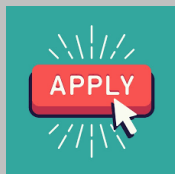


OSA S.T.E.P.S. to Success



September: Application Time

A message from OSA to our incredible students: We see the dedication, resilience, and hard work that have led you to this important milestone. As you navigate this exciting and often stressful time, know that we are here to support you and are cheering you on every step of the way! **YOU GOT THIS!!!**

WE ARE HERE TO SUPPORT YOU!

If you need assistance at any time in this process, please reach out.

As we approach applications, we have a LOT of pearls to share (*read – this is a LONG newsletter packed with important information*). Additionally, you can anticipate several email reminders and updates over the next few weeks.

Date	Applicant Timeline/Activity
Sep 4	Applicants may begin to send applications to programs
Sep 25	Application Deadline (ERAS/ResidencyCAS) <i>ERAS programs may begin to review applications</i>
Oct 1	<i>ResidencyCAS programs may begin to review applications</i>
Jan 30	NRMP Registration Deadline
Feb 2	NRMP Ranking Opens
Mar 4	NRMP Rank Order List Certification Deadline

NOTE: *SF Match (Ophthalmology Timeline is earlier – [See Timetable](#))*

Monthly Timeline/Checklist for [ERAS](#), [ResidencyCAS](#), [SF Match](#), [AUA](#)

- ☐ **Submit** your Residency Application!
Finish **application** and upload **supporting documents**
- ☐ Follow up with **Letter** Writers (recommend they submit by September 1)
- ☐ Review your **MSPE** for accuracy, spelling, grammar
- ☐ Choose/refine **program list** (Resources – specialty advisors, near-peers, residency explorer, OSA advisor)

Additional Resources:

RAM: The Application – [Components](#); [Applying to Programs](#); [Final Steps](#)

RAM: [Letters of Reference](#)

AAMC [Residency Explorer](#)

AMA OBGYN [Residency Alignment Index](#)

Office of Student Affairs

Studentaffairs@som.umaryland.edu

OSA STEPS to Success

S. Self-Assessment
T. Target Specialty
E. Experience
P. Preparation & Planning
S. Strategy Execution

ERAS Resources

[Applicant User Guide](#)
[ERAS Worksheet](#)
[ERAS Checklist](#)
[ERAS FAQs](#)
[OSA Checklist](#)

ResidencyCAS Resources

[Quick Start](#)
[EM Worksheet](#)
[OBGYN Worksheet](#)
[OSA Checklist](#)

SF Match Resources

[SF Match](#)

Application Basics

When is the best time to complete your application? Student may begin submitting applications as early as September 4th. We recommend students submit on or before September 22nd. Do NOT wait until the last minute as the system often crashes during times of high activity. Note there is no specific benefit to submitting early, as programs cannot see your applications until September 24th at 9 am regardless of when you submit. Remember, once you CERTIFY your application, you cannot go back in and edit. ***For SF Match, your submissions are due September 2nd- that is when programs can see your applications. Please do NOT wait until the last minute to submit.*

Important Tips

- Don't wait to get started on this if you have not already begun!
- OSA is available to answer questions regarding application completion
- Use the resources available to you based on your application system
 - [The UMSOM Residency Application Manual](#)
 - MyERAS [Worksheet](#) and [Applicant User Guide](#)
 - The ResidencyCAS [EM Worksheet](#) and [OBGYN Worksheet](#)
- Authorize and release your USMLE and COMPLEX-USA transcripts
- Manage your documents – some documents are assigned to programs by default and others require you to make assignments to programs manually
- We recommend someone reviews your Personal Statement and Impactful Experiences section if you choose to complete it.
- Finalize your program lists – including total number of programs and which programs to apply –discussions with OSA Deans/Departmental advisors may be helpful in understanding your competitiveness for particular programs. The AAMC [Residency explorer](#) tool is useful in learning more about programs of interest.

Program Signaling

RAM: [Applying to Programs and Program Signaling](#)

ERAS: [Program Signaling 2026](#)

AAMC [Residency explorer](#)

- We strongly encourage that you use ALL signals available to you.
- Strategies regarding signaling are unique to specialty/applicant.
- In general, your signals should include a mix of target and reach programs; with the majority being programs where you are competitive.

Need additional advice about signaling? OSA is here to help! Specialty Advisors are another great resource.

Should I signal my home or away programs? National recommendations say YES to both (except for EM). We recommend following that advice unless told otherwise by your specialty-specific advisors at home and away.

