Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates

ECFMG Basics 2014
The Requirement for IMGs & J-1 Physicians

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Exchange Visitor Sponsorship Program
Learning Objectives

Review the basics on ECFMG and its role & services related to international medical graduates (IMGs) in U.S. GME

- ECFMG Certification
- CVS on-line
- ERAS
- Exchange Visitor Sponsorship Program (EVSP)
  - Exchange Visitor Network (EVNet) / on-line application
ECFMG (Established in 1956)
Private, Nonprofit Organization

Current Organizational Members

- American Board of Medical Specialties® (ABMS)
- American Medical Association (AMA)
- Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC)
- Association for Hospital Medical Education (AHME)
- Federation of State Medical Boards of United States, Inc. (FSMB)
- National Medical Association (NMA)
IMGs & Entry into U.S. GME

General Path for IMGs:

1. ECFMG Certification
2. Apply for U.S. Residency Training Position
   - Apply via ERAS
   - Interview with programs
   - Enroll in the NRMP Match
   - Secure a contract/letter of offer
3. Seek Appropriate U.S. Training Visa / Status
   (if foreign national physician)
ECFMG Certification

Assures residency program directors and the U.S. public that the IMG has met the minimum standards of eligibility to enter U.S. residency training.

ECFMG Certification is required for:

- IMG entry into ACGME-accredited GME
- Taking USMLE Step 3
- State licensure
- J-1 visa sponsorship / ECFMG
ECFMG Certification Requirements

○ Medical Education Credentials
  • Completion of a medical school curriculum of at least 4 years
  • School and graduation year listed in *The International Medical Education Directory (IMED)*
    [www.faimer.org/resources.imded](http://www.faimer.org/resources.imded)
  • Primary-source verification of medical diploma and transcript(s) by ECFMG

○ USMLE Exams
  • Step 1 Basic Science
  • Step 2 Clinical Knowledge (CK)
  • Step 2 Clinical Skills (CS)
ECFMG Certification Resources

- General Certification Information @
  http://www.ecfmg.org/cert/index.html
- ECFMG Certification Fact Sheet @
  http://www.ecfmg.org/cert/certfact.html
- E-Newsletter: The ECFMG Reporter
  ✓ Latest information delivered via e-mail
  ✓ Subscribe on the ECFMG website
CVS Online*
*Free for GME Programs

- Web-based requests for confirmation of ECFMG Certification status
- Report sent by e-mail
- Establish an account for your program by sending e-mail to cvsonline@ecfmg.org
- http://www.ecfmg.org/cvs
ERAS Support Services

- ECFMG serves as the designated Dean’s Office for IMGs applying to U.S. GME programs

- ECFMG’s ERAS Support Services collects and transmits applicant documents to the ERAS Post Office:
  - Photograph
  - Letters of recommendation
  - Medical student performance evaluations (MSPEs)
  - Medical school transcripts
  - ECFMG certification status
  - USMLE transcripts (at the request of the applicant)

- ECFMG Medical School Web Portal (EMSWP) allows international medical schools to send official documents electronically directly to ECFMG on behalf of students/graduates applying to ERAS http://www.ecfmg.org/eras/index.html

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Immigration

All foreign national physicians need an appropriate visas / visa status for GME (includes both U.S. graduates and IMGs)

- **Most Common Visas for GME**
  - J-1 “Exchange Visitor Physician” - ECFMG
  - H-1B “Specialty Occupation Worker” - Employer

- **Less Common**
  - F-1 “Student” Optional Practical Training - OPT
  - J-2 “Dependent” - EAD
J-1 Visa Sponsorship: Roles and Responsibilities

U.S. Department of State (DOS)
U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS)
Student & Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS)

ECFMG
Exchange Visitor Sponsorship Program (EVSP)
Regional Advisor

Teaching Hospital Training Program Liaison (TPL)

Program Director

J-1 Physician

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ECFMG: Visa Sponsor for J-1 Physicians in Clinical Training

