

EXCHANGE VISITOR SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM
REFERENCE GUIDE

EDUCATIONAL COMMISSION FOR FOREIGN MEDICAL GRADUATES

Committed to promoting excellence in international medical education

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The Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG®) would like to welcome you to the Exchange Visitor Sponsorship Program. This information booklet has been designed to acquaint you with the role of ECFMG in administering the Exchange Visitor Program, as well as to introduce you to regulations governing sponsorship of the J-1 visa. The information outlined in the *Reference Guide* should prove an invaluable resource not only to assist you with the initial application process, but through your subsequent stay in the United States as well.

EDUCATIONAL COMMISSION FOR FOREIGN MEDICAL GRADUATES Exchange Visitor Sponsorship Program (EVSP)

The Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG) is authorized by the U.S. Department of State (DoS) to sponsor foreign national physicians as Exchange Visitors in accredited clinical training programs or their directly associated fellowships. ECFMG also sponsors foreign national physicians in short-term advanced research programs (involving primarily observation, consultation, teaching or research) in the United States. Foreign national physicians sponsored by ECFMG are issued a Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor (J-1 Visa) Status referred to as Form DS-2019.

The objectives of the Exchange Visitor Sponsorship Program are to enhance international exchange in the field of medicine and to promote mutual understanding between the people of the United States and other countries through the interchange of persons, knowledge and skills.

The Program is administered by ECFMG in accordance with the provisions set forth in a Memorandum of Understanding between ECFMG and the DoS and the Federal Regulations established to implement the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act. ECFMG is responsible to ensure that all Exchange Visitors and host institutions meet the federal requirements for participation.

ROLE OF THE EXCHANGE VISITOR

The individual Exchange Visitor is required to obtain and remain in valid J-1 visa status throughout the duration of his/her stay in the United States. If an Exchange Visitor wishes to extend his/her stay in this country beyond the end date on the most recent DS-2019, he/she must file the appropriate application with ECFMG at least six weeks prior to the DS-2019 expiration date. Each DS-2019 is issued to reflect specific training dates, training level, and training program. The DS-2019 is not transferable and is to be used exclusively for training at the institution indicated on the Form. The Exchange Visitor is required to notify ECFMG of any proposed changes to his/her training specifics (e.g., training level, training dates, etc.) and/or departure from a training program.

EXCHANGE VISITOR DEPENDENTS

ECFMG is authorized to sponsor the spouse and unmarried minor children of the Exchange Visitor for entry to the United States under J-2 visa status. A minor child is defined as one under the age of 21. Parents, brothers, sisters, other family members, or domestics are not eligible for sponsorship as J-2 dependents. Physicians already sponsored by ECFMG who wish to request a DS-2019 for a dependent should complete the Application for J-2 Dependent Visa Sponsorship Form <http://www.ecfm.org/evsp/> and submit it to EVSP along with a copy of the dependent's passport biographic page. Issuance of the DS-2019 alone does not automatically grant J-2 status. Applicants for J-2 status either need to apply for a J-2 visa at a U.S. consulate or, if already present in the United States and eligible, apply for a change of status through United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). Those applying for J-2 status through USCIS may want to seek the advice of a qualified immigration attorney regarding their eligibility for a change of status.

TRAINING PROGRAM LIAISONS

The host institution in the United States providing the clinical or research training designates an individual to act as an intermediary between ECFMG and the program. This individual is known as the Training Program Liaison (TPL). The TPL communicates with ECFMG on all matters pertaining to J-1 visa sponsorship.

CATEGORIES OF SPONSORSHIP

ECFMG is authorized by the DoS to sponsor foreign nationals who are graduates of medical schools in either clinical training programs of graduate medical education *or* in non-clinical programs of observation, consultation, teaching or research.

Physicians sponsored as J-1 Exchange Visitors for participation in accredited clinical programs or directly associated fellowship programs of graduate medical education or training are categorized as “**alien physicians.**”

Physicians sponsored as J-1 Exchange Visitors for participation in non-clinical programs primarily involved with observation, consultation, teaching or research are categorized as “**research scholars.**” Unlike “alien physicians,” “research scholar” participants generally are not required to pass U.S. medical licensing exams and are not required to be ECFMG certified. “Research scholars” are limited to activities involving no patient contact or incidental patient contact.

