In this policy the term “Resident” refers to both specialty Residents and subspecialty Fellows.

Purpose:

Consistent with our mission to educate physicians for a leadership role in clinical and academic medicine as well as to protect, improve and maintain the health of our patients, we adopt this policy and procedure setting standards for admissions of all Foreign Medical Graduates (FMG) at the University of Colorado School of Medicine (CU SOM), Graduate Medical Education (GME) program.

Policy

GME prefers that residents, who need a visa status supported by CU, do so on a J-1 clinical visa sponsored by the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG). However, there are other visa statuses that could be sponsored by the CU SOM. Contact the GME Assistant Program Director for Administration and Finance, Training Program Liaison (TPL) in the CU SOM GME office at 303-724-6028 for information on a J-1 Visa and the International Student & Scholar Services (ISSS), Office of International Affairs at 303-315-2235 for information on other visa options before making any promise to a prospective international resident that the University will support a particular visa type. There is important information on time limits with all visas which CU SOM and ISSS will need to review on a case-by-case basis. For further information on the different visas review “Comparing J-1 Exchange Visitor, H-1B Specialty Occupation, E-3 Specialty Occupation, and O-1 Nonimmigrant Visa Statuses for Residents and Clinical Fellows (Rev. July, 2011)” located on our website; under Program Director and Coordinators, Policies and Procedures, GME Procedures “VISA Comparison Informational Document.

Definitions

A list of pertinent definitions can be found on the ECFMG website: www.ecfmg.org/evsp/glossary.html

Processes

J-1 Visa Sponsorship – Initial and Continuation of Sponsorship in an ACGME-Accredited Clinical Training Program

1) Application and Supporting Documentation Instructions - The application process requires completion of each of the following steps in the order listed below:

   a) Program provides applicant and the GME Assistant Program Director for Administration and Finance with Letter of Offer or fully executed Training Agreement (TA). Program name must match name exactly as indicated on the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) website (www.acgme.org).
b) The GME Assistant Program Director for Administration and Finance submits an on-line appointment profile through EVNet. https://ecam.ecfmg.org/login.aspx

c) Primary Site of Activity can be the specific Program’s address noted on the ACGME website. Indicate address in the “Comments” field; requesting ECFMG to attach the Program address to our Institution address when setting up the appointment profile.

d) Applicant accepts the on-line appointment profile and completes his/her portion of the application on-line using OASIS. (NOTE: An email from ECFMG will be sent directly to the applicant with specific instructions and/or checklist.)

e) Applicant pays the administrative/application fee on-line using OASIS. ECFMG’s J-1 sponsorship application fee is $285.00. **An additional $180.00 fee, payable to the Department of Homeland Security, is required of initial applicants for J-1 sponsorship.. The J-1 sponsorship application fee is non-refundable.

f) The applicant will submit to the GME Assistant Program Director for Administration and Finance, all required documentation as indicated on the applicant’s checklist. Supporting documentation should not be submitted prior to completion of steps 1-3, as documents submitted prior to completion of these steps cannot be tracked and may delay application review. ECFMG will communicate directly with the GME Assistant Program Director for Administration and Finance regarding any application deficiency and/or requests for additional documentation.

2) Once sponsorship is approved, the original Form DS-2019 is mailed to the GME Assistant Program Director for Administration and Finance via United States Postal Service, first class mail* for distribution to the applicant. (*If courier service is preferred, The GME Assistant Program Director for Administration and Finance must provide ECFMG with a pre-paid/pre-addressed airbill including billing account number, which the program must provide, along with supporting documents for the sponsorship application.)

3) Upon receipt of an on-line sponsorship application and supporting documentation, Exchange Visitor Sponsorship Program (EVSP) reserves the following timeframes for review and processing:

   a) Four to six weeks for ACGME-accredited training programs

   b) Six to eight weeks for non-standard training programs

**Processing of DS-2019 received from ECFMG and New Resident documents:**

1) Distribution of DS-2019 - Within 24 hours of receipt of the DS-2019, the GME Assistant Program Director for Administration and Finance will contact the applicant and coordinate distribution/pick up of the DS-2019. If the applicant is outside of the U.S., the GME Assistant Program Director for Administration and Finance will send the DS-2019 to the applicant via express mail. A pre-addressed envelope for returning a signed copy to GME will also be sent to the applicant.

2) Applicant applies for J-1 visa status. Once EVSP issues Form DS-2019 for sponsorship; the applicant has two options by which to obtain J-1 status.

   a) If the applicant 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).

   b) 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 their home country to apply for a J-1 visa and then enter the United States in J-1 visa status. Applicants should contact embassies
and consulates directly for information on the application process and processing times. Processing instructions are provided by ECFMG with the DS-2019 initially sent to the applicant.

3) The GME Assistant Program Director for Administration and Finance will make a copy of the DS-2019 and keep in the residents file. The GME Assistant Program Director for Administration and Finance will send a copy to:

a) Program Coordinator
b) Human Resources
c) ISSS

4) The GME Assistant Program Director for Administration and Finance will notify the program coordinator when the DS-2019 has been received. The program coordinator is responsible for:

a) Sending the resident a GME “New” resident package, with instructions to return the package to the program.
b) Reviewing the completed forms from the resident prior to submitting forms to the GME office. A checklist must be submitted with every GME package.
c) Ensuring all program-related responsibilities (licensure, ID badges, etc.) are completed in a timely manner. Most applicants will not have a social security number when they begin training. If this is the case, do not put anything in the social security number blanks on these forms at this time.

5) Applicant must contact and meet with the following individuals upon arrival:

a) The GME Assistant Program Director for Administration and Finance at 303-724-6028 to set up an appointment to:
   ii) Submit copy of most recent Form I-94 Arrival/Departure record, or Form I-797.
   iii) Submit a copy of J-1 visa page from the passport (if applicable) and
   iv) Submit a copy of stamped DS-2019 form will need to accompany this form.
   v) Complete form I-9 (Employment Eligibility Verification) will also need to be completed.
b) International Tax office – Go to https://www.cusys.edu/pbs/ and under the Tools and Resources (right hand side), choose “International Tax Office – schedule an appointment online” link.

6) Apply for a social security card if s/he does not already have one. Once the applicant has arrived s/he must obtain a social security card by completing the appropriate paper work from the Social Security Administration Office. However, if this is the person’s first time in the United States as J-1 visa holder, s/he should wait 10-14 days after arrival in the US and SEVIS validation before visiting a Social Security Administration office, to ensure that the Social Security Administration can access their entry information in SAVE. More information on how to obtain a social security card and information can be obtained by visiting their website at http://www.ssa.gov/.

a) ISSS can assist with problems with obtaining a social security number, Colorado driver’s license application, or any other issues related to being an International working in the US.
Maintaining J-1 Visa Status (from ECFMG website: http://www.ecfmg.org/evsp/status.html)

ECFMG-sponsored J-1 visa status requires full-time participation in an approved program of graduate medical education. In addition to meeting the academic standards required to progress through residency, J-1 physicians must maintain valid visa status in order to continue to train at U.S. teaching hospitals. Maintaining status requires, but is not limited to, the following:

1) Possession of required documents/records confirming visa status:
   a) Form DS-2019 reflecting an active SEVIS record.
   b) I-94 record with “Duration of Status” (D/S) or future end date
   c) Valid, unexpired passport

2) Mandatory residential address reporting
   a) Report U.S. residential address to U.S. government (Form AR-11) within 10 days of any move.
   b) Report valid contact information to ECFMG via OASIS. It is the responsibility of all J-1 physicians to maintain and update contact information throughout the course of training. ECFMG uploads all address changes to SEVIS.

3) Notification to ECFMG of any proposed changes to the approved training program or curriculum, including location, course of training, leaves of absence, termination (Notification of Termination as an ECFMG Exchange Visitor in the United States), remediation, etc.

Failure to comply with the requirements of J-1 visa status can seriously impact an applicant’s eligibility for a future U.S. visa application or stay.

J-1 Visa Sponsorship – Initial and Continuation of Sponsorship in a Non-Standard Clinical Training Program

The term non-standard training refers to advanced clinical subspecialty disciplines or pathways for which there is no ACGME and/or American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) member board certification available. The member boards of the ABMS are viewed as the subject matter experts on educational developments within their respective specialties. All Non-Standard disciplines must be endorsed by an appropriate ABMS member board to be considered for J-1 sponsorship.

Application and Supporting Documentation Instructions – Same application process; however, keep the following in mind:

1) Verify the CU GME Program is on the ECFMG list (www.ecfmg.org/evsp/nonstandard-subspecialty-disciplines.html) of those non-standard disciplines currently approved by ABMS boards for the purpose of J-1 sponsorship.

2) If CU GME Program is not listed, Program must inform the GME Assistant Program Director for Administration and Finance @ 303-724-6028 and contact specific ABMS board to obtain Member Board Recognition. See http://www.abms.org for contact information.

3) ABMS member board endorsement does not guarantee J-1 sponsorship approval.

All other Types of Visas - Contact ISSS at 303-315-2235.
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Miscellaneous Information:

1) Official Documentation of Funding Source – Funding documentation must include confirmation from the official source of the terms and conditions, dates, and amount in U.S. dollars. A certified, word-for-word English translation must accompany a non-English document. Applicant must provide the Assistant Program Director for Administration and Finance with the contact information for the official source of funding in order to coordinate the transfer of the funds to the CU SOM GME office.

2) Proof of Health Insurance; which at a minimum meets the following ECFMG requirements:

   a) **ECFMG 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. A deductible not to exceed $500 per accident or illness.

3) 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.

   All residents and fellows in a CU GME training program must show proof of other health insurance if waiving the CU GME Health Benefits Plan.

4) **International Travel is DISCOURAGED during Training Programs**

   a) Why?
      If the J-1 physician departs the United States with an expired visa stamp in the passport, visa renewal will be required to re-enter the United States. The visa application process may involve lengthy security clearances, etc., and J-1 renewal cannot be guaranteed.

   b) If the J-1 Physician MUST Travel:
      i) Discuss contract conditions – delay, failure to return, etc.
      ii) Refer to [www.state.gov/travel](http://www.state.gov/travel)
      iii) Request travel documents from ECFMG
      iv) Endorsed DEVIS Form DS-2019
      v) “Letter of Good Standing”