22CFR§62.27(b)

- J-1 visa
  - Temporary, non-immigrant visa
  - Full-time educational training/GME ~ not employment

- Requires evidence of strong ties to the home country
- Imposes 2-year home residency obligation
- Duration = 7 years maximum for progressive training
- Tracked in SEVIS
SEVIS
Student and Exchange Visitor Information System

- Data exchange between DHS / DOS
  - Immigration tracking of the activities of non-immigrant (J, F & M) visa holders and dependents

- Accessed by consulates, embassies, ports-of-entry, and other DHS agencies

- ECFMG creates and updates SEVIS records for all J-1 “alien physicians” and J-2 dependents
ECFMG J-1 Sponsorship

J-1 Physician + TPL = Complete Application

Sponsorship Available for Participation in:
- ACGME-accredited residency training
- ACGME-accredited subspecialty training
- Non-Standard programs (i.e., advanced cutting edge fellowships)
- Extension for board examinations

Sponsorship application materials available @
http://www.ecfmg.org/evsp/index.html

On-line application payment and status updates through OASIS @
http://www.ecfmg.org

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EVNet
Exchange Visitor Network

Web-based system developed by ECFMG for submission of J-1 sponsorship applications by GME programs

- EVNet access limited to authorized TPLs
- Replaces paper application forms
- Applicants notified via email once TPL initiates a sponsorship application on his/her behalf
  - Applicant must accept appointment, provide biographical data and submits fee payment through OASIS
- All supporting documentation mailed or faxed to ECFMG
EVNet Flow

- Two portals
  - EVNet (TPL)
  - OASIS (J-1 Applicant)

- “Appointment profile” or GME contract summary submitted by TPL through EVNet
  - Multiple applicants can be tied to one “appointment profile”

Flow: EVNet → OASIS → ECFMG

(TPL) (Applicant) (Regional Advisor)
J-1 Sponsorship Application Process

- J-1 physician + TPL = complete application
- 4 - 6 weeks to review applications
- Regional Advisor evaluates for eligibility
- If approved, SEVIS record is created
- ECFMG issues Form DS-2019

ECFMG notifies applicant via e-mail, provides instructions for obtaining J-1 visa status
Form DS-2019
Required Immigration Reporting

- Initial Arrival to the program = "Validation"
- Timely renewal according to annual GME contract
- Any change in the approved training plan
  - Visa delays
  - Remediation
  - Leave of absence
  - Licensure delay
  - Proposed off-site rotations
  - Proposed early advancements
  - Resignation
  - Contract termination
- Legal concerns / allegations, internal hearings, etc.
Critical Issues for Initial J-1s

**Credentials**
- Final medical school diploma, USMLE scores
- Issuance of ECFMG Certificate, medical license

**Immigration**
- Approval of visa sponsorship
- Consular interview abroad, security clearance or change of status if in the United States
- Secure J-1 “visa status” document

**Program Start**
- Report to program for orientation
- Obtain Social Security Number (10 day wait after U.S. entry)
- I-9 verification of legal employment by hospital
Critical Issues for Continuing J-1s

Maintaining J-1 Visa Status

- Continued full-time participation in GME
  - Contract to progress in training
  - Licensure – Step 3, if required
  - Timely renewal of ECFMG J-1 visa sponsorship

- Required reporting of any change in approved training plan

- J-1s do not need to renew visa stamp annually
Maintaining J-1 Visa Status

- Strict Adherence to J-1 Regulations (22CFR§62)
  http://exchanges.state.gov/jexchanges
- Compliance With All U.S. Immigration Laws
  http://www.uscis.gov
- Reporting of U.S. Address
  http://www.uscis.gov
- Valid Documentation
  - Uninterrupted ECFMG Sponsorship / Valid SEVIS Form DS-2019
  - Valid Form I-94
  http://www.ecfmg.org/evsp/index.html
Questions/Discussion

- Share “best practices”
- Questions/concerns/needs
- Can ECFMG help?

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