While ECFMG is the only agency authorized to sponsor “alien physicians” for J-1 status, many U.S. hospitals and training institutions are DoS-designated sponsors for J-1 “research scholars.” Therefore, ECFMG only provides research sponsorship to those physicians participating in programs at hospitals or institutions that do not have their own J-1 research designation. The categories of “alien physician” and “research scholar” are specifically defined in the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations as follows:

ALIEN PHYSICIAN (Clinical Training Program)

An “*alien physician* is...a foreign medical graduate seeking to pursue graduate medical education or training at accredited schools or medical or scientific institutions” [22CFR62.27(a)]. The term *graduate medical education* is further defined as “a program in which the alien physician will receive graduate medical education or training, which generally consists of a residency or fellowship program involving health care services to patients, but does not include programs involving observation, consultation, teaching or research in which there is no or only incidental patient care. This program may consist of a medical specialty or a directly related medical subspecialty or both...” [22CFR62.2].

RESEARCH SCHOLAR (Non-clinical Program)

A “*research scholar* is...an individual primarily conducting research, observing, or consulting in connection with a research project...” [22CFR62.4(f)].

No Patient Contact: Activity which involves no direct patient care, indicating that the physician will at most attend or give lectures, go into patient areas as an observer or consultant, or work on research tissue and specimens that have no direct bearing on patient care.

Incidental Patient Contact: Activity involving incidental patient contact, indicating clinical patient contact that is directly supervised. The exchange visitor must not have final responsibility for diagnosis and treatment. Making a diagnosis and entering it in a patient chart, prescribing treatment or medication administered by the physician or other health care professionals, or performing surgery is beyond the scope of incidental patient contact. Activities which may be acceptable include: performing a diagnostic examination in the presence of a senior physician who repeats the

examination or ensures at every step that it is done correctly and the proper diagnostic information is obtained; being present during therapies and treatment with opportunities for hands-on experience in ways that do not compromise the care of the patient; being present in the operating room and having direct patient contact, but not performing procedures.

[NAFSA Advisor's Manual §9.10.2, 1998 Edition]

GENERAL QUALIFICATIONS FOR ALIEN PHYSICIAN CLINICAL PROGRAM

Foreign nationals applying for sponsorship as “alien physicians” must meet the following general requirements:

- Pass USMLE Step 1 and Step 2 Clinical Knowledge (CK); or the former VQE, NBME Part I and Part II, or FMGEMS; or an acceptable combination thereof; (Note: The former one-day ECFMG Examination and the Federation Licensing Examination (FLEX) do **not** meet the requirements for J-1 visa sponsorship.)
- Hold a Standard ECFMG Certificate without expired examination dates, if applicable; (Note: Graduates of LCME-accredited U.S. and Canadian medical schools are not required to be ECFMG certified.)
- Hold a contract or an official letter of offer for a position in an approved graduate medical education or training program;
- Provide a Statement of Need from the Ministry of Health of the country of nationality or most recent legal permanent residence. This statement must provide written assurance that the country needs specialists in the area in which the Exchange Visitor will receive training and that s/he will return to the country upon completion. (Note: If permanent residence is in a country other than that of citizenship, the *Statement of Need* must come from the country of most recent legal permanent residence.) *See *Statement of Need Sample Letter*

Duration of Stay: ECFMG'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 American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS). The duration of sponsorship is further limited to a maximum of seven years.

GENERAL QUALIFICATIONS FOR RESEARCH SCHOLAR NON-CLINICAL PROGRAM

Foreign nationals applying for sponsorship as “research scholars” must meet the following general requirements:

- Be a graduate of a U.S., Canadian or foreign medical school;
- Hold a contract or official letter of offer for a position;
- Obtain the appropriate certification statement for no patient contact or incidental patient contact.

