International Medical Graduates

OIS Services and Visa Options for Foreign Physicians

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Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this seminar, participants should have a better understanding of:

• IMG Programmatic Options
• The visa types that support IMG activity and the visa policy for GME at UTHSCSA
• The eligibility restrictions associated with IMG programs
• The roles that the OIS and GME offices play in supporting IMG professional activities at the HSC
GME Visa Policy

• The GME Office has established a general visa sponsorship policy for graduate medical education and training.

• Graduate Medical Education Policies:

  Section 2, General Policies & Procedures
  Policy 2.1.14., Resident Visas

• The preferred visa type for graduate medical education and training at UTHSCSA is: J-1 sponsored by ECFMG.
HSC Programmatic Options for IMG’s

- Medical Residency
- Clinical Fellowship
- Visiting Resident
- Visiting Resident – Observer
- Visiting Clinician
Visa Options for Medical Residency and Clinical Fellowship

Visa Types:

J-1: sponsored by ECFMG

H-1B: case-by-case basis and as approved by GME

J-2 EAD: case-by-case basis and as approved by GME

EAD/Adjustment of Status to LPR: case-by-case basis and as approved by GME
ECFMG Sponsorship for Graduate Medical Education

- The OIS is the official Training Program Liaison (TPL) with ECFMG
- ECFMG has established a seven-year program maximum for progressive, pre-approved training
- Residents and fellows must advance/progress as per ACGME standards
- Failure to disclose failure to advance/progress to ECFMG is cause for sponsorship termination
- Two-year “return home” requirement applies in all cases
J-1 Visa Sponsorship: Roles and Responsibilities

U.S. Department of State (DOS)
U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS)
Student & Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS)

ECFMG
Exchange Visitor Sponsorship Program (EVSP)
Regional Advisor

Host Institution Training Program Liaison (TPL)

Program Director
J-1 Physician

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IMG Training Program Challenges

- Failure to advance/progress as determined by ACGME and failure to report same to ECFMG and to the OIS
- J-1 Research to J-1 Clinical: prohibited by U.S. Department of State regulation; exceptional cases involve a special application called “Change of Category” that must be facilitated by the OIS to ECFMG and on to the Department of State
- Dual-career Clinical Couples: J-1/J-2 means the work authorization of one is dependent on the other; the J-2 will experience periods of unproductivity in the training cycle; Program Directors need to be aware of this in advance
UTHSCSA Graduate Medical Education

J-1 Sponsorship Requirements:
- ECFMG Certification
- Training Program Offer Letter (see sample)
- ECFMG Sponsorship/Continuation Form (signed by TPL)
- Ministry of Health Letter
- Form I-644 (signed by Program Director)
- Proof of Payment to ECFMG (via the OASIS System)
- Form I-94 (copy, if IMG already in the US)
Visa Options for Visiting Resident

• Visiting Residents are engaged in GME programs within the US.
• J-1 sponsored by ECFMG
• H-1B – but only with prior OIS and GME approval. Please note: rotation pre-authorization for H-1B visa holders can take as much as 60 days. Last minute rotation requests cannot be accommodated due to Department of Labor LCA posting requirements.
• EAD – but only with prior OIS and GME approval.
Visa Options for Visiting Resident “Observer”

- Visiting Resident Observers are engaged in GME in other countries (including Mexico and Canada).
- J-1 sponsored by UTHSCSA via the OIS
- Tourist (“Visitor”) visa status specifically *not* allowed for the Visiting Resident Observer Program.
- Canadians and Mexicans may *not* use the TN (Trade NAFTA) visa status for Observer Program.
Visiting Resident Observers

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• Visiting Resident Observers must be officially appointed via GME before arrival; there are no exceptions to this rule.

• The OIS is unable to assist hosting departments until the Observer has been officially appointed via GME.

• Maximum Program Participation: 2 rotations of four (4) weeks each; rotation site may not change or be amended after arrival.

• Failure to follow GME program and visa policies will lead to withdrawal of the invitation to observe.
General Information for the New Visiting Clinician Program

- This is a new Program administered through the OIS in cooperation with the Schools of Medicine and Dentistry.
- The Program will be available only to senior clinicians who are beyond the training phase.
- The Program will follow the same general structure of the Visiting Resident Observer Program.
- Visiting Clinicians must be appointed by the hosting department and the OIS.
- Badges will not be issued without OIS pre-approval.
- Visa Type: B-1 or “WB” (Visa Waiver for Business).