FOREIGN MEDICAL GRADUATES

It is the policy of the Public Health Trust to sponsor and process J-1 visas through the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG).

Procedure

Requirements of the ECFMG for sponsorship are as follows:

1. To be eligible for sponsorship in programs of graduate medical education or training, foreign national physicians must have passed one of the following:
   
   USMLE  Step 1 and Step 2 or the former VQE, or
   NEBME  Part 1 and Part 2, or
   FMGEMS (Note: the former one-day ECFMG Medical Examination does not meet the Requirements for J-1 visa sponsorship)

2. Application for initial sponsorship may be made by the Institution in the United States offering the education or by the foreign national physician.  Each application and all correspondence must include the foreign national’s ECFMG/USMLE applicant identification number.  The ultimate responsibility for obtaining immigration status rests with the foreign national physician.

3. A complete application for initial sponsorship consists of the following:
   
   A. Application for initial sponsorship;
   B. Letter of appointment/Offer signed by the responsible official of the institution that will provide training and the foreign national physician.  The letter of offer must include the annual salary, training level and training dates.
   C. Current curriculum vitae;
   D. Proof of health insurance as mandated by federal regulations;
   E. Written assurance from the Ministry of Health of the foreign national physician’s country of origin or last legal permanent residence stating that there is a need in that country for persons with the skills that the physician will acquire and that the physician will return to his home country upon completion of the training.
   F. Administrative fee of $140.00 payable in US dollars; the applicant’s ECFMG number must be indicated on the check.
G. If entering a subspecialty fellowship program, a detailed job description prepared by the Department must be submitted which includes the length of training of entire program.

H. A current passport size photograph and a photocopy of the medical school diploma.

I. Copy of a valid ECFMB Certificate. (NOTE: Graduates of LCME-accredited US and Canadian Medical Schools are not required to be ECFMG certified)

NOTE: Duration of stay for ECMFG’s sponsorship for programs of graduate medical education is limited to the time typically required to complete specialty/subspecialty training requirements as determined by the ABMS. The duration of sponsorship is further limited to a maximum of seven (7) years.

Change of Specialty – The Regulations state that “…the alien physician may once, and not later than two (2) years after the date the ‘alien physician’ enters the US as an Exchange Visitor (or acquires Exchange Visitor status), change his/her designated program of graduate medical education or training…” ECFMG is authorized to issue a change in program specialty before the completion of the second year of training. Once an Exchange Visitor enters the third year of training, a change in specialty is no longer permitted.

Two year Home Country Residency – In accordance with Section 212(e) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, as amended, all Exchange Visitors categorized as alien physicians (and all accompanying J-2 dependents) are required to return to their country of origin or country of last permanent residence for an aggregate of at least two (2) years before becoming eligible for a change or adjustment in visa status.

4. Once the documentation has been received, processed and found to meet the requirements, ECFMG will issue a Certificate of Eligibility (Form IAP-66) and send it to the institution only, to be forwarded to the foreign national physician.

A. If the physician is outside of the United States, the IAP-66 is used to obtain a J-1 visa to enter the United States.

B. If the physician is in the United States, the applicant may submit the IAP-66 to the Regional Immigration and Naturalization Service for processing or the applicant may leave the United States and obtain the J-1 visa from the U.S. consulate or Embassy from their country.

C. Duplicate IAP-66 forms may be necessary for travel outside the United States and must be requested in writing by the foreign national physician at least three weeks prior to departure.

D. Processing of an IAP-66 takes at least 8 to 12 weeks.