New Regulations Pertaining to Research Scholars: Participants in the Exchange Visitor Program as a “professor” or “research scholar” are subject to a two-year bar on “repeat participation” in those categories under two circumstances:

- When the Exchange Visitor completes a full five years of program participation with one or more sponsors; *or*
- When the Exchange Visitor completes a particular Exchange Visitor program, and returns home before the full five-year period is over. In this case, the five-year window is “closed,” the individual is not eligible to access the remaining unused time, and the individual must wait two years before beginning a new program as a J-1 “professor” or “research scholar.” This second circumstance would subject the participant to the two-year bar regardless of how much time he or she spent in the program.

ECFMG APPLICATION TYPES

Forms for the various application types for ECFMG sponsorship are available on the ECFMG website at <http://www.ecfm.org/evsp/>

Requests for ECFMG sponsorship should be made using one of the following application types:

Initial Application – to be submitted for physicians who are not currently sponsored by ECFMG and who will be participating in an ACGME accredited clinical training program

Continuation Application – to be submitted for physicians who are already being sponsored by ECFMG and will continue to participate in an ACGME accredited program either at the same institution or at a different host site.

Non-Standard Application – to be submitted for physicians who will be participating in subspecialties and/or training pathways for which ACGME accreditation is not available or no ABMS Board Certification is available. Note that applications for both initial and continuation of non-standard programs are available. **An initial application should only be submitted if the physician is not currently sponsored by ECFMG as an “alien physician.”**

Chief Residency Application – to be submitted for physicians who will be undertaking a Chief Residency year.

ABMS Board Applications – to be submitted for physicians who are scheduled to sit for an ABMS member-board examination.

Research Scholar – to be submitted for physicians who will be undertaking non-clinical, research programs that have no or incidental patient contact (Note that both initial and continuation applications are available.)

EVSP reserves four to six weeks to review applications for sponsorship in accredited programs, and six to eight weeks for applications for non-standard programs. Applications that are incomplete at the time of submission to ECFMG may require additional time. EVSP will make every effort to review all applications in a timely manner, and will review all applications on a first come, first served basis.

INITIAL ECFMG SPONSORSHIP

Once EVSP issues Form DS-2019 for sponsorship, an applicant has two options by which to obtain J-1 status. If the individual is in the United States in a visa status other than "J-1," s/he may apply for a change of status through USCIS by filing Form I-539 (see the USCIS website at <http://www.uscis.gov>). If the applicant is physically present outside the United States s/he may use the Form DS-2019 to schedule an appointment with the U.S. embassy or consulate in his/her home country to apply for a J-1 visa and then enter the United States in J-1 visa status. Physicians should contact embassies and consulates directly for information on the application process and processing times.

Additional information regarding applying for U.S. visas is available at: <http://usembassy.state.gov/> It is recommended that professional immigration counsel be sought if seeking to change visa status within the United States. Physicians should not undertake any training with host hospitals until they are in J-1 visa status or have alternative employment authorization.

SELECTED FEDERAL REGULATIONS GOVERNING EXCHANGE VISITOR PHYSICIANS

Exchange Visitor physicians and host institutions should be familiar with the policies outlined in the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations which relate to an Exchange Visitor's stay in the United States. Following is a summary of the major requirements affecting Exchange Visitor physicians. Applicants are encouraged to also review a complete copy of the regulations which are located in the Code of Federal Regulations, 22 CFR Part 62. Copies are generally available at university, law school or public libraries, or from the DoS (www.state.gov).

DURATION OF STAY: The duration of stay for participants in the Exchange Visitor Program for clinical training is limited to the time typically required to complete the advanced medical education program. For clinical training programs, the time typically required refers to the medical specialty and subspecialty certification requirements published by the ABMS. The duration of stay in clinical programs is further limited to a period of no more than seven years.

VISA CATEGORY CHANGE: Exchange Visitors may not, as a matter of course, change from one J-1 category designation to another. The categories most often used by foreign national physicians are: "research scholar," "professor," "student," and "alien physician." For example, physicians entering the United States in J-1 status under the category of "research scholar" may not change to the "alien physician" category for clinical training *without prior DoS approval*.

