

American Academy of Cosmetic Surgery

Certified Fellowship Training Program Match Policy and Procedure

Introduction

A fellowship in cosmetic surgery is a post-residency program involving advanced education and training in the art of cosmetic surgery. The American Academy of Cosmetic Surgery (“AACS”) certifies fellowship training programs (“**Certified Programs**”) that meet or exceed the requirements set forth in the *Program Requirements for Clinical Fellowship Training in General Cosmetic Surgery* or the *Program Requirements for Clinical Fellowship Training in Facial Cosmetic Surgery* (collectively “**Program Requirements**”). AACS’ certification process seeks to ensure the public, the health care community, state medical boards, and medical specialty boards including, without limitation, the American Board of Cosmetic Surgery, that the Certified Programs include comprehensive education, training, and experience in cosmetic surgery. To facilitate the appropriate match of a Certified Program and a physician submitting an Application for Fellowship Training (“**Application**”) for fellowship training at a Certified Program (“**Applicant**”), AACS offers its *Cosmetic Surgery Fellowship Match Program* (“**Match**”) which it established to: (i) provide an organized and unbiased mechanism for matching the training preferences of Applicants with the preferences of Certified Program’s directors (“**Program Directors**”); (ii) facilitate the confidential selection of Applicants using an electronic and confidential process; (iii) determine a fair and orderly timeline for Applicants and Certified Programs to submit ranking lists that express their respective preferences; (iv) allow Certified Programs to make informed decisions about Applicants in an organized manner and without undue influence; and (v) in conjunction with the Program Requirements, foster the establishment of a binding commitment between the Applicant and the Certified Program.

Match Procedure

In furtherance of the above, AACS will apply the following procedure in accordance with the corresponding timeline:

- 1. Annual Reporting and Match Agreement | November.** During November each year, and prior to November 30th, all Certified Programs will submit to AACS, via AACS’ Fellowship Training Program Manager (“**FPM**”), AACS’ current *Annual Reporting Form* and *Fellowship Program Match Agreement* pertaining to the upcoming applicable fellowship training program period (“**Cycle**”), signed by the Certified Program’s Program Director. Program Directors, or their approved authorized representatives, may obtain the current AACS *Annual Reporting Form* and *Fellowship Program Match Agreement* from AACS, either through AACS’ website via a secured / password protected link, or by contacting the FPM. Although the FPM routinely sends a reminder to Program Directors in early November, regardless of whether a reminder is sent, and regardless of whether a Certified Program intends to participate in the Match for any given period, it is the obligation of every Certified Program to submit the *Annual Reporting Form* and *Program Match Participation Agreement*, signed by the Program Director, on or before November 30th each year.
- 2. Program Participation and Website Updates | December.** Based on the timely submitted *Annual Reporting Forms* and *Program Match Participation Agreement*, the FPM will: (i) compile a list of Certified Programs participating in the Match for the upcoming Cycle, and update the AACS website to identify which Certified Programs are participating in the upcoming Cycle; (ii) revise the Application form to include only Certified Programs choosing to participate in the Match for the upcoming Cycle; and (iii) publish Application submission deadlines for the upcoming Cycle.

3. **Application Submission/Process | *January through May.***

A. Application. The Match opens Jan 1st each year, after which Applications may be submitted via the AACCS website. Although all Applications are initially received by AACCS, Applications are not considered submitted to AACCS, but deemed submitted to the Applicant's designated Certified Programs *via* AACCS. Along with their Application, Applicants must execute AACCS' *Training Fellow Candidate Match Agreement*. Upon receipt of an Application and corresponding *Training Fellow Candidate Match Agreement*, AACCS will vet the Application to ensure Applicant meets or exceeds the prerequisites for fellowship training identified in AACCS' Program Requirements ("**Prerequisites**"). Importantly, AACCS only confirms that Applicants meet or exceed the Prerequisites, and does not otherwise assess the Applications. If information in the Application indicates the Applicant meets or exceeds the Prerequisites, it is deemed qualified ("**Qualified Application**").¹ If the Application does not confirm the Applicant meets the Prerequisites, the FPM will notify the Applicant of the reason(s) their Application was deemed unqualified. Applicants receiving notice that their Application was deemed unqualified may, if the basis therefor is correctable, revise and resubmit their Application within the applicable submission deadline, provided their revised submission is submitted to the FPM with a cover correspondence indicating it is a *revised* Application.