Please share consider sharing your signal list with us/your school! This is helpful in advising future year students!

OSA Insider Podcasts

[Apple Podcasts](#)

E 72: Mission & Brand

E 24, 25: Applying to Residencies

E 92: Organization, Time Management

How Can OSA Help You?

ERAS Tokens

Adam Esselman

Aesselman@som.umaryland.edu

VSLO/Aways

Bailey Jenkins

Bjenkins@som.umaryland.edu

Registration

Brian Wynder

Bwynder@som.umaryland.edu

Financial Aid

Sofia Casio/Juanita Simmons

SOMFINAID@som.umaryland.edu

OSA Advisors/MSPE Questions

[OSA Deans](#)

Kerri Thom, MD

John Allen, MD

Marissa Flaherty, MD

Elisabeth Lamos, MD

[Specialty Advisors](#)

Geographic Preferences

RAM: [Applying to Programs and Geographic Preferences](#)

ERAS: [Applicant User Guide – Geographic Preferences](#)

Generally, the best strategy is when your Geographic Preferences align with your program list and signaled programs. If you are applying to a broad geographic area (i.e. > 3 regions), we recommend selecting “No Geographic Preference”. This strategy may be unique to individuals/specialty. Please discuss with your OSA Dean if you are uncertain.

Note, the following specialties are not participating in geographic preference signaling for the 2026 application cycle: Emergency Medicine, Obstetrics & Gynecology, Orthopedic Surgery, and Otolaryngology.

Application Components

Transcripts

- OSA will upload your Transcripts – you do NOT need to request
- You should see the Transcripts uploaded early to mid- September
 - Transcripts have already been upload to SF Match
- Students may review their transcripts at anytime on SURFS

The MSPE

- We are preparing your MSPE.
- A draft copy of your MSPE is now available for your review (due 9/8)
- The MSPE will be uploaded to your application system prior to September 24th
- NOTE that regardless of specialty/application timeline, the MSPE is available to all programs nationally at the same time on September 24th
- Note that Dr. Thom reviews and signs all MSPEs, your ‘MSPE writer’ is the OSA Dean you worked with throughout the season.

Personal Statement

- Feeling Stuck? Check Out: RAM [Personal Statement Guidelines](#)
- Have someone read your PS (We are happy to review these!)
- Keep it to ~ 1 page

Letters of Recommendation

- Aim to have these uploaded by the 1st week of September when possible.
- If you aim to get a letter from a September rotation, plan ahead to discuss the request with faculty to ensure these are received on time
- If you are having difficulty securing a letter, reach out to OSA ASAP
- Make sure you understand the requirements of your specific programs (e.g., most require 3 letters, but some may require a 4th; some require a “chair” letter, etc...). You may need to review your program webpages for detailed requirements.
- Note that once letters are assigned to a program this cannot be changed.

Residency Application Manual

Components

The MSPE ([RAM Link](#))

Review MSPE due by 9/8

Contact: OSA @

studentaffairs@umaryland.edu

Personal Statements

[Guidelines](#)

Letters

RAM: [Link](#)

[MyERAS Guide LoRs](#)

[ResidencyCAS Evaluations](#)



Interviews – Thalamus and More

The Interviews

OSA Interview resources and tips can be found in the **RAM:** [The Interview](#). We strongly encourage all students to participate in at least one mock interview. Many specialty/departments offer mock interviews; if this is not available to you, OSA will be offering a Mock Interview program – details/survey coming soon.

Thalamus

ERAS has partnered with Thalamus, an interview management program. This service is FREE to all ERAS applicants. You should have already received a Thalamus account creation link when registering your ERAS token from no-reply@thalamusgme.com – use this link to finalize your account.

ERAS: [Thalamus](#)

NRMP

What is the NRMP and what do I do now?

The NRMP is the [National Resident Match Program](#), the organization that runs The Match. This is separate from ERAS/ResidencyCAS (which manage your applications) and requires a separate registration.

NRMP/Match timelines can be found [here](#)

Registration opens September 15th and is due by January 30th, 2026 after which time an additional \$50 late fee is applied

*Ophthalmology Match is through [SFMATCH](#)

*Urology Match is through [AUA](#)

What's Ahead

I have submitted my application, what do I do now?

- Prepare for Interviews – see above!
 - Share interview data with OSA via MedScope interview tracker (more details to come). This information helps us to help you in providing real-time feedback and advice throughout the application process.
 - This is a good time to review [Graduation Requirements](#) – and confirm you are on track. You can use this [worksheet](#) to keep track and share with your OSA Dean.
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