CHANGE OF SPECIALTY: The Regulations state that "...the alien physician may once, and not later than two years after the date the 'alien physician' enters the U.S. as an Exchange Visitor (or acquires exchange visitor status), change his/her designated program of graduate medical education or training..." [22CFR62.27(f)]. 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. Below you will find a list of medical specialties as recognized by the ABMS.

ABMS-RECOGNIZED SPECIALTIES

Allergy and Immunology	Neurological Surgery
Anesthesiology	Neurology
Colon and Rectal Surgery	Nuclear Medicine
Combined Specialty Programs:	Obstetrics and Gynecology
Internal Medicine/Emergency Medicine	Ophthalmology
Internal Medicine/Family Practice	Orthopaedic Surgery
Internal Medicine/Neurology	Otolaryngology
Internal Medicine/Pediatrics	Pathology
Internal Medicine/Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation	Pediatrics
Internal Medicine/Psychiatry	Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
Neurology/Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation	Plastic Surgery
Pediatrics/Emergency Medicine	Preventive Medicine
Pediatrics/Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation	Psychiatry
Pediatrics/Psychiatry/Child Psychiatry	Radiology (Diagnostic)
Psychiatry/Neurology	Radiation Oncology
Surgery (General)/Plastic Surgery	Surgery (General)
Dermatology	Transitional
Emergency Medicine	Thoracic Surgery
Family Practice	Urology
Internal Medicine	
Medical Genetics	

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 legal permanent residence for an aggregate of at least two years before becoming eligible for a change or adjustment in visa status. Research scholars, in some instances, may not be subject to this requirement.

MANDATORY INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS: Federal Regulations require that Exchange Visitors and dependents obtain health, accident, medical evacuation and repatriation of remains insurance. Insurance must provide the following coverage:

1. medical benefits of at least \$50,000 per accident or illness
2. repatriation of remains in the amount of \$7,500
3. expenses associated with the medical evacuation of the Exchange Visitor to his/her home country in the amount of \$10,000
4. a deductible not to exceed \$500 per accident or illness.

ECFMG will provide insurance for the Exchange Visitor and his/her accompanying dependents for medical evacuation and repatriation of remains (numbers 2 and 3 above). The policy will match the prescribed levels stipulated by Federal Regulations and becomes effective on the start date indicated on the DS-2019. A copy of the policy will be sent with the document. It is the responsibility of the Exchange Visitor to obtain the other insurance specified in numbers 1 and 4 above. In many cases, this insurance is provided as a benefit of the training program at the host institution.

TRAINING AUTHORIZATION / EMPLOYMENT: The primary objective of each ECFMG-sponsored Exchange Visitor is to receive graduate medical **training** in the United States which will ultimately enhance his/her skills in a specialty field of medicine. Visa sponsorship, which is documented by Form DS-2019 (Certificate of Eligibility for J-1 Exchange Visitor Status) and issued by ECFMG, authorizes a specific training activity and associated financial compensation. Federal regulations do not permit activity and/or financial compensation outside of the defined parameters of the training program. Therefore, employment outside of approved residency or fellowship training is not permitted.

Dependents of the Exchange Visitor in the United States with J-2 status may file an Application for Employment Authorization (Form I-765) with the office of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services for permission to accept and/or continue employment, provided that the earned income is not needed for support of the principle (J-1) Exchange Visitor. Form I-765 may be obtained by calling the DHS Forms Request Line at 800-870-3676 or accessing the USCIS home page at <http://www.uscis.gov/>

REPEAT TRAINING: Exchange Visitors are expected to advance through **progressive** levels of training that are required by their chosen specialty/subspecialty Boards. Repetition of any portion of training is discouraged. Requests for repeat training will only be considered upon strong recommendation by the Program Director.

