



ECFMG J-1 Visa Workshop

Presented by the Office of International Services
January 2017

Today's Workshop Agenda

Definitions

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Today's Workshop Agenda - Definitions

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ECFMG J-1 Visas – Definitions - ECFMG

- ▶ **ECFMG** is a non-profit organization that:
 - 1) evaluates the qualifications of international medical graduates and medical schools;
 - 2) assists International Medical Graduates (IMGs) in process of applying for U.S. GME positions; and
 - 3) sponsors foreign IMGs for the J-1 visa (Exchange Visitor Sponsorship Program) to participate in GME programs.



ECFMG J-1 Visas – Definitions –

GME Policy Manual

- ▶ The **GME Policy Manual** states the official policies in regards to all Graduate Medical Education programs at the UT Health Science Center at San Antonio.
- ▶ The GME Policy Manual can be found on the [Office of Graduate Medical Education website](#).
- ▶ [GME Policy 2.14.a](#) states the policy re: visa sponsorship for Medical Residents. No exceptions to policy.
- ▶ [GME Policy 2.14.b](#) states the policy re: visa sponsorship for Clinical Fellows. No exceptions to policy.



ECFMG J-1 Visas – Definitions - IMG

- ▶ An **International Medical Graduate (IMG)** is a physician who received his/her basic medical degree or qualification from a medical school located outside the United States and Canada. (U.S. citizens who are IMGs do not require visa sponsorship but do require an ECFMG certificate.)



ECFMG J-1 Visas – Definitions - TPL

- ▶ A **Training Program Liaison (TPL)** is an individual who is designated to serve as the official teaching hospital representative and assists in the communications between the GME training programs, the physician on the ECFMG J-1 visa, and ECFMG to ensure regulatory compliance and provide administrative oversight.

More information and definitions can be found at:

www.ecfm.org/evsp



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Program reviews GME Policy Manual and determines if ECFMG J-1 visa sponsorship is required for medical resident or clinical fellow. Program contacts the Office of International Services (OIS) at 567-6241 or international@uthscsa.edu if they have any questions about appropriate visa under GME Policy Manual.

Program submits a complete ECFMG J-1 Exchange Visitors request packet to the OIS. (Forms can be found at www.uthscsa.edu/ois). The OIS reviews packet. If documents are missing or additional information is needed, the OIS will contact department.
OIS Processing Time: 5 to 10 business days

Once there is a complete ECFMG J-1 Exchange Visitor request packet, the OIS uploads the request packet to ECFMG via their online Exchange Visitor Network (EVNet).
OIS Processing Time: 1 to 3 business days.

ECFMG reviews documents uploaded to EVNet and notifies the OIS if additional information or documents are required. ECFMG emails resident or fellow with instructions and any requests to upload required documents to Online Applicant Status and Information System (OASIS.)
ECFMG Processing Time: 4 to 8 weeks

When ECFMG approves the application, they send the DS-2019 form to the OIS. The OIS will send the DS-2019 form to the resident or fellow. If the physician is abroad, then s/he uses the DS-2019 form to apply for a ECFMG J-1 visa at U.S. consulate.
OIS Processing Time: 1 to 2 business days.

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Documents Required

On the OIS website (www.uthscsa.edu/ois/) , go to J-1 ECFMG tab and open ECFMG J-1 Exchange Visitor Visa Sponsorship Request Form.

Read and complete the form carefully and select the appropriate ECFMG checklist which details the supporting documents which must be submitted with the completed form to the OIS.

If you have questions about the request form or the checklist, please contact OIS.



