

UNIVERSITY HEALTH CARE
HOSPITALS AND CLINICS

GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION

RESIDENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL GRADUATES - ELIGIBILITY AND EXAMINATIONS

GME 15.1

Review Date: Jan 2011

Chapter: International Medical Graduates

I. PUPOSE:

The **ECFMG (Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates)**, through a program of certification, assesses the readiness of graduates of international medical schools to enter ACGME accredited residencies or fellowships in the United States. ECFMG certification provides assurance to program directors that graduates of international medical schools have met minimum standards of eligibility required to enter such programs. ECFMG certification is a requirement for entry into a residency program and is also a prerequisite for licensure in most states.

II. POLICY:

To earn the **ECFMG Certificate**, IMGs are required to

- Pass Step 1 and Step 2CK of the United States Medical Licensing Exams (NOTE: Some combinations of formerly administered medical science exams, such as FLEX or FMGEMS may be acceptable for purposes of obtaining ECFMG certification. However, they are no longer accepted as prerequisites for USMLE Step 3 and so are not valid for licensure. All medical science exams must have been taken within 7 years of application.)
- Pass the ECFMG Clinical Skills Assessment exam or the USMLE Step 2CS exam. This exam tests both clinical proficiency and spoken English language proficiency. It is a one-day exam administered at various testing centers located in Philadelphia, Atlanta, Los Angeles, Chicago, and Houston. The Clinical Skills exam or Step 2CS can be applied for at any time after meeting the previous exam requirements. Details for eligibility, application, and scheduling are available on the ECFMG web site at www.ecfm.org.
- Document completion of requirements for, and receipt of final medical diploma from, a medical school that is listed in the *World Directory of Medical Schools*.

Only those with an ECFMG certificate are eligible to apply for graduate

medical education training in the United States.

Fee information for the USMLE examinations are is available through ECFMG. Fees are paid by the applicant and are not reimbursed by the University. Examination fees will not be credited to a future examination nor refunded if applicants do not take the examination. Scores for examinations take approximately six weeks, and are mailed directly to the applicant.

The USMLE Step 1CK, Step 2CK, and Step 2CS for international medical graduates are offered through the ECFMG. The exams are computer based, are offered in selected test centers throughout the world, and may be applied for at any time through ECFMG.

To learn about eligibