Joint	U Utah	Residency Joint
New York Medical College	Residency Integrated	U Virginia	Residency Integrated
Northwell Health/ Zucker School of Medicine at Hofstra	Residency Integrated	U Washington	Residency Joint
Northwestern University	Residency Integrated	U Wisconsin	Residency Joint
NY Presb. Hosp-Weill MC/Cornell U	Residency Integrated	University of Chicago	Residency Joint
NYMC at Jamaica Hospital MC	Residency Joint	University of Florida College of Medicine - Jacksonville	Residency Joint
NYU Grossman School of Medicine	Residency Integrated	University of Massachusetts Chan Medical School	Residency Integrated

Ohio State University	Residency Joint	University of Mississippi	Residency Joint
Oregon HSU	Residency Integrated	University of Rochester Flaum Eye Institute	Residency Integrated
Penn State U - Hershey	Residency Integrated	University of South Florida	Residency Joint
Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine	Residency Integrated	USC Roski Eye Institute – Residency	Residency Integrated
Rush Medical Center	Residency Integrated	UT Southwestern- Dallas	Residency Integrated
Rutgers New Jersey Medical School	Residency Joint	Vanderbilt University Medical Center	Residency Joint
Scheie Eye Inst / U Penn	Residency Joint	Virginia Commonwealth University Health System	Residency Joint
Sinai Hospital -Baltimore	Residency Joint	Wake Forest U	Residency Integrated
St. John's Episcopal Hospital	Residency Integrated	Washington University in St. Louis	Residency Integrated
St. Louis University	Residency Joint	West Virginia University Eye Institute	Residency Joint
Stanford Ophthalmology Advanced Research Residency Program (SOAR)	Residency Joint	Wills Eye Hospital Residency Program at Jefferson	Residency Joint
Stanford University	Residency Integrated	Wilmer-Johns Hopkins	Residency Integrated
Stroger/Cook Cty-Chicago	Residency Integrated	Yale New Haven Medical Center	Residency Joint
SUNY Upstate - Syracuse	Residency Integrated		

The ERAS application is required to secure an intern year spot in joint programs. Since this describes a large portion of ophthalmology residencies, there is a good chance you will need to fill out the ERAS application as well. In doing so, you may need an additional letter of recommendation (some internship programs have a minimum of 4 letters of recommendation). Furthermore, you will need to adjust your autobiographical sketch to indicate you are applying to an intern year program in (either medicine or surgery). You do not need to change your autobiographical sketch completely, simply adjust the ending to apply to the relevant intern year.

If you match into a program that has a joint or integrated program, you may still need to rank the program on NRMP when it comes to submitting your rank list. If this is the case after you match, your program coordinator will send you a specific code for their internal medicine or surgery program. You may or may not need to even apply via ERAS to the program. Your program will inform you before the NRMP rank list deadline.

Types of intern year programs

General Medicine - This is the most common preliminary internship. Now that all programs are joint or integrated, many will do their internship program at the same institution at which they apply. If this is of interest to you, reach out to the general medicine program coordinator after you match in February 2023 to determine if this is the case. Some programs will have you interview with the director of the preliminary year on the same day as your ophthalmology interview. General medicine programs vary in rotation offerings and call schedules, so if elective or ambulatory time is important to you, make sure you get a good idea of requirements and scheduling. Internal medicine programs vary in intensity and culture, so talk to people where you end up matching about where they did their intern year.

General Surgery - Some elect to do a general surgery intern year. While this is less common, this may be a route for you if you enjoy surgery much more than medicine. It is important to consider the culture of a program and how they treat preliminary residents compared to their categorical residents when selecting a surgical intern year.

