An Overview of ECFMG – FAIMER & International Medical Graduates in Family Medicine Training

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Disclosure Statement

No Conflict of Interest to Report
Learning Objectives

✓ Comprehend ECFMG’s role, services and resources available to GME programs and IMGs

✓ Understand the requirements for IMGs and foreign national physicians to enter and progress through U.S. GME

✓ Identify key internal policies that help to ensure regulatory compliance and successful training of IMG residents

Agenda

▶ A Review of ECFMG’s Role, Programs and Services

▶ Recruiting IMGs and Foreign National Physicians
  • Requirements, timelines and immigration options

▶ ECFMG J-1 Visa Sponsorship
  • Regulations, roles and responsibilities

▶ Best Practices
  • Selection, orientation, training, and well-being

▶ Discussion
Private, non-profit organization
Founded in 1956

To assess the readiness for IMGs to enter U.S. GME

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 (FSMB)
National Medical Association (NMA)

“Improving world health through excellence in medical education…”

U.S. Programs
• ECFMG Certification
• ECFMG Certificate Holders Office (ECHO)
• ERAS Support Services
• Exchange Visitor Sponsorship Program (EVSP)
• Certification Verification Services (CVS)

International Programs
• Electronic Portfolio of International Credentials (EPIC)
• Global Educational Exchange in Medicine & the Health Professions (GEMx)
• Foundation for Advancement of International Medical Education and Research (FAIMER)
International Medical Graduate (IMG)

Definition: An international medical graduate (IMG) is any physician who received his/her basic medical degree from a medical school outside of the United States or Canada, regardless of country of citizenship.

✓ The location of the medical school, not the citizenship of the physician, determines whether the graduate is an IMG.

Recruitment and Training of IMGs
Current ECFMG Certification Requirements

▶ Medical Education Credentials
  • Completion of medical school curriculum of at least 4 years
  • School and graduation year listed in the Sponsor Notes tab of the WDMS* 
  • 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)

*World Directory of Medical Schools (World Directory)
www.wdoms.org

Entry into U.S. GME

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Complete medical school</td>
<td>May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pass U.S. Medical Licensing Examinations (USMLE)</td>
<td>Previous year/s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Step 1, Step 2 CK, Step 2 CS</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ If IMG, complete ECFMG Certification</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Complete residency application process</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Electronic Residency Application Service (ERAS)</td>
<td>August - February</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Program Interviews etc.</td>
<td>September - February</td>
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<tr>
<td>• National Residency Matching Program (NRMP) “The Match”</td>
<td>March</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program issues GME contract/letter of offer</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ If foreign national, secure appropriate visa status</td>
<td>March – April</td>
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<tr>
<td>Residency training – academic year in medicine</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Orientation</td>
<td>July 1- June 30</td>
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<td>Mid-June</td>
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IMGs and Application to U.S. GME

AAMC - ERAS

ECFMG ERAS Support Services

NRMP

In Coordination with U.S. GME Programs

U.S. Immigration & Participation in U.S. GME
Foreign National Physicians in U.S. GME

International Medical Graduates
- ECFMG Certificate
- Visa / visa status

U.S. Graduates
- Diploma, USMLE and/or COMLEX
- Visa / visa status

Canadian Graduates
- Diploma, MCEE and/or USMLE
- Visa / visa status

Most common visa options for GME: J-1, H-1B, J-2 w/employment authorization (EAD)

ECFMG is the sole sponsor of J-1 physicians

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Basic J-1 and H-1B Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regulatory Oversight</th>
<th>J-1 Exchange Visitor Physician</th>
<th>H-1B &quot;Specialty Occupation Worker&quot;</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ECFMG</td>
<td>ECFMG Department of State 22CFR§62.27(b) &amp; Department of Homeland Security</td>
<td>Department of Labor Department of Homeland Security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credentials and Examinations</td>
<td>ECFMG Certification USMLE Steps 1, 2CK, 2CS</td>
<td>ECFMG Certification USMLE Steps 1, Step 2CK, Step 2CS, Step 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Limit</td>
<td>7 years maximum</td>
<td>6 years maximum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding</td>
<td>Generally hospital salary or * home government/other</td>
<td>U.S. employer salary only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject to 2 year Return Home Obligation* CFR§212 (e) INA</td>
<td>&quot;Statement of Need&quot; from home Ministry of Heath *Must fulfill 2 yrs. in home country to be eligible for H-1B, L visas or any permanent residence status</td>
<td>No service requirement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Permit for spouse employment authorization (EAD)</td>
<td>J-2 dependents can apply for EAD</td>
<td>Generally, H-4 cannot work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processing Time/Fees</td>
<td>$325 - ECFMG, $180 - SEVIS Paid by physician</td>
<td>Filing fees, anti-Fraud (paid by employer), premium processing etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Minimal J-1 Physician Requirements