**ECFMG SPONSORED J-1 EXCHANGE
 VISITOR VISA SPONSORSHIP REQUEST FORM**
(To be completed by medical resident/clinical fellow and GME program)

The Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG) is the sole entity authorized by the U.S. Department of State to sponsor J-1 Exchange Visitor physicians enrolled in accredited or non-standard Graduate Medical Education (GME) training programs. The staff of the Office of International Services (OIS) facilitates this sponsorship by serving as the Training Program Liaisons (TPLs) between the UT Health Science Center at San Antonio's GME programs, sponsored medical residents and clinical fellows, and ECFMG.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

- This process is to be used for an international medical graduate (IMG) who requires ECFMG J-1 visa sponsorship under [GME Policies 2.14.a \(Medical Residents Visas\) and 2.14.b \(Clinical Fellow Visas\)](#) to engage in a medical residency or clinical fellowship program at the UT Health Science Center at San Antonio.
- In order to qualify for initial sponsorship, the IMG must be officially accepted to a residency or clinical fellowship program at the university.
- Continuation of sponsorship is based on the IMG demonstrating successful progress in his/her designated program and remaining in good standing. The IMG is expected to advance through progressive levels of training that are required by the specialty/subspecialty Boards.
- ECFMG J-1 Exchange Visitor physicians are only allowed to engage in activities that are a part of their formal GME training programs. Programs may contact the OIS if they have questions about allowable activities.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS TO PROCESS J-1 REQUEST

- ECFMG Sponsored J-1 Exchange Visitor Visa Request Form

*Section A must be completed by the medical resident or clinical fellow requesting sponsorship.
 *Section B must be completed by the sponsoring GME program.

- Please select the appropriate checklist below for the anticipated GME program and submit **all** documentation indicated on the checklist along with this form completed to the OIS. If you are unsure which checklist to select, please contact the OIS.

[Initial ECFMG Sponsorship in ACGME-accredited Clinical Training](#)

[Continuation of ECFMG Sponsorship in ACGME-accredited Clinical Training](#)

[Initial ECFMG Sponsorship in Non-Standard Clinical Training](#)

[Continuation of ECFMG Sponsorship in Non-Standard Clinical Training](#)

[Initial of ECFMG Sponsorship in Research/Non-Clinical Program](#)

[Continuation of ECFMG Sponsorship in Research/Non-Clinical Program](#)

[Continuation of ECFMG Sponsorship to sit for ABMS Board Examination](#)

PROCESS AND TIMEFRAME

The form should be completed by the sponsoring GME program and submitted with all required documentation indicated on the appropriate ECFMG checklist to the OIS. Within 5 to 10 business days of receipt of the packet, the OIS will review it and notify the GME program if any information and/or documents are missing. Once the OIS receives the complete information and/or documentation, within 1 to 3 business days the OIS will submit the request packet to ECFMG. ECFMG requires 4 to 8 weeks to review the applications and issue and send the DS-2019 form to the OIS.

For medical residents or clinical fellows entering the U.S. initially, they require the DS-2019 form to apply for an ECFMG J-1 visa at a U.S. consulate abroad to enter the U.S. **The OIS will mail the ECFMG J-1 DS-2019 form to the applicant for all initial sponsorship requests via eShip Global. Please provide the following information to bill the sponsoring program for the cost of mailing:**

Username: _____ Project ID (PID): _____ Dept. ID: _____

For continuing ECFMG J-1 medical residents or clinical fellows, they can pick up the new DS-2019 form in person at the OIS. Program coordinators cannot pick up the DS-2019 forms for them.

SECTION A: (TO BE COMPLETED BY MEDICAL RESIDENT OR CLINICAL FELLOW)

USMLE/ECFMG Number ____-____-____-____-____-____

Gender: Male Female

Marital Status: Single Married

Are you currently in the U.S.? Yes No

When did you enter the U.S.? (if applicable) ____/____/____ (mm/dd/yyyy)

What is your current visa status? (if applicable) _____. When does your current visa status expire? ____/____/____

If you are currently in the U.S., do you intend to apply to change status within the United States or leave the U.S. to apply for an ECFMG J-1 visa?

Have you ever previously been in the United States as a J-1 Exchange Visitor? Yes No

Will you be requesting sponsorship for dependents (spouse/child)? Yes No If so, how many? _____
 (Applicants will be requested to insert information and upload documentation regarding accompanying dependents in the ECFMG Online Applicant Status and Information System (OASIS) once the OIS has submitted the ECFMG J-1 request to ECFMG.)