Transitional year or (TY) - These programs are often a mix between internal medicine, surgery, emergency medicine, and elective time. These are becoming less and less common and only a handful still exist to this day. A list of TY programs often are found on various forums online. [FREIDA](#) is a resource put together by the AMA that allows you to see many of these transitional programs and some information like work hours, number of residents, vacation time. [TexasStar](#) also will have a list. Transitional year programs have a reputation of having more elective rotations and variety of offerings than internal medicine programs. However, some TY programs

can be more time-intensive than certain internal medicine programs, so be sure to thoroughly investigate the different programs and ask about rotation schedules. Talk to an upper-class student who recently went through the cycle because much of the information about programs are passed down through word-of-mouth. Programs with a lot of elective time are naturally highly sought after and the applicant pool is competitive representing students from competitive subspecialties (ophthalmology, dermatology, radiology, etc). These transitional year programs get thousands of applications a year.

Timeline for applying to intern year

Most programs with joint internships will ask you to apply for the intern year through ERAS *after* the match in early February.

However, if you are considering a back up plan outside of SF Match, it may be important to register for ERAS early in order to take advantage of dual applying.

Pricing for ERAS

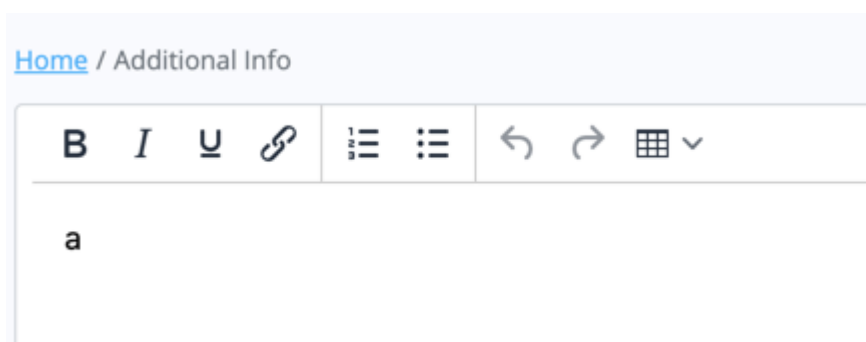
It is important to know that each category of internship you apply to (ie internal medicine vs. surgery vs. transitional year) has its own fees. This means that you will pay \$100 for each type of intern category you plan to apply to, and you can apply to up to 10 per specialty at that price. The price table for ERAS for 2022 is below:

Programs Per Specialty	Application Fees
Up to 10	\$99
11 - 20	\$19 each
21 - 30	\$23 each
31 or more	\$26 each

SF Match Guide

The application format for SFMatch changed in 2020, but many of the application sections have remained the same throughout the years. The categories are fairly vague and have some overlap, so you have some flexibility in choosing how to format your application. SF match has released an [application guide](#) for their Central Application Service as well. We have extracted the key points and highlights from this guide below.

Formatting: SFmatch has free-text boxes for many categories, and specific fill-ins for others. For the free-text boxes, most will recommend using bullet points with short descriptions and appropriate spacing in order to keep your application readable. You will be allowed to bold, underline, italicize but otherwise the formatting is somewhat limited.



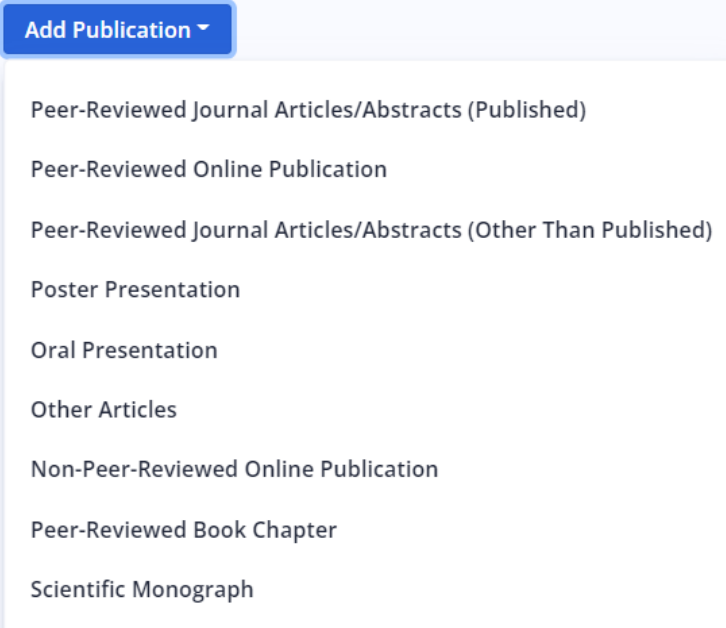
In the past, you could preview your application in PDF form to see the formatting the program directors will see. It is important to note that there may also be character/line limits for these free-text boxes. Sometimes words get cut off in the final document, so be sure to include a little bit of margin. **As of 8.15.22, the 2022 website does not allow for PDF preview.** Hopefully this will change in future years. The 2023-2024 application will have some updates.