EMPLOYMENT OUTSIDE THE SPONSORED PROGRAM

The U.S. Code of Federal Regulations governing the Exchange Visitor Program clearly states that the primary objective of the Exchange Visitor physician's training in the United States should be to enhance his/her skills in the field of medicine. Visa sponsorship, which is documented by Form DS-2019 and issued by ECFMG, authorizes a specific training activity and associated financial compensation. The final requirement for sponsorship as an Exchange Visitor physician involves the signing of the Form DS-2019. This certifies that the exchange visitor physician understands that he/she "...shall be permitted to perform only those activities described in Item 4 on this form."

Federal Regulations do not permit activity and/or compensation outside the defined parameters. The U.S. Code of Federal Regulations governing the Exchange Visitor Program states:

- (a) *An exchange visitor may receive compensation from the sponsor or the sponsor's appropriate designee for employment when such activities are part of the exchange visitor's program.*
 - (b) *An exchange visitor who engages in unauthorized employment shall be deemed to be in violation of his or her program status and is subject to termination as a participant in an exchange visitor program.*
 - (c) *The acceptance of employment by an accompanying spouse or minor child of an exchange visitor is governed by Immigration and Naturalization Service regulations. [Note that in March 2003, service and benefit functions of the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service transitioned into the Department of Homeland Security as the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.]*
- (22CFR§62.16)

Participation in a structured training program should serve to meet the above objective by strengthening and improving the J-1 Exchange Visitor physician's knowledge of American techniques, methodologies and expertise in a particular medical specialty. As J-1 Exchange Visitor physicians sponsored by ECFMG have a chosen primary objective of graduate medical education, they may receive compensation *only* for activities that are part of the designated training program. Therefore, work outside of the sponsored program, or "Moonlighting" is *not* permitted.

STATEMENT OF NEED SAMPLE LETTER

U.S. Public Law 94-484, effective January 10, 1978, requires that Exchange Visitor applicants provide a letter of need from the Ministry of Health of the country of his/her nationality or most recent legal permanent residence. Such letter must provide written assurance, satisfactory to the Secretary of the United States Department of Health and Human Services, that there is a need in that country for persons with the skills the alien physician seeks to acquire. If the applicant is a permanent resident of a country other than that of citizenship, the statement of need must come from the Ministry of Health of the country of **most recent legal permanent residence**. The Statement of Need must:

- Specify the **exact** specialty and/or subspecialty pursued.
- Be issued by the **central office** of the Ministry of Health in country of most recent legal permanent residence.
- Be accompanied by a certified English translation if letter is written in a foreign language.

The following is the exact wording that has been approved by the U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services for the *Statement of Need*:

Name of Applicant for Visa: _____

There currently exists in (country) a need for qualified medical practitioners in the specialty of _____.

(Name of Applicant for visa) has filed a written assurance with the government of this country that he/she will return to his/her country upon completion of training in the United States and intends to enter the practice of medicine in the specialty being sought.

Include Stamp (or Seal and Signature) of issuing official of named country.

Include Date and Signature of Official of named country.

The Statement of Need is required for all INITIAL applicants to ECFMG or if any of the following apply:

- The applicant is entering a new specialty or subspecialty
- The letter on file with EVSP will expire
- The letter on file with EVSP is institution-specific and a change in host institution is proposed

TRAVEL AND VISA ISSUANCE

All physicians sponsored by ECFMG must be in possession of a valid J-1 visa affixed in their passports for reentry to the United States. The only time physicians require valid visas is if they are physically outside the United States and wish to reenter the United States in J-1 visa status. J visas may only be issued by U.S. embassies and consulates *outside* of the United States. Typically, J visas are issued by consulates for the duration indicated on the Form DS-2019 submitted at the time of the visa interview. Information on applying for a J visa at a particular U.S. consulate is available at the U.S. consulate website <http://usembassy.state.gov/>

In addition to possessing a valid J visa in an unexpired passport, J-1 physicians and their J-2 dependents who depart the United States temporarily are required to hold a travel endorsed Form

DS-2019 for reentry. The Form DS-2019 must be signed by a Regional Advisor at EVSP in the lower right hand box marked "TRAVEL VALIDATION BY RESPONSIBLE OFFICER." Further information on travel while in J-1 status under ECFMG sponsorship and how to request a travel validated Form DS-2019 is available at www.ecfmq.org/evsp/travel.html.

