



**Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates:
An Overview**

ACGME Annual Educational Conference
February 28, 2008

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ECFMG
Private, Non-profit Organization

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 the United States, Inc (FSMB)
- National Medical Association (NMA)

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"IMG" Definition

An **International Medical Graduate (IMG)** is any physician who received his/her basic medical degree or qualification from a medical school outside of the U.S. or Canada, regardless of citizenship

- This includes any U.S. citizen who received a medical degree from a school outside of the U.S. or Canada

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ECFMG Certification

ECFMG Certification assures residency program directors and the U.S. public that the international medical graduate (IMG) has met minimum standards to enter U.S. residency programs

ECFMG Certification is required for:

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

Medical Education Credential Requirements for ECFMG Certification

- Completion of a medical school curriculum of at least **four academic years**
- Medical school and graduation year listed in the **International Medical Education Directory (IMED)** See <http://IMED.ecfm.org>
- Documented completion of all requirements for and receipt of **final medical diploma**
- **Primary source verification** of medical diploma and **transcript** by ECFMG

Examination Requirements for ECFMG Certification

Prior Requirements*	Current Requirements
USMLE Step 1 Basic Science	USMLE Step 1 Basic Science
USMLE Step 2 Clinical Science	USMLE Step 2 CK Clinical Knowledge
ECFMG Clinical Skills Assessment (CSA)	USMLE Step 2 CS Clinical Skills
English language proficiency test (TOEFL)	Spoken English Proficiency (SEP) is part of the USMLE Step 2 CS

*A valid ECFMG Certificate may be based on previously-administered examinations.

ECFMG Certificates Issued*

	2001	2002	2003	2004*	2005	2006
U.S. Citizen IMGs	1518	1427	1571	1360	1932	1857
Non-U.S. IMGs	4416	4002	7593	4650	9603	8960
Total	5934	5429	9164	6010	11535	10817

Source: ECFMG® Annual Reports
Citizenship refers to country of citizenship at the time of entry into medical school

*Changes in ECFMG Certification requirements and USMLE Step 2 CS were implemented in 2004.

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ECFMG Certification Resources

- **General Certification Information**
• <http://www.ecfm.org/cert/index.html>
- **ECFMG Certification Fact Sheet**
• <http://www.ecfm.org/cert/certfact.html>
- **Permanent Validation Sticker**
 - Form 246: <http://www.ecfm.org/cert/permvaid.pdf>
 - Form 295: <http://www.ecfm.org/forms/form295.pdf>
- **E-Newsletter: *The ECFMG Reporter***

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Certification Verification Service (CVS)

ECFMG offers an electronic confirmation of an IMG's ECFMG certification status to residency programs, state medical boards and other organizations, such as hospitals and HMOs.

- Satisfies JCAHO requirement for IMGs
- Free to GME programs
- See <http://www.ecfm.org/cvs> for instructions

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Electronic Residency Application Service (ERAS)

- Developed by the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) to facilitate applications to residency/fellowship programs
- ECFMG administers ERAS for all IMGs and transmits application materials to program directors through the Internet (letters of recommendation, deans' letters/ MSPEs, transcripts, etc.)

* NEW * IMG Acculturation Initiatives

- One-day Orientation Program
Philadelphia, New York
- IMG Advisors Network (IAN)
<http://www.ecfm.org/acculturation/ian.html#over>

Entry into U.S. GME Foreign National Physicians & IMGs

- Complete ECFMG Certification (*if IMG*)
 - Meet examination and credentialing requirements
- Apply for U.S. Residency Training Position
 - Apply to ERAS
 - Interview with programs
 - Enroll in the NRMP Match
 - Secure a contract/letter of offer
- Seek Appropriate U.S. Training Visa/Status (*if foreign national*)

Who Needs a Visa?

All **foreign national** physicians need appropriate visas to participate in U.S. graduate medical education (GME).

Foreign nationals are non-U.S. citizens or permanent residents

- A foreign national physician may be a U.S. medical school graduate or an IMG
- All IMGs, regardless of citizenship, must be ECFMG Certified to enter U.S. GME, not all IMGs need visas

Most Common Visa Types for IMGs

	J-1	H-1
Regulatory Oversight	Department of State, DHS ECFMG, SEVIS Tracking	Departments of Labor, DHS
Examinations	USMLE Steps1, 2CK, 2CS	USMLE Steps1, 2CK, 2CS, 3
Time Limit	7 years maximum	6 years maximum
Funding	Multiple sources acceptable	U.S. employer salary only
Return Home Requirement	2yr home rule or Waiver job in HPSA MUA	No service requirement
EAD for Spouse	Yes - J-2 can apply for work	No work permit for H-4
Processing Time/Fees	\$300 (ECFMG+SEVIS)	From \$ 1,500 - \$6,000+ (attorneys, family etc)

What is "SEVIS"?

Student and Exchange Visitor Information System

- Database that tracks immigration activities of all non-immigrant students and exchange visitors (J, F, M visa holders and dependents - **not H-1Bs**)
- Data exchange with DHS/DOS
- Accessed by consulates, embassies, ports-of-entry and other DHS agencies
- ECFMG creates and updates SEVIS records for J-1 "alien physicians" and "research scholars"

Required J-1 Reporting by Host Institutions & TPLs

- Arrival / Delays – within 30 days of contract start date
- Any Change in the Approved Training Plan
 - Remediation
 - Leave of absence/maternity leave
 - Licensure delay
 - Proposed off-site rotations
 - Proposed early advancements
 - Resignation
 - Contract termination
- Legal Concerns /Allegations, Internal Hearings, etc.

* *H-1B reporting also required*

International Travel Issues for IMGs

- Consider the Time and the Risk
 - If the IMG resident departs the U.S. with an expired visa stamp in the passport, visa renewal will be required to re-enter
 - The visa application process may involve lengthy security clearances, etc. and visa issuance/renewal cannot be guaranteed
- If the IMG Resident **MUST** Travel:
 - Discuss contract conditions - delay, failure to return, etc.
 - Prior to departure, J-1s should contact ECFMG and refer to: <http://www.ecfm.org/evsp/travel.html>

Maintaining Visa Status

- Strict Adherence to J-1 Regulations (*22CFR§62*)
<http://www.exchanges.state.gov/education/jexchanges>
- Compliance With All U.S Immigration Laws
<http://www.uscis.gov>
- Reporting of U.S. Address
<http://www.uscis.gov/graphics/howdoi/address.htm>
- Valid Documentation for J-1
 - ✓ Uninterrupted ECFMG Sponsorship / Valid SEVIS Form DS-2019
 - ✓ Valid Form I-94
<http://www.ecfm.org/evsp/index.html>

EVSP Resources Review

- **EVSP Homepage** @ <http://www.ecfmg.org/evsp/index.html> for access to:
 - *EVSP Reference Guide*
 - *EVSP Fact Sheet*
 - Application Materials
 - Updates and Memoranda
- **U.S. Department of State Exchange Visitor Program**
@ <http://exchanges.state.gov/education/jexchanges>
- **U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services**
@ www.uscis.gov
- **U.S. Department of Homeland Security**
@ www.dhs.gov/dhspublic

Questions?

Exchange Visitor Sponsorship Program

Tel: (215) 823-2121

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