Review of each of the sections

Personal information: This is a fairly intuitive section. Make sure you list all relevant employment! Many programs appreciate seeing service-related jobs (ie restaurant server, front-desk manager, retail, fast-food, paper-routes etc) as it can highlight aspects of your character and people-experiences. If you worked through college, it also shows time-management, discipline and work ethic!

Take advantage of listing your previous home (or parents') address in the alternate address section if different from current address. It is natural for readers to connect positively with applicants when they see they might have a connection to that town or state which sometimes does not show up elsewhere in the application.

The personal information section consists of a dropdown menu similar to ERAS to record your research publications and presentations. These are the options for input as of in the 2022-2023 cycle. SFMatch announced the launch of 2023-2024 update.



A screenshot of a web interface showing a dropdown menu. The menu is titled "Add Publication" and is currently open, displaying a list of publication types. The options listed are:

- Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles/Abstracts (Published)
- Peer-Reviewed Online Publication
- Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles/Abstracts (Other Than Published)
- Poster Presentation
- Oral Presentation
- Other Articles
- Non-Peer-Reviewed Online Publication
- Peer-Reviewed Book Chapter
- Scientific Monograph

Here is the information needed to be imputed:

Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles/Abstracts (Published) ×

Author(s)*

Journal Article/Abstract Title*

Publication Name*

Publication Med-Line Unique Identifier*


Issue Number*

 N/A

Publication Volume*

 N/A

Month/Year*

Pages*

Website (URL)

Save

It is important to double check minor things like author-order, because it is easy for author order to have been changed minorly in the final manuscript ([Tamez et al](#)).

Honors/Interests: This is also under personal information. This is where you can list your honors, awards, achievements, other research activities, outside interests, and hobbies. That is a huge list for the specific box. Use that to your advantage - if there is information listed elsewhere in your application, perhaps do not discuss it in this section. **Create subheaders to keep this section organized.**

Some things that you might not think to consider that can go in this section are:

- Don't forget about research awards - those can go here! So can any academic scholarships.
- Anything you consider an achievement can go here! Did you set up a cool program at your school? That could be considered an achievement.
- Other research activities give you a chance to highlight research projects that are not yet published or presented. It is also an opportunity to briefly outline the research you have done with your mentors.
- Outside interests and hobbies are so important to include in your application! This is one of the most popular questions asked during the interview process. If there is some hobby you are passionate about, put it there, and be prepared to talk about it!
- A lesser priority, but if your school has a nontraditional grading system, this may be an opportunity to re-highlight that by reiterating and indicating which courses you

honored (this will also be reflected in the Medical Student Performance Evaluation (MSPE). This is sent late September to early October by your medical school. Some programs have access to this before downloading your application for review, while others who read applications early do not.

Additional information:

Career objectives - short description of what your objectives are beyond being an ophthalmologist (ie, academic research, private practice, med ed, basic science research, mentorship, regional, global health, etc)

Specialty electives and related activities: Specialty electives include any electives you did related to ophthalmology. This is a place for you to highlight visiting rotations or multiple ophthalmology rotations. "Related activities" is rather vague but use it to your advantage and list anything related to ophthalmology or activities related to a focused skill set (i.e. chalk talks given or courses like neuro-radiology, volunteer activities or Zoom lectures attended across the country, and if you completed any ophthalmology courses at your home school (like the ACEs at Vanderbilt), you can include any end-of-course presentations here). You can include specific research interests you may have. Most things can qualify as "related activities" as long as they are related to your preparation for ophthalmology.