- Adequate prior education
- ECFMG Certification (for IMGs)
- GME contract or letter of offer
- “Statement of Need” from home country Ministry of Health*

*Home country is defined as the country of most recent legal permanent residence

J-1 Visa Sponsorship: Roles & Responsibilities

- Designated Institutional Official (DIO)
- Training Program Liaison (TPL)
- Program Director Coordinator
- J-1 Physician
- ECFMG
  Exchange Visitor Sponsorship Program
  EVSP
- Regional Advisor
- U.S. Department of State (DOS)
- U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS)
- Student & Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS)

Close Coordination and Strict Compliance
ECFMG J-1 Sponsorship On-line Application

- Training Types:
  - ACGME-accredited base residency training
  - ACGME-accredited subspecialty/fellowship training
  - Non-standard programs *(advanced cutting edge fellowships)*
- On-line Application initiated by the Training Program Liaison (TPL)
- Renewed annually based on the GME Contract

http://www.ecfmg.org/evsp/application-checklists.html

J-1 Required Reporting

Program Directors and Coordinators must work with the Training Program Liaisons (TPL) to ensure required reporting to ECFMG. These include:

- **Notification of new J-1 arrivals and any visa delays or denials**

- **Completion of required forms, when applicable**
  - Leaves of Absence (http://www.ecfmg.org/evsp/notification-LOA.pdf)
  - Off-site Rotations (http://www.ecfmg.org/evsp/notification-off-site-rotation.pdf)
  - Dismissals (http://www.ecfmg.org/evsp/early-dismissal-form.pdf)
  - Resignation (http://www.ecfmg.org/evsp/notification-resignation.pdf)

- **Proposed contract amendments (start date, training level, etc)**

- **Serious incidents or allegations**
  - Incident or Allegation Reporting form (http://www.ecfmg.org/evsp/incident-report-tpl.pdf)
Important J-1 Policy Notes

No Moonlighting

J-1 regulations do not permit activity and/or financial compensation outside of the defined parameters of the approved training program.

- ECFMG sponsorship authorizes a specific residency or fellowship training activity and associated compensation as documented on Form DS-2019
- No additional training or employment is permitted

J-1 Waivers

J-1 physicians who receive a DoS waiver recommendation are not eligible for an extension of ECFMG sponsorship for any training activity beyond the end date of the most recent Form DS-2019.

- Only extensions to prepare and sit for an ABMS board exam are permitted

EVSP Support for J-1 Physicians

- Access to TPL at the host institution and an EVSP Regional Advisor
- Pre-arrival orientation materials and acculturation resources
- On-going webinars - policy updates, travel, applications renewal etc.
- Resources on cross-cultural activities
- Open phone lines
- Email support @ evsp-support@ecfmg.org
- Confidential reporting / advising with EVSP senior staff
- Health, safety and welfare checks
- Meet and greet opportunities with ECFMG staff
Planning for the Incoming PGY1 Resident

**Critical Issues and Timelines**

**Recruitment**
- ERAS application, interview, selection

**Credential Check**
- Diploma/transcript, USMLEs, ECFMG Certificate, medical license

**Immigration**
- Applicant’s U.S. immigration history
- Internal visa policies/procedures/coordination/oversight - ECFMG/J-1, H-1B, other
- Resident must apply for and secure “visa status” to begin training on time

**Program Start**
- Arrival, Orientation, On-boarding
- Obtain Social Security, drivers license
- Confirm J-1 required medical / accident insurance
The Continuing Resident:

*Critical Issues and Timelines*

**Academic Milestones**
- Evaluations, progression in training, USMLE Step 3

**Required Reporting**
- Remediation, leaves of absence, proposed changes etc.

**Maintaining/Renewing Visa Status**
- Application to ECFMG for J-1 visa sponsorship, extension for other statuses
  - J-1 physicians with DOS waiver recommendation *are not eligible* for a training extension

**Wellness**
- Cultural adjustment, family etc.

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**Summary and Discussion**
Immigration Update and Outlook for AY2018-19

Please complete the session evaluation.

Thank you.
ECFMG Expert Resource, Collaborative Partner on IMGs Issues

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