Applicant's Family Name _____ Given Name _____ Middle Name _____

Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy) _____ City of Birth _____ Country of Birth _____

Country of Citizenship _____ Country of Last Legal Permanent Residence _____

Occupation in Home Country _____ Name of Employer/University _____

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There are requirements even after the physician receives the ECFMG J-1 visa and checks in with the OIS. The physician, TPLs, and programs all have certain responsibilities.

Failure to meet compliance requirements may result in ECFMG terminating the J-1 record in the federal governmental database SEVIS which would require the physician to immediately depart the U.S.



Compliance – Physician's Responsibilities

Contact Information

After entering the U.S. on ECFMG J-1 visa, the physician must continually update the following in OASIS:

- 1) Residential Address
- 2) Email Address
- 3) Phone Number

The physician must also notify the USCIS of any address changes online via their website: www.uscis.gov.

The physician should also notify the OIS at international@uthscsa.edu regarding any changes in his/her contact information.



Compliance – Physician's Responsibilities

Travel Outside of the U.S. – Valid Travel Signature on DS -2019

*Must have signature of ECFMG Regional Advisor in Travel Validation section of DS-2019 form. No-one in the OIS is authorized to sign the form.

*Travel signature is valid for one year from date of signature or until the expiration date of the DS-2019 form, whichever is earlier.

*Physician must upload to OASIS a [Request for Duplicate Form DS-2019](#) to obtain ECFMG signature for Travel Validation. Request form asks for TPL's or Program Director's signature, but the OIS requires the Program Director's signature to confirm that s/he is aware of the physician's upcoming travel abroad.

*ECFMG requires 7 to 10 business days to issue DS-2019 form with travel validation signature.



Compliance – Physician's Responsibilities

Medical Insurance

U.S. Department of State regulations require that all J-1 Exchange Visitors including ECFMG J-1 physicians maintain medical, evacuation, and repatriation of remains insurance with certain coverage for the entire duration of their stay in the U.S.

J-2 dependents must also have insurance meeting these requirements for their entire stay in the U.S.

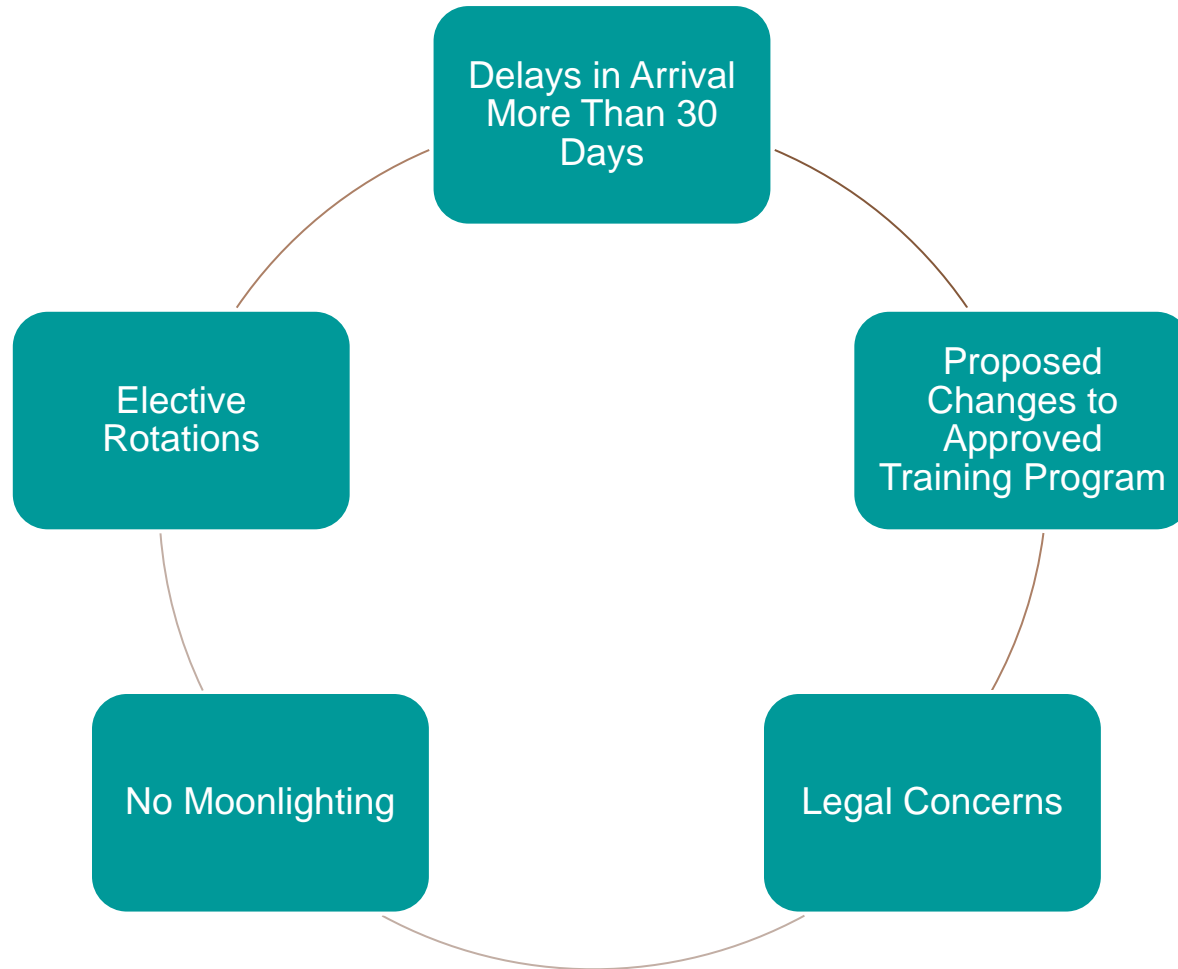
It is the J-1 physicians' responsibility to ensure that their medical insurance plans meets the regulatory insurance requirements and that J-2 dependents also have the required insurance coverage.