Public Service and Activities: Again, this is rather vague because of the word "activities." Keep this section organized with headers like you should organize the rest of your application. This is a chance for you to highlight any service-related activities you were involved with. However, this is also an opportunity to highlight your leadership roles in other activities in medical school. Many things can be considered "public service" so find things in your CV that you want to highlight here. If you have the space for it, **it is meaningful to write a sentence highlighting your role/accomplishments with each activity so programs know you are not listing clubs and activities for the sake of listing them.**

Self-identification as URM: Check this box if you are a URM as defined in the application. **Read this carefully, in the past people have accidentally checked it when it does not apply to them.** The AUPO and AAO are committed to increasing ethnic and racial diversity in ophthalmology.

Documents:

Global: Upload your transcripts, Step score reports, AOA letter etc here. Your school will upload the MSPE and you can view that here, too.

Personal statements: See above for tips on personal statement writing. See below for the sections that comprise the new "Personal Statement" prompts as of 2022 and will be repeated in 2023-2024 cycle:

Personal Statements



CLICK FOR INSTRUCTIONS

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 questions not to exceed 250 words each). Select 2 questions from the list below. Copy the 2 questions and limit each answer to 250 words.

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 a way in which you will add diversity to your residency class. This may relate to your background, upbringing, life experiences, professional/personal interest, or educational path.
4. If you were to start an ophthalmology residency program, what would be the three core values you would base it on?

Each applicant is required to compose an autobiographical sketch as well as two short-answer responses to 2 of the 4 essay prompts listed above. You are able to upload multiple personal statements to selectively send to different programs. Each applicant can have a different combination of essay question responses for different institutions. For example, for one program, one might answer question #2 if they have an important mentor from that institution. This might not be the case at another institution where another essay question response is more relevant for that student. This allows for flexibility to change the statement to reflect why you might be interested in a specific geographical area or describe a connection to the program (i.e. “My mother, having been an alumna of Emory Eye Center has always cherished the mentorship culture of this program.”) This isn’t necessary or expected, but the opportunity exists if you can to take advantage of it.

LOR section: The program allows you to send a request to your letter writers.

Programs: This is a directory that will allow you to search for programs by state and application deadline. If the program is listed to have four years of training, you can count on that program being integrated or joint. However, if it is listed to only have 3 years of training, that does not not necessarily mean that they do not have an attached internship.

At the top of the “Program Directory” subsection, you can choose to export a Microsoft Excel sheet of all of the programs that you can apply to that year. You can choose to view information for all or selected programs. The Excel sheet will give you information on the name and address of the program, program director’s and coordinator’s names and contact information, whether or not the program is joint or integrated, number of positions, application deadlines, interview dates, etc. See below:

Interview scheduler: This will be used to schedule a maximum of 15 interviews. On and after interview release day (usually in mid-October), you will receive emails (and text notifications if you have set these up) each time a program sends you an interview invitation. In the “Interview Scheduler” tab, applicants can view pending interview invitations and choose from open, available time slots. Although you may be invited to more than 15 institutions, you can only “accept” up to 15 interviews. Be mindful of what time an interview will begin in **your** time zone. Also, you cannot schedule more than one AM or more than one PM interview on the same day. **Be sure to sign up for text and email alerts through the SF Match website! You want to address an interview invite as soon as it arrives!**

Interviews: To build your match list, you will need to select the programs you interviewed at on this page.

Rank List: You will order your rank list here after you complete interviews.

At Vanderbilt, Dean Fleming is a great resource, and she will help review all CVs early to make sure you have it formatted well. She helps reword phrases as well as recommend items to put on your CV you may not have thought of! She will even help you review your finalized application if you schedule a meeting with her.

