



The Texas Medical School Match

Helpful Information about an Often Misunderstood Process

Texas always has to do things a little differently than everyone else...of course! We have our own application service, *The Texas Medical and Dental Schools Application Service*, and within the context of that service, we have something called the TMD SAS Medical School Match. This process often confuses applicants and advisors. So, we thought we would try to help by providing the following information and illustration.



Pre-Match Offers of Acceptance

Medical schools in Texas may extend offers of acceptance to Texas residents between **November 15** and **December 31**. Applicants may accept pre-match offers from more than one medical school without the risk of an offer being withdrawn by another medical school during this time period. An applicant who receives more than one offer should decline any offer from a school that s/he definitely does not plan to attend, as soon as that decision is made.

The TMD SAS Match Process

The TMD SAS Match is conducted to confirm the pre-match offers applicants are holding and to fill the remaining open slots for the medical schools.



Texas resident applicants must rank all schools at which they interviewed regardless of whether or not a pre-match offer was received. Applicants holding a pre-match offer who have interviewed at school(s) that did not extend an offer may rank one or more of those schools higher than the pre-match offer school without risk of losing the pre-match offer. If an applicant holds a pre-match offer and matches to a school s/he has ranked more highly, the pre-match offer will be withdrawn. Pre-match offers will also be withdrawn through the match process from all other lower ranked schools. The applicant can still be selected by schools which s/he ranked higher than the school to which s/he matched. If applicants are holding multiple pre-match offers, they will come out of the match holding only one offer. A case study provided at the end of this document illustrates these points.

The deadline for applicants to submit their match preference rank list online is **January 20** by 5:00 PM (CT). Applicants who do not enter their match preference ranks by the deadline will automatically be withdrawn from all medical schools regardless of whether or not an early offer has been made.

Following the match, rolling admissions will continue through the beginning of orientation at each medical school. Medical schools will continue to make offers from their alternate pools which may include applicants who are currently holding an offer at another Texas medical school. However, the Texas medical schools have agreed that after **June 1**, no school may make an offer to an applicant already holding a place at another Texas medical school.

Advice for Applicants and Advisors

Typically, applicants try to overthink the details and make assumptions that can confound this straight-forward process. Essentially, students will be required to rank all medical schools at which they interviewed according to their preference of attendance.

The key is for applicants to rank the medical schools according to “their heart”...honestly and sincerely evaluating **ONLY** their level of preference for each medical school and rank them accordingly. Do not try to analyze how the schools “liked you”, how “competitive” at a given school you think you are, or how you “think” a particular school might rank you on their list. None of this is knowable or will matter in the match process.



Additionally, at **NO** point in the process...before the match, during the match, after the match...do medical schools know how applicants ranked their schools. So, the level at which an applicant ranked a school will never be used in any way by the medical schools to influence their decisions.

Important Dates for the Entry Year 2017 Application

| | |
|--------------|--|
| May 2 | TMSAS Online Application Opens – 8am (CT) |
| September 30 | TMSAS Online Application Closes – 5pm (CT) |
| October 15 | Deadline for Receipt of Application Documents (letters, transcripts, etc.) |
| November 15 | Pre-Match Offer Period Begins for Texas Residents |
| December 31 | Pre-Match Offer Period Ends |
| January 20 | Deadline to Submit Match Rank List – 5pm (CT) |
| February 1 | Match Results Announced – 8am (CT) |



A Case Study: Susan's Experience with The Texas Match



Susan Walker is a 22-year-old neuroscience major at Nomington State University in Blankstown, Texas. She is a good student (3.72 overall GPA, 3.69 BCPM GPA). Susan was quite worried about the MCAT since she has not traditionally been a strong standardized test taker. She took an MCAT review course and scored 28 (BS 9, PS, 8, VR 11) on her first attempt. With helpful advice from her pre-med advisor, Susan decided to retake the MCAT...this time the new 2015 version. Her scores were seemingly better (506 Total, 122 CPFBS, 128 BBFLS, 127 PSBFB, and 129 CARS) but she is very confused about how the medical schools will compare the two formats.

She has worked diligently during college to establish strong ties with the Blankstown community (including several leadership roles). Susan's passion, however, is her empathy for those in need, especially the mentally ill. She has volunteered much of her time in this area: three semesters as a volunteer for the campus crisis hotline, ongoing contact with a local psychiatric clinic where she has volunteered, as well as multiple shadowing experiences in various medical practices both in Blankstown and her hometown of San Antonio.