ECFMG provides the required evacuation and repatriation of remains insurance to ECFMG J-1 physicians and their J-2 dependents.

Additional information on the [ECFMG website](#).



Compliance – Program’s Responsibilities



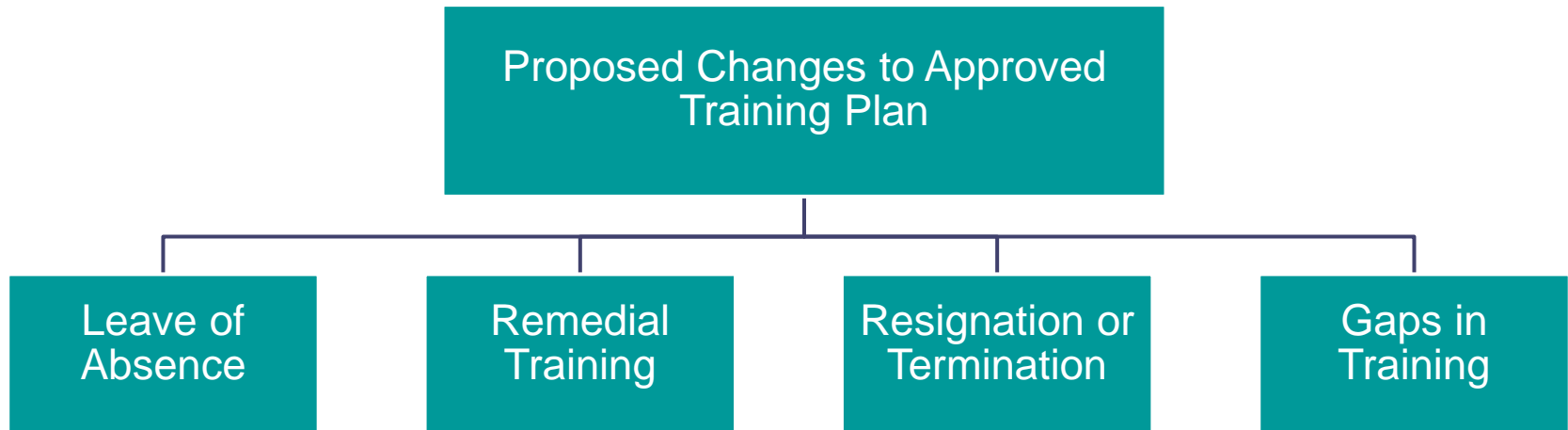
Compliance – Program's Responsibilities

Delays in Arrival

If physician is delayed for any reason including visa issuance more than 30 days from the start date of his/her program (as indicated as on the DS-2019 form), then the program must notify the OIS. The OIS will notify ECFMG and they will subsequently advise us of the next steps.



Compliance – Program’s Responsibilities



Compliance – Program's Responsibilities

Proposed Changes to Approved Training Plan **Leaves of Absence**

ECFMG must approve in advance whether it be medical, FMLA, educational, or any other leave of absence.

ECFMG wants to know if the HSC continues to have responsibility for the physician as member of training program during leave of absence.

Program must notify the OIS in advance of proposed leave of absence. Include details such as type of leave, dates of proposed leave, continued receipt of benefits, salary, etc..., institutional oversight and/or contact, location of leave (U.S. or abroad), and non-clinical assignments/credits.



Compliance – Program's Responsibilities

Proposed Changes to Approved Training Plan Remedial Training

Regulations only allow for maximum of 12 months of repeat training if requested by the Program Director.

ECFMG wants to know if the request is consistent with GME requirements for academic progression.

ECFMG takes into consideration the rationale for the remedial training, credits/rotations, plan of remedial training, presence of periodic evaluations, amended contract, etc...



Compliance – Program's Responsibilities

Proposed Changes to Approved Training Plan Resignation or Termination

Program must inform the OIS of official date of release of upcoming resignation or termination so that the OIS can notify ECFMG.

Grievance process and timeline must have been followed consistent with GME Policy.

ECFMG wants to know that the HSC has thought about the potential issues for the program and the physician in the future.



Compliance – Program's Responsibilities

Proposed Changes to Approved Training Plan **Gaps in Training**

