

Dual Training in Adult Cardiothoracic Anesthesia and Critical Care Medicine Information for Applicants

General Information:

Critical Care Medicine (CCM) and Adult Cardiothoracic Anesthesia (ACTA) are separate fellowship training programs. Unfortunately, in the current GME environment, there is no truly “integrated” dual CCM/ACTA track (clinical time in the ICU intermixed with OR clinical time). Existing programs typically offer a sequential fellowship training paradigm (either CCM followed by ACTA or vice versa); there is no required “norm” for order of training. There exist institutions with CCM and ACTA programs that work closely together while others operate their fellowships very independently. This document serves to give applicants general guidance when navigating the process of pursuing ‘dual’ training.

Candidates who want to apply to both CCM and ACTA (“dual training”) are entering a complex process (but rewarding training paradigm and career path). Both CCM and ACTA use the SF Match service for applications and to conduct the “match” which takes place in the spring. The CCM match date is usually several weeks prior to the ACTA match date. There is not currently an integrated match process (a process that would allow a candidate to rank both CCM and CTA programs). Therefore, CCM and ACTA have an agreed upon “exception process” (see information on the SOCCA and SCA websites for more information).

Candidates who do not receive an “exception offer” will have to make a decision about their application and can usually only enter one of the two matches due to overlapping deadlines. There is great variability among programs in the extent to which they utilize this process. The lack of an “exception offer” from a specific program does not indicate that the program will not rank a candidate in the match.

Some background information:

1. Communication with individual programs is very important for the dual candidate. It is highly recommended that candidates contact the program coordinator early in the process. Additionally, the program coordinator can often provide contact information for recent graduates or current fellows who may offer unique insights into a training program.
2. Some programs may use a “lead program” as the contact program director (PD) that will discuss the application with candidates, offer interview invitations, etc.
3. Some programs will work with dual candidates to coordinate both CCM and ACTA interviews on the same day; other programs will keep the interview process separate.

Application Recommendations:

- Applicants should apply to BOTH training programs (CCM and ACTA). Typically, this will involve registering and applying through both SF Match programs.
- However, candidates with a STRONG preference about their order of training may want to only apply through one pathway for that application cycle.
- The majority of the demographic and personal information on the applications will be similar for both programs (and most programs will accept the standard “application packet” for the other fellowship program).

- A strong personal statement will address the candidate's interest in pursuing both CCM and ACTA training so that both programs understand their desire to pursue this pathway.
- Programs that offer dual training typically desire a letter of recommendation from faculty members in both ACTA and CCM (candidates should inform their letter writers that they are applying for dual training). We recommend the following:
 - One letter from the residency program director
 - One letter from an ACTA faculty member
 - One letter from a CCM faculty member
- We highly recommend that candidates complete the Supplemental Questionnaire and submit it to each program where they are applying for both CCM and ACTA (see below).

Supplemental Questionnaire:

- The responses may differ per specific institution.
- The purpose is to help the individual programs better understand the candidate's training preferences, coordinate application review/interview invitations, and to assist them throughout the process.
- The responses submitted on this form are not binding in any way.