Canadian citizens are not required to have J visas affixed in their passports and are therefore, not required to apply for a visa at a U.S. consulate. However, upon reentry to the U.S., Canadian citizens must be in possession of a travel endorsed DS-2019 and unexpired Canadian passport.

I-94 CARD: ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE RECORD or FORM I-797: NOTICE OF ACTION

The I-94 Card is the Arrival/Departure Record issued by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) upon entry to the United States. If the foreign national physician is already present in the United States with another visa status, DHS Form I-539/*Application to Extend or Change Non-Immigrant Visa Status*, must be filed and Form I-797: Notice of Action will be issued. The I-94 Card or Form I-797 record the following information: **Date of Entry** to the United States; **Visa Status** granted; **Length of Authorized Stay** in the United States.

It is the Exchange Visitor's personal responsibility to maintain lawful J-1 visa status.

The length of authorized stay may be indicated in one of two ways:

- **D/S (Duration of Status)** - J-1 visa status is valid when in possession of *both* the I-94 Card or Form I-797 and a valid, current Form DS-2019. The I-94 Card or Form I-797 with D/S status expires with the end date of the Form DS-2019, upon leaving the program or upon departing the United States, ***whichever comes first***.

OR

- **Finite End Date** - J-1 status is valid only until the specific date written on the I-94 Card or Form I-797, regardless of Form DS-2019 dates. The I-94 card expires on the finite end date, upon leaving the program, or upon departing the United States, ***whichever comes first***. A finite end date restriction means that the J-1 physician's J-1 status will expire on that date, regardless of whether the physician possesses a Form DS-2019 with a future end date. Typically, J-1 Exchange Visitors and their J-2 dependents are issued I-94 cards with "D/S" noted on them. Physicians should notify their Regional Advisor at EVSP if they or their J-2 dependents are issued I-94 cards reflecting a finite end date or an incorrect visa status. Overstaying the expiration date on the I-94 card, without having filed an extension of the card through USCIS, could result in severe immigration penalties.

Please note that DHS grants a 30-day grace period of lawful status from the expiration date on the I-94 Card or Form I-797 if it is finite, or from the expiration date on the Form DS-2019 if the I-94 Card or Form I-797 is marked D/S. This additional 30-day period, applicable only to *J* status, is for the purpose of making final arrangements before departing the United States. **There is no employment or training authorization during this 30-day grace period.**

MAINTENANCE OF LAWFUL STATUS

All J-1 physicians must maintain full time participation in the ECFMG approved training program as listed on the Form DS-2019. Evidence of lawful J-1 status is maintained through possession of *both* a valid Form DS-2019, reflecting the ECFMG approved training, and an I-94 Card or Form I-797. The I-94 Card or Form I-797 marked with "Duration of Status" (D/S) is valid until the end date shown on Form DS-2019. If training with the host institution concludes prior to the end date shown on Form DS-2019, sponsorship terminates on the last day of training rather than the end date shown on Form DS-2019. Any attempt to use the Form DS-2019 after termination or resignation from the training program, regardless of validity dates on the Form DS-2019, is considered a violation of visa status.

MAILING INSTRUCTIONS

Applicants for ECFMG sponsorship are strongly encouraged to pay any and all application fees online via the ECFMG's On-Line Applicant Status and Information System (OASIS) rather than by check or money order. Payment through OASIS immediately credits the applicant's account and precludes delays associated with payments made by check or money order. Applicants may access OASIS at the ECFMG website at www.ecfm.org

SUBMITTING APPLICATION MATERIALS (with check or money order)

VIA U.S. POSTAL SERVICE:

Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates
Exchange Visitor Sponsorship Program
P.O. Box 48087
Newark, NJ 07101-4887

VIA COURIER SERVICE:

ECFMG
C/O Image Remit
205 North Center Drive
Commerce Center
North Brunswick, NJ 08902

SUBMITTING APPLICATION MATERIALS (with credit card or OASIS online payment) or SENDING GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

VIA U.S. POSTAL SERVICE or COURIER SERVICE:

Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates
Exchange Visitor Sponsorship Program
3624 Market Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104-2685

RECEIVING INFORMATION FROM ECFMG

ECFMG will forward the DS-2019 to the host institution by first class mail (United States Postal Service). ECFMG is not authorized to release an original DS-2019 directly to an Exchange Visitor and will communicate only with the designated Training Program Liaison (TPL) at the host institution regarding application status.