Assign documents: You can upload more than 3 LORs and multiple personal statements, and this allows you to send a unique combination of LORs and an autobiographical statement to different programs. An additional step prior to submitting is to assign documents to programs (similar to ERAS). Make sure you assign the correct documents to the correct programs!

Supplemental essays in 2022

Some programs will ask you to submit supplemental information by specific deadlines. This could include getting an eye exam with stereovision and color vision testing (many Texas programs ask for this), or essays requesting you to respond to why you’re interested in their program. A compiled list of programs that require supplemental essays is updated annually by other student online resources. Always check on the website to confirm. Most programs will email you with a request once you apply. **Please note, the deadlines were historical deadlines and may change in future years. Source: OphthoMatch 2022-2023 (accessed 1.12.23)**

Program	Deadline Prompt(s)	Where to Send?
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University of Washington	9/1	Please send us a paragraph of 100 words or less about why specifically you would like to come to the University of Washington by SEPTEMBER 1 in MS Word Document to uwophth@uw.edu. Please no PDFs.	uwophth@uw.edu
Dartmouth	9/2	Dartmouth-Hitchcock has a supplemental application requirement: In one paragraph, please describe your interest in moving to northern New England and joining the Dartmouth-Hitchcock medical community for your ophthalmology training.	Please include your SF Match ID and Name in the document and email your supplemental application statement as a PDF attachment (after your CAS application) to EyeResidency@hitchcock.org (Program Coordinator Email - TBD)
George Washington	9/5	A separate statement, (Deadline for statement submission will be September 5, 2020) 1 page or less, indicating your interest in our program	Ms. Darcelle Pinckens , Residency Coordinator at dpinckens@mfa.gwu.edu
University of Kentucky	9/7	We require a short, secondary application consisting of a 400 word maximum statement discussing why you want to come to UK.	The completed statement can be sent in the text of an email or as an attachment to: madison.seward@uky.edu. The deadline for this application is Wednesday, September 7th, 2022.
University of Minnesota	9/9	Please upload a one-paragraph (300 words or less) explanation of your interest in the ophthalmology residency program at the University of Minnesota by Friday, September 9.	The paragraph should be saved as a PDF:CLastname_Firstname_SFMatch#.pdf and uploaded below. Be sure to include your name and SF Match# in the body of the document. https://forms.gle/bUs14iPawtM8bX5a6
University of California: Irvine	9/15	ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS REQUESTED: CV & Photo -- Please email it to uciophthoresidency@hs.uci.edu by 9/15/22 (application deadline) CV only this year	Please email additional documents to c by 9/15/2022.
UCSD	9/25	In addition to the CAS materials requested by the SF Match you are welcome to send any	Program Manager at Shiley-residency@health

		additional documents you would like to add to your application which is not accepted by the match program	.ucsd.edu or rkaustin@health.ucsd.edu.
Mayo Clinic	9/28 noon	OPTIONAL: Is there a specific professional or personal reason that you are seeking training at Mayo Clinic (e.g., professional mentor, location, etc.)?	If you wish to respond to the following optional supplemental question, please respond to: RSTOPHEDU@mayo.edu by WED 9/28/22 at 12 Noon. We ask that you please follow these steps: 1. In the "SUBJECT" line and in the "Body of the E-mail document" please enter: "Last Name, First Name, SFMatch ID#" 2. Please respond within the body of the email: we DO NOT want .pdf attachments! 3. Please limit response to a maximum of 2-3 sentences.
University of Florida: Jacksonville	9/30	.	E-mail the statement to eye.gme@jax.ufl.edu stating your CAS number.
Albany	10/14	NON-CAS Supplemental Materials that must be received by Oct. 14th: Your application will be reviewed only if you have submitted a document briefly answering the following two questions. 1. What particular interests do you have in our program? 2. Please share a life lesson that you have learned on the job prior to entering medical school.	NON-CAS Supplemental Materials that must be received by Oct. 14th: Your application will be reviewed only if you have submitted a document briefly answering the following two questions. 1. What particular interests do you have in our program? 2. Please share a life lesson that you have learned on the job prior to entering medical school.
University of Arizona	ASAP	Thank you for your interest in the Ophthalmology Residency Program at the University of Arizona. We have received your application from the San Francisco Matching Program. Please email a short paragraph about why you are interested in our program to pbroyles@eyes.arizona.edu.	pbroyles@eyes.arizona.edu Your application will be reviewed after we have received the paragraph. (No specific date

			included in the email)
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The interview process