A Texas resident, Susan is the middle of three children and the first in her family to seek higher education. Her father is a mechanic at a local car dealership and her mother works part-time as a teacher's aide at one of the local elementary schools. Her Socio-Economic Status (SES) score is a B. Susan identifies ethnically as mixed, her father is an immigrant from Panama and her mother was raised in the U.S. but is of Asian descent. She is quite close to her family, particularly her older brother, who has bipolar disorder.

She applied to all of the TMDAS medical schools and was interviewed by five of them. Now it is time for Susan to rank the five schools at which she interviewed. How should she proceed in the TMDAS Match process?

Medical School A

Susan enjoyed her visit to this school and felt very positive about its curriculum and the comments she heard from current students. Her interviews were comfortable and gave her some confidence that the school liked her as a candidate and might very well make her an offer. However, the location of the school is not very attractive to her as it is quite distant from her family and friends. All in all, Susan feels as if she will be a great candidate for School A and she fully anticipates an offer from them.

Pre-Med Student Thoughts:

Though School A is not where Susan would prefer to go, mainly because of the location, it was a school that seemed to really like her and at which she thinks she is very competitive. One of her friends told her that this is a big deal...the fact that the school liked her...so maybe she should rank them high on her list so that the school will know she is enthusiastic about being a doctor and getting in "somewhere."

TMDAS Answers:

The medical schools DO NOT know how an applicant ranks their particular school. At NO point in the process are the medical schools given the preference rank information for the applicant. Therefore, students should absolutely not overthink the dynamic of how much they believe the school liked them (that is really not possible to know). In this case, Susan clearly does not feel that School A is a good fit for her, but would go if it was the only option.

Suggested Preference Rank: Number 4

Medical School B

Susan's visit to school B was nothing less than spectacular. She absolutely loved every element of the institution including the various students and faculty with whom she interacted on the interview day. The location is perfect too, only an hour from her hometown. But, she did not feel comfortable during the challenging interviews she had with two faculty members. She was very nervous and felt as if she did not perform well which makes her wonder if the school liked her as a candidate. Susan very much questions whether or not an offer will come...though she is keeping her fingers crossed.

Pre-Med Student Thoughts:

Medical School B is absolutely the school in Texas where Susan wants to be! She was convinced before the process started that she liked School B, and the interview day only confirmed her feelings. However, she doesn't know if she is competitive enough as an applicant to be on their offer list. Her thought, then, is to perhaps rank a school where she seems more competitive as a higher choice and rank School B lower since maybe her chances of matching there are lower.

TMSAS Answers:

Susan is definitely caught in the "overthink" mode. She is presuming that the match process somehow disadvantages applicants based on their "competitiveness" and therefore she is trying to "game" the system to benefit her by ranking a school that she loves as a lower choice because of her perceptions of the match/offer process. School preference ranks should be based ONLY on the student's desire of where she wants to attend and NOT on some thinking of how the process might be impacted by her rankings and her unsubstantiated feelings about what the school might think about her. Additionally, if she ranks it lower and matches to a higher ranked school which actually was a lower preference, she will be removed from the School B's rank list and not be eligible for an offer from the waiting list.

Suggested Preference Rank: Number 1

Medical School C

This school is really not quite what Susan expected. She felt ambivalent about it before visiting, based on reputation and things that she had heard from other pre-med students. However, she was pleasantly surprised! Her experience on the interview day was quite positive including a great conversation with one of her interviewers that lasted an entire hour! She remains unsure about School C, but would not be opposed to attending. She feels certain that she was a hit with the interviewers and that the school will make her an offer. But, there is the reputation issue to consider also.

Pre-Med Student Thoughts:

The fact that she did so well in the interviews gives Susan great confidence that she will get an offer from School C. The interviewers 'loved' her, she tells a friend. Her thought is to rank School C high, if not number one, because of these positive experiences. She would probably prefer to go to School B, but that seems a bit of a long shot...Schools C seems more realistic and she would be "ok, for sure" going there.

TMSAS Answers:

As an applicant, trying to perceive how you may have come across to interviewers or, ultimately, to an admissions committee is not really possible. Interviewers can have various agendas and not knowing their personalities makes it a losing battle to interpret what their words or reactions might mean in the process. Also, be careful about the sources(s) upon which you base "reputation," as this can be misleading.

