



EDUCATIONAL COMMISSION for FOREIGN MEDICAL GRADUATES

3624 MARKET STREET, PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19104-2685, U.S.A.
TELEPHONE: 215-386-5900 • FAX: 215-387-9963 • INTERNET: www.ecfm.org

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Stanley Colvin, JD
Director
Office of Exchange Coordination and Designation
Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs
US Department of State
301 Fourth Street, SW, Room 852
Washington, DC 20547

Dear Stanley:

I am pleased to present to you a Summary outlining the results of meetings and discussions on two issues pertinent to the Exchange Visitor Sponsorship Program (EVSP) administered by the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG). The purpose of EVSP, as set forth in applicable regulations, is to facilitate “exchange of foreign medical graduates seeking to pursue graduate medical education or training at accredited schools of medicine or scientific institutions”. The graduate medical education community has traditionally endorsed the ECFMG-sponsored J-1 visa as the most appropriate visa option for international medical graduates pursuing post-graduate training in the United States.

At your suggestion, ECFMG initiated these discussions with interested medical organizations. You, along with representatives of the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME), the American Board of Medical Specialties, the American Hospital Association, the American Medical Association, the Association of American Medical Colleges, the Council of Medical Specialty Societies, and academic medical centers, participated in the process. The resulting discussions were open, robust, and fully supportive of the intent of the J-1 visa and the EVSP.

The two issues that were reviewed involved sponsorship of J-1 physicians in clinical programs that were directly associated with ACGME programs, but not independently accredited by ACGME, and sponsorship of J-1 physicians in clinical programs whose length exceeded that of the accredited length published in the *AMA: Graduate Medical Education Directory*. The Summary addresses both of these issues. The conclusions, as set forth in the Summary, are as follows:

It was agreed that, effective July 1, 2003, there would be three pathways for ECFMG J-1 sponsorship:

- 1) A program accredited by the ACGME
- 2) Programs within a specialty or subspecialty where the appropriate Specialty Board of ABMS offers a Certificate

- 3) Programs within a subspecialty “recognized” by an appropriate Board of ABMS as evidenced by a letter from the CEO of that Board

With respect to the third pathway, it was agreed that the following additional requirements must be met:

- a) The program’s institutional sponsor must be in full compliance with ACGME institutional requirements as evidenced by a “Favorable” action on its most recent institutional review.
- b) All accreditable programs within the institution must be in good standing with the ACGME.
- c) The sponsorship institution’s GMEC must affirm in writing to ECFMG that it approves of the program after review of program description.
- d) There must be verification that the proposed training program is directly associated with an ACGME-accredited program. This verification must be provided by the program director of the accredited program.
- e) The program director must submit a detailed program description which has been reviewed and approved by the GMEC specifying the educational objectives, the curriculum involved, the nature of supervision, the method of evaluation, and the duration of the program.
- f) The applicant must submit documentation that includes a Statement of Need from the applicant’s home country Ministry of Health which confirms the government’s need for the specific subspecialty training and confirms the applicant has committed to return home upon completion of training. The applicant physician must also submit a personal statement of educational objectives which documents a definite training program in the United States and indicates its application to the home country.

Sponsorship in Programs Whose Length Exceeds the Accredited Length:

There was also discussion regarding the second issue before the group -- sponsorship of J-1 physicians in clinical programs whose length exceeds the ACGME-accredited length. After review, it was agreed that sponsorship by ECFMG would continue to be limited to the accredited length of the program as indicated in the *AMA: Graduate Medical Education Directory* (green book). It was pointed out by a number of participants that the ongoing review of the number of work hours appropriate for residents may impact on this issue. It was also pointed out that ACGME currently has a mechanism in place for specialties and subspecialties to seek an increase in their accredited length.

ECFMG was pleased to act as a facilitator for these discussions. Your interest and participation in the meetings was critical to their successful conclusion and, on behalf of all participants, we would like to thank you for your significant contributions.

If you have any questions, please contact Stephen S. Seeling, JD, ECFMG Vice President for Operations, via telephone at 215-823-2107 or e-mail at sseeling@ecfm.org.

Sincerely,

James A. Hallock, M.D.
President and Chief Executive Officer

Irs
Enclosure

cc: Busharat Ahmad, MD
Mr. James A. Bentley
James L. Borland, Jr., MD
Marvin R. Dunn, MD
Stephen H. Miller, MD, MPH
Roger L. Nelson, MD
K.K. Wallace, Jr., MD
Ms. Sunny G. Yoder
Stephen S. Seeling, JD
Eleanor M. Fitzpatrick