- How do you choose which programs to interview at? At first, be less picky, but as soon as you have the critical minimum number of interviews (10-13 interviews), you can be comfortable to be more selective moving forward if you want to maintain around that number (some applicants choose to cancel already accepted interviews, but be careful and considerate if you are in this position). If you have specific needs (ie. couples matching or 2nd time applicant) you may want to aim for more interviews.
- Most applicants will use a completely separate Gmail account to sign up for SFmatch. There are ways you can set up your Gmail to notify you as soon as interview invites come out. Unfortunately most schools only have a few days that they interview, so if you do not respond within minutes, your preferred day may be filled. That could be the difference between attending an interview at a program and having to choose between two programs.
- An extremely type-A method to plan your interviews: Pick 25-30 places that you want to interview at and list of all their possible interview dates. Once you do this, rank and notate the dates in the preferred order you would like them. You will notice that there are only a few permutations that would allow you to participate in all of those interviews (virtually or in-person). Thankfully if you're only interviewing at 12-13 programs, the permutations are higher, but you do not know which places will offer you an interview, and you only have a short amount of time to request your #1 interview spot.

Here is an example calendar for planning interviews with possible interview dates outlined in purple. As you confirm interviews, you can easily change around your #1,2,3 if needed and you can add your confirmed interviews and flights in a different color (blue here).

Today

< > November 2019

🔍 ? ⚙️ Month ▾ ☰

SUN 27	MON 28	TUE 29	WED 30	THU 31	FRI 1 Nov	SAT 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4pm Southwest Airlines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baylor Baylor #1 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2:25pm Southwest Airli 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Michigan #1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bayor #2 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cleveland Clinic Cleveland Clinic #1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baylor #3 Cleveland Clinic #2 3:55pm Southwest Airli 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scheie #2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vanderbilt Vanderbilt #1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Michigan #3 Vanderbilt #2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northwestern Baylor #4 Northwestern #1 Vanderbilt #3 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10:25am Southwest Airli 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scheie Eye Institute Scheie #1 WashU#3 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utah #1 6:30am Southwest Airli 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Michigan Michigan #2 WashU #2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utah #2 11:25am Your Itinerary: 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5:30am Your Itinerary: C 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Iowa Iowa #1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scheie #3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Washu Utah #3 WashU #1 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OHSU OHSU #1
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

Responding to interview invites

- Interview invites come in several different ways:
 - SFMatch message/email requesting that you schedule through the SFMatch platform (most common)
 - SFMatch email from coordinator requesting an emailed response

If you receive an SFMatch message or email requesting an emailed response about date preference, you can use the email format below to communicate with program coordinators.

Hello,

These are my preferred interview dates in order of preference.

- November 13
- November 15
- November 20

Thank you!

Best,

If you do not get your first choice interview date, sometimes you can contact the program coordinator and request to be placed on a waitlist for a particular date (some programs offer this). It is not appropriate to organize a switch outside of program coordinators, so the best option is to request to be put on a waitlist for the date wanted.

Virtual interviews

For 2023-2024, virtual interviews will be conducted by all ophthalmology programs. These formats might vary from the program's historical methods of interviews, so keep in mind this is just as new to them as it will be for the applicant. When a full day or 1.5 days has previously been planned, it is possible this will break up into a series of sessions before the interview (or after the interview). The interview will possibly last half day (AM or PM) and may have multiple interviews and styles: one-on-one with another faculty, 2-faculty interviews, resident group interviews, or small group break-out sessions with multiple faculty/residents. Most programs include opportunities to meet residents either socially or through formal interviewing. Socials and networking will also look and feel very different. They are trying to get to know you and promote their program virtually, which is difficult to do without physical tours. Do your homework and lots of it - to learn about the program culture and training experience - to make the most out of these limited screen interactions.