For physicians continuing on with GME, there ideally should be no gaps between contracts.

Programs should advise the OIS if there will be a gap in training program for physician and if so, detail if result of off-cycle training, reason for off-cycle (i.e. visa or licensure delays), location during gap (U.S. or abroad), institutional oversight during gap, etc...

If minimal gap, ECFMG will consider options to continue sponsorship and meet regulatory requirements.



Compliance – Program's Responsibilities

Legal Concerns

Program must notify the OIS immediately if they know that the resident has encountered legal concerns such as arrest, criminal charges, etc... so that the OIS can work with the Office of Legal Affairs, Office of GME, ECFMG, the program and the physician.



Compliance – Program's Responsibilities

Moonlighting Prohibited

Physicians on ECFMG J-1 visas are only authorized to participate in official program training activities.

If a physician on an ECFMG J-1 visa engages in unauthorized employment including internal moonlighting, ECFMG may have to terminate the physician's visa status.

For ACGME programs, the training activities are well-defined. For non-standard programs, ECFMG will review the original program description submitted in support of the visa application. Programs may contact the OIS to determine if proposed activities are allowable.



Compliance – Program’s Responsibilities

Elective Rotations

Physicians who want to participate in an rotation that is not at an approved ACGME “major participating site” must first receive approval from ECFMG.

ECFMG form requesting approval of off-site rotation requires the signatures of both the Program Director and the TPL.

ECFMG requires submission of the approval request via OASIS or EVNet 30 days in advance.



Compliance – TPL's Responsibilities

The Training Program Liaisons in the OIS serve to communicate between the program and ECFMG.

The OIS TPLs rely on the Program Coordinators, the Program Directors, and the medical residents or clinical fellows being sponsored to advise us of the mandatory compliance reporting items.

TPLs also participate in ECFMG webinars and outreach programs to stay informed of our institution's obligations and ECFMG processes.



Team Work & Communication Leads to Success for Everyone





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