Suggested Preference Rank: Number 2 or 3

Medical School D

Interview day at School D was a disaster from almost the very beginning. Susan got lost on her way to the school that morning and ended up arriving 45 minutes late. She was so rattled that she feels she did not perform very well in the interviews at all. In fact, one interviewer asked if she was “ok” and the other interviewer suggested that she should have tried to reschedule. It’s likely that Susan’s entire experience at School D was clouded by the initial events of the day. She is not excited about the prospects of attending there and has even toyed with the idea of withdrawing her application from School D. Her pre-med advisor, however, convinced her to let it remain active and to “see what happens.”

Pre-Med Student Thoughts:

Susan doesn’t really want to go to School D, for a variety of reasons, not the least of which was the terrible interview day that has really affected how she feels about the school. She very much thinks that she will rank it low on her list, probably last.

TMSAS Answers:

For once, Susan is thinking the right way. She’s basing her rank of that school on her intuition regarding the school based on her experiences. We would suggest, however, a second visit (if allowed) to the school to get a better feeling for it outside of the tension that she felt during the interview day. Withdrawing her application from the school is definitely an option for Susan. If she doesn’t, there is a chance she might match there. If that happened, she would have to struggle with the notion of attending School D...she would need to think about that and see if that would be ok. If she is not ok with that idea, then a withdrawal might be appropriate. Otherwise, a low rank would be the right way to go. Beware...applicants should never withdraw from an already-received offer of acceptance as this could signal to other medical schools, or in a future application cycle, a lack of commitment to attending medical school generally.

Suggested Preference Rank: Number 5 or Withdraw

Medical School E

Attending medical school at School E would be fine for Susan. The environment that she encountered, as well as her impressions of the school prior to her visit, were largely positive. But, there was nothing special that “knocked her socks off” during the interview day or in her reflections afterward. Good curriculum, pleasant and enthusiastic students, faculty who seemed largely engaged...all added to the positive feeling she got. However, the school is not one that was really on her radar screen before the application year started and the only reason she applied was because TMSAS lets applicants apply to all schools for one flat fee. All in all, Susan’s feeling about School E is good but not great.

Pre-Med Student Thoughts:

Susan feels that School E is an acceptable school for her to attend. It is solid in its reputation and she has a good feeling about the school. She is not totally sold on it as the best choice for her, but it seems to be a safe and, probably, reasonable school to attend if that’s where it turns out she matches. She is thinking that she wants desperately to go to medical school and if School E is that place...so be it.

TMSAS Answers:

Applicants definitely need to keep in mind that the ultimate goal is attending medical school somewhere. Whether their first choice school, or another at which they interviewed, the overall goal has to be

supreme...going to medical school and becoming a physician. Additionally, gaining acceptance to medical school is extremely competitive; therefore these decisions should not be made lightly.

Suggested Preference Rank: Number 2 or 3

The Outcome of Susan's Application Process

Susan received pre-match acceptances from Medical Schools A, C, and E. Upon reflection, Susan decided that she really wanted to attend Medical School B, so ranked her match list this way:

| <u>Medical School</u> | <u>Susan's Rank</u> |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Medical School A | 4 |
| Medical School B | 1 |
| Medical School C | 2 |
| Medical School D | 5 |
| Medical School E | 3 |

On February 1 (Match Day), Susan matched to Medical School C, so her acceptances from Schools A and E were automatically withdrawn. She was placed in the alternate pool at Medical School B. She is also withdrawn from Medical School D since she received an offer in the match from a higher ranked school.

Waiting throughout the spring and early summer to hear if she would get an acceptance to Medical School B was difficult for Susan. However, she made plans to attend School C since she did not know if an offer from School B would ever come. Unfortunately, she did not receive an offer of acceptance by Medical School B. Because, after June 1, no Texas medical school can make an offer to a student who is currently holding a position at another Texas medical school, Susan was then set to enroll at School C.

The end result, however, was that Susan achieved her medical school goal! She enrolled at Medical School C in early August and found that she was very happy and satisfied that things worked out so well.

More Questions about The TMDSAS Match?

We know that the match process can be confusing for advisors and applicants. Our goal is to make the process as transparent and understandable as possible. If you have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us at any time.



Texas Medical and Dental Schools Application Service

P.O. Box 2175 512-499-4785 Phone

Austin, Texas 78768 512-499-4786 Fax

www.tmdsas.com

info@tmdsas.com

facebook.com/tmdsas1