Applications are accepted until midnight on May 15th, and any Applications received by AACCS after May 15th will not be considered for the Match. All Qualified Applications received between January 1st and March 1st will be batched and submitted by AACCS to the Certified Programs designated in said Applications ("**Designated Programs**") on or by the 3rd business day after March 1st (or other date determined preferable by AACCS in early March). All Qualified Applications received from March 2nd to May 15th will be submitted by AACCS to the Designated Programs within five (5) business days of AACCS' receipt (or as soon thereafter as AACCS deems appropriate). Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit Applications as soon after January 1st as possible to provide themselves and Program Directors adequate time to finalize their respective Ranking Lists (specified below) prior to the June 1st deadline.

B. Letters of Recommendation. Applications require three letters of recommendation ("LORs") from three separate individuals. LORs must be submitted by their author either to: (i) Applicant; or (ii) AACCS, c/o the FPM, who will submit them to Designated Programs. AACCS receives and verifies LORs for purposes of connecting the correct LORs with the applicable Applications, and does not otherwise review their content.

C. Interviews. It is then the Designated Programs' responsibility to review Qualified Applications, LORs, and any other information it deems appropriate, conduct and consider its own fact investigation, and determine whether to interview the Applicant(s) of the Qualified Application(s) it receives in connection with the Match. Any/all interviews must be scheduled and conducted by the Designated Program with no interaction or input from the FPM or any other AACCS representative. Without limiting the foregoing, it is up to the Designated Program to determine in its sole discretion whether, and if so in what medium, to interview an Applicant.

¹ While the training Cycle for most Certified Programs commences during or about July, some include annual training programs that commence in January. Applications of Applicants seeking to participate in a program commencing in January, will not be deemed a Qualified Application for purposes of this policy, and will be addressed in accordance with Section 5.B. (and not 5.A) hereof.

4. **Ranking Lists.** In connection with their Application, Applicants must submit their Program Ranking List (defined below) to the FPM on or before June 1st. After June 1st, no Ranking Lists or proposed revisions to previously submitted Ranking Lists will be considered with the Match, but may be considered and/or otherwise utilized in connection with the process of connecting unmatched Applicants and Certified Programs following the June 1st deadline. Program Directors must submit their list of Applicants they approve for their Certified Program during the subject Cycle in order of preference (“**Applicant Ranking List**”) to the FPM on or before June 1st.

5. **Match Process.**

A. **Matching.** The Match is designed to place an Applicant (Applicant A) into the Certified Program indicated as their first choice on the ranking list of Certified Programs submitted in connection with their Application (“**Program Ranking List**”). If Applicant A cannot be matched to the first choice on their Program Ranking List (because the Certified Program does not also list Applicant A as a preference on its Applicant Ranking List), an attempt is made to place Applicant A into the Certified Program they list second on their Program Ranking List, and so on, until Applicant A obtains a tentative match, or all of Applicant A’s choices are exhausted (i.e., Applicant A cannot be tentatively matched to any Certified Program on its Program Ranking List). Applicant A will be “tentatively matched” to a Certified Program if it also ranks Applicant A on its Applicant Ranking List, and either: (a) it has an unfilled position (making room for the tentative match to Applicant A); or (b) it is filled *but* Applicant A is preferred over another applicant already tentatively matched (Applicant B). In the latter instance, Applicant B is “bumped” from the tentative match to make room for Applicant A. Then, regarding Applicant B, an attempt is made to tentatively match Applicant B with the next most preferred Certified Program on Applicant B’s list. The attempt to find another tentative match for Applicant B will proceed in the same manner as outlined for Applicant A. When all Applicants’ Ranking Lists are considered, matching is complete and all tentative matches become final.

