

# 2026–27

## Coordinated Interview Release Process FAQs

# FAQs



### Coordinated Interview Release Dates for the 2026–2027 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 improve 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 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 2026–27 ophthalmology residency match will implement two coordinated

interview release dates, each followed by a 24-hour scheduling delay. Interviews will be released on two distinct dates: October 13 and October 20. These pre-determined release dates minimize training disruptions for medical student applicants and give programs ample time to accommodate changes or cancellations that can occur. Unlike other medical specialties that have opted for a single release date, two 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. The 24-hour scheduling delay gives applicants time to review invitations before scheduling opens. The program's response deadline remains a minimum 48-hour window, according to SF Match settings.

**1st date batch interviews can be released by programs: 10/13/26 at 12:00 PM Pacific Time**

**2nd date batch interviews can be released by programs: 10/20/26 at 12:00 PM Pacific Time**

---

**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 two 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 two distinct interview dates, rather than a single batch release of all applications.

***SF Match Interview Scheduler Queue Logistics:***

Programs will utilize the SF Match Interview Scheduler Queue system to rank applicants in their preferred order and assign them to available invitation release dates. Although programs may queue as many applicants as they choose, SF Match will not issue more invitations than the number of interview slots listed by each program.

After the first batch release, no additional invitations will be extended until the second coordinated release date. If interview slots remain unfilled or an applicant cancels, programs may use the Interview Scheduler Queue to send additional invitations on that second release date. After October 20, the SF Match Interview Scheduler Queue will remain available for programs to fill vacancies as they arise.

---

**Q** Can applicants view their position on a program's interview invitation queue?

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

---

**Q** Are October 13 and October 20 the only dates when residency programs can send interview invitations?

**A** October 13 and 20 are the official coordinated release dates for interview invitations. After October 20, programs may send additional invitations on a rolling basis to fill vacancies. Programs are encouraged to share their intended interview release dates on both their SF Match profile and program websites.

---

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

**A** Yes, programs may select one or both dates for batch release interviews.

---

**Q** Will every notification arrive by 12:00 PM Pacific Time on the coordinated release dates?

**A** No, expect notifications to occur throughout the afternoon starting at 12:00 PM Pacific Time.

---

**Q** When will candidates be able to log in to accept an invite?

**A** The first release of invitations will occur October 13. Candidates will have 24 hours to review their invites to plan their acceptances accordingly. Candidates can then log on October 14 at 12:00 PM (noon) PT to formally accept and sign up for the best date/time offered.

The same process will occur for the second release date: October 20. Candidates will be able to log on October 21 at 12:00 PM (noon) PT to formally accept and sign up for the best date/time offered.

---

**Q** If a candidate needs to cancel an interview due to a conflict after receiving additional invites, what is the ideal time to do this?

**A** The candidate can cancel at any time; however, it is highly encouraged to cancel as early as possible, allowing programs to invite the next candidate immediately on the coordinated release date. This also helps applicants nearing the 15-interview limit by reducing delays in accepting available interview opportunities.

---

**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 two release dates?

**A** If an applicant declines or cancels an interview after initially accepting, a program may fill its slot by inviting another candidate through the SF Match Interview Scheduler. Programs may manage interview invitations manually.

---

**Q** Are there any changes to the process for scheduling interviews on the SF Match site?

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

---

**Q** How will this affect the SF Match Interview Scheduler Queue process?

**A** There are no changes to the functionality of the SF Match Interview Scheduler Queue process.

---

**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.

---

**Q** What if a program wants to add additional invitation slots during the match process?

**A** The process for a program to select the number of interview slots remains unchanged. Programs may add additional slots at their discretion.

---

**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 who complete a visiting rotation later in the cycle?

**A** No. The coordinated release dates do not impact students completing visiting rotations later in the cycle.

---

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

**A** Yes, feedback will be collected throughout the application cycle to refine the process.