*If using a courier service, enclose an airbill (pre-paid and pre-addressed to the TPL) with the application. **Regional Advisors are not permitted to complete airbills.***

QUESTIONS

Exchange Visitors: Contact the Training Program Liaison at your host institution.

Training Program Liaisons: Contact your Regional Advisor (phone: 215-823-2121; fax: 215-386-9766).

GLOSSARY OF SELECTED TERMS

ABMS	<i>American Board of Medical Specialties</i>
ACGME	<i>Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education:</i> Responsible for the accreditation of graduate medical education programs in the United States.
AMA	<i>American Medical Association:</i> Major physician membership organization in the United States; instrumental in establishing standards that support graduate medical education.
DHS	<i>Department of Homeland Security:</i> Comprised of divisions responsible for immigration policies, procedures and enforcement including U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and U.S. Customs and Border Protection.
DoS	<i>United States Department of State:</i> U.S. government agency responsible for the administration of all Exchange Visitor Programs.
DS-2019	Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor (J-1) Status. The legal document necessary to obtain/maintain J-1 status. (Formerly Form IAP-66).
D/S	Duration of Status, contingent upon valid Form DS-2019.
ECFMG	<i>Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates:</i> Through its program of certification, assesses the readiness of international medical graduates to enter graduate medical education in the United States.
EVSP	<i>Exchange Visitor Sponsorship Program:</i> ECFMG Department responsible for J-1 sponsorship.
Exchange Visitor	J-1 visa holder
GME	Graduate Medical Education
Graduate Medical Education Directory	Commonly referred to as the “ <i>Green Book</i> ”; directory published annually by the AMA which lists all accredited U.S. programs of graduate medical education (specialty and subspecialty). To order a copy, telephone the AMA Order Department at 800-621-8335.
Host Institution	United States hospital or medical center which provides graduate medical education or research training to the Exchange Visitor.
I-94 Card	Record of <i>arrival to/departure from</i> the United States; it documents Exchange Visitor’s visa status.
I-797	Notice of Action, received when an <i>Application to Extend or Change Non-Immigrant Visa Status</i> is filed with USCIS.
J-1	Visa status assigned to Exchange Visitors for the purpose of education and/or training in the United States.
J-2	Visa status assigned to dependents of Exchange Visitors. Note: Dependents are defined as spouse and/or unmarried children under the age of 21 who are either in the United States with the Exchange Visitor or who will accompany the Exchange Visitor in the future.

Non-Standard Program	Program directly associated with an ACGME-accredited program, supported by an ABMS-member board.
SEVIS	<i>Student and Exchange Visitor Information System:</i> Government database that tracks immigration activities of all non-immigrant students and Exchange Visitors.
SEVIS fee	A U.S. government fee charged to applicants for issuance of specific visas, including the J-1 visa. Fee is part of visa application process at U.S. consulates.
TPL	<i>Training Program Liaison:</i> Person at the host institution who coordinates the administrative details of the Exchange Visitor's training program.
USCIS	<i>United States Citizenship and Immigration Services:</i> Division of DHS responsible for the administration of immigration and naturalization adjudication functions and establishing immigration services policies and priorities.
Visa Stamp	Issued by a United States embassy or consulate and located inside of a passport. Allows a foreign national to enter and/or re-enter the United States (may be issued to allow single or multiple-entry; must include a valid end date). Should not be confused with the I-94 Card; the visa stamp does not document authorized duration of stay; it is an entry document only and does not confer visa status.
Visa Status	Controls the length of authorized stay and associated privileges with each visa class. The visa status of J-1 physicians is documented by possession of both a valid Form DS-2019 and a valid I-94 Card confirming "J-1, D/S."