B. **Unmatched Applicants/Certified Programs.** The FPM will provide all Applicants who were not matched pursuant to the Match (“**Unmatched Applicants**”) with a list of the Certified Programs that were not matched with an Applicant (“**Unmatched Programs**”). Within 14 days of receiving the list from the FPM, Unmatched Applicants will provide a response to the FPM via email (“**Response**”) identifying the Unmatched Programs to which the Applicant wants their Application submitted for consideration. It will be AACCS’ understanding that any Unmatched Applicants who do not submit a Response within said 14-days do not want to be considered by any of the Unmatched Programs. Upon receipt of a Response, the FPM will submit the Applicant’s Application and LORs to the Unmatched Programs identified by the Applicant. This will conclude AACCS’ tasks regarding all Applications subject to this Match Policy. Thereafter, the Program Director is responsible for determining which, if any, Applicant(s) they want to interview and/or consider for their Certified Program during the upcoming Cycle, and contacting said Applicant(s) regarding the same. If, at any time, the Program Director contracts with an Unmatched Applicant, the Program Director must immediately notify the FPM.

6. **Notifications.** When matching is complete and all tentative matches become final, the FPM will notify: (i) matched Applicants and Certified Programs via an *Applicant/Program Match Letter* in the forms determined by AACCS; and (ii) Unmatched Applicants and Unmatched Programs via an *Applicant/Program Unmatched Letter* in the forms determined by AACCS.

7. Withdrawals. At any time before matches become final in accordance with Section 5 above, AACS may withdraw from the Match any Certified Program AACS believes, in its sole discretion, violated its Fellowship Program Match Agreement, failed to comply with this Match Policy , or engaged in other conduct AACS deems detrimental to or inconsistent with its AACS Certified Program status and/or the Match.

8. Disclaimer. Certified Programs, pursuant to the *Fellowship Program Match Agreement*, and Applicants, pursuant to the *Training Fellow Candidate Match Agreement* , acknowledge that if and to the extent any fee is charged by AACS for their participation in the Match, it does not include consideration for any assumption by AACS of the risk of any damages that may arise in connection with any Certified Program's or Applicant's participation in the Match. Certified Programs and Applicants agree that neither AACS nor any director, officer, employee, affiliate, or agent of the AACS, will be liable for any loss, damage, cost, or expense whatsoever, direct or indirect, regardless of the cause, that may arise out of, or be in any way related to the Match, the results of any match, this Match Policy and Procedure, the manner in which the match is administered, the erroneous transmission of any data or the transmission of any erroneous data; any failure or delay suffered or allegedly suffered by any party in receiving or sending any rank order list or other information, however caused; or any other cause in connection with the furnishing of services or notices by AACS. NEITHER AACS NOR ANY OF ITS DIRECTORS, OFFICERS, AGENTS, EMPLOYEES, OR AFFILIATES MAKES ANY WARRANTY OR REPRESENTATION OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, WITH RESPECT TO SUCH SERVICES, THE MATCH, OR TO THE ACCURACY, COMPLETENESS, SECURITY, TIMELINESS, OR RELIABILITY OF THE INFORMATION TO WHICH ANY PARTY HAS ACCESS OR WHICH ANY PARTY TRANSMITS OR RECEIVES IN CONNECTION WITH THE MATCH. ALL IMPLIED WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE, TITLE, AND NON-INFRINGEMENT ARE EXPRESSLY EXCLUDED. No oral or written information or advice given by AACS, or any of their directors, officers, agents, affiliates, or employees will create a warranty, and no party may rely on any such information or advice.

This Certified Fellowship Training Program Match Policy and Procedure was adopted by the AACS Board of Directors on December 9, 2025