Start practicing now to master your facial expressions and responses into a camera rather than to a specific person. Get comfortable talking into a green light while being yourself on Zoom or Teams! Learn how to be dynamic on camera!

Set up:

1. Be sure to be in a location with strong connectivity. Have a clean, tidy, and professional background (school, office, or home) or use a very non-distracting virtual background.
2. **If your webcam or microphone quality is unreliable, invest in a USB webcam and microphone (around \$30 on Amazon)**
3. Avoid a rocking or swivel chair.
4. Sit up tall, dress to impress as if it were in-person. You will feel professional if you dress the part. Avoid flashy jewelry which can be distracting.
5. Position your video camera at eye level so you don't look sleepy (camera positioned too low) or surprised (camera positioned too high)

Zoom socials. The same rules apply, have the right etiquette, posture, and don't fidget. Practice eye contact **into your computer's camera or separate webcam**. Minimize the windows of the videos of your interviewers and then move it to the top of the screen to bring your eyes closer to the video camera.

If you prefer contact lenses or have no preference regarding eyeglasses, this is the time to choose to wear contact lenses to avoid the glare that computer screens have on many glasses.

Other key points about the interview day:

Take notes immediately after you finish the interview: strengths, weaknesses, topics to follow up on or get more information.

Interview tips

- **PREPARATION PREPARATION PREPARATION.** This is perhaps the MOST important thing to do to prepare for your interviews. Know everything in your application inside and out. That research from college? Someone will ask you about it. Your obscure hobby? Someone will ask you about it! The one sentence in your personal statement that you forgot about? Someone will ask about it. Behavioral questions also come up often, so prepare answers to many of those. At Vanderbilt, Dr. Law holds mock interviews and may offer extra practice if you request it. She is by far one of the hardest interviewers during the mock interview, so a session with her will be great practice. You should practice in the mirror, practice with faculty from other disciplines, video yourself, set up multiple practice sessions with others via Zoom, etc.
- **Answers:** Be honest, authentic and try not to sound scripted. Because you have a screen in front of you during virtual interviews, it is tempting to write out answers on Word, but instead just write on paper key words to jog your memory or place a paper sticky note on screen. It will feel more natural and will be less overwhelming to have to find your e-notes behind windows. When asked about your institution, stay positive even if there are many changes you'd like to suggest or if you have a negative experience. Don't forget your institution may be another faculty's alma mater. Don't have yes/no or dead-end answers, always find a way to explain what you've learned or briefly close with how you've experienced something. Keep answers illustrative but concise.
- **What questions do you have?** Ask them. It looks bad to say "I don't have any" or "All my questions have been answered". This shuts down the interviewer. Use this space to learn what that interviewer has to say about a similar question that was previously answered elsewhere as this helps you have a better understanding of the program. But don't ask questions that are answered by the website. Instead, state that you read X on the website and ask a perspective question about X. (ie. description of research program: "I read about the structure of the research program on the website; can you tell me how residents find mentors and projects?")
- **Dinners and socials:** These are not traditionally mandatory, but are often your best resource to figure out what programs are the best fit. Pay attention to how happy the residents are, and what kinds of things the residents do for fun! Ask the residents a lot of questions, but most importantly figure out if you fit in. At many programs the current residents or chiefs have some say in the final rank list. There are a handful of programs that have a cocktail hour for their social rounds where faculty also attend. If business casual is the dress code, it's okay to err on the side of business more than casual. Many faculty or residents come directly from clinic.
- **Thank you notes:** Email > Card > None. You will get many different recommendations for thank you notes, but ophthalmology is a small world, so at minimum, a personalized thank you note can show courtesy and gratitude and may be remembered as such. Some programs will give you a strict no-email policy, but most will provide you with emails for your interviewers. If you write a thank you note, keep it short, but try to include a few sentences that were personal to your interview. Some programs rank applicants on the final day of interviews, so the thank you note or email may not make it to the interview

members in time to have any impact. In fact, most will say that a note will not influence rank, [see recent publication on this topic](#).

- Your behavior and professionalism is being observed at all times! You are always building your reputation. How you communicate and interact with program coordinators, directors, residents, and other candidates is carefully considered. Stay engaged and be courteous to everyone, even while declining interviews or rescheduling dates.

(The hardest) Interview questions

- What would your sibling say about you that no one else would say about you?
- What would your frenemy say about you?
- Tell me your 3 greatest weaknesses
- Share an ethical dilemma you've encountered
- Describe a time that you failed as a leader and what did you learn?
- Describe a time when you had to admit a mistake?
- Describe a time you were held accountable for something. How did you own up to your mistakes?
- What is a research question you are interested in exploring?

Helpful books/resources for medical students on ophthalmology

- AAO's Basic Ophthalmology: Essentials for Medical Students, Tenth Edition
<https://store.aao.org/basic-ophthalmology-essentials-for-medical-students-tenth-edition.html>
- Medical student page on AAO website: <https://www.aao.org/medical-students>
- Tim Root: <https://timroot.com/>
- Eyewiki: https://eyewiki.aao.org/Main_Page
- Iowa's resources: <http://eyerounds.org/>
- Moran Eye Center resources <https://morancore.utah.edu/>
- Gonioscopy: <http://gonioscopy.org/>
- Eye Guru: <https://eyeguru.org/>
- Medskl: <https://medskl.com/>
- Eyes for Ears Podcast: <https://eyesforears.net/>

Other Match Guides

Below are resources that may still be available from the 2022 cycle. The 2023 resources have not all been released nor taken place at the time of this publication.

2022 Central Application Service Ophthalmology Applicant Instructions

<https://sfmatch.org/files/f0956bd95c6b4da1aa6c1b96dbaf29b8>

Basic info from AAO on ophthalmology residency:

<https://www.aao.org/medical-students/residency-match-basics>

2022 Advice for the Ophthalmology Residency Match Season - Link to 85 minute joint AAO/AUPO webinar held June 1, 2022:

<https://www.aao.org/annual-meeting-video/2022-advice-ophthalmology-residency-match-season-c>

Copy of presentation presented during that webinar:

<https://aupo.org/sites/default/files/2022-06/2022%20Advice%20for%20the%20Ophthalmology%20Residency%20Match%20Season%20Slides.pdf>

SF Match 2022 Report

<https://aupo.org/sites/default/files/2022-03/Feb%202022%20Oph%20Residency%20Match%20General%20Stats%20final.pdf>

SF Match 2023 Report

[Ophthalmology Residency Match](#)

SF Match 2023 Demographics Report

<https://sfmatch.org/files/be306f84595c4c94b62b998e2fb8ba96>

University of Iowa Match Guide:

<https://webeye.ophth.uiowa.edu/eyeforum/tutorials/iowa-Guide-to-the-Ophthalmology-Match.pdf>

University of Minnesota Match Guide:

<https://med.umn.edu/ophthalmology/education-training/residency>

Virtual interview tips:

<https://www.aamc.org/what-we-do/mission-areas/medical-education/conducting-interviews-during-coronavirus-pandemic?fbclid=IwAR3-EnIRLZPBqGwPDLrLpoL4qt4xJSS4CHkSziF-Gmwep2Z4tBK2iixF0Wk>

Compiled map of ophthalmology programs: <https://www.medmap.io/specialty/Ophthalmology>

Social media

Social media is a growing way to learn more about various departments across the country. This can give you a preview of the research going on in various departments and can show you what kinds of educational programming is offered. However, you should also know that anything you post on social-media is public or can be shared and negatively affect you. Be considerate what kinds of things you post on your social media. [It can be a powerful tool, but can also be detrimental \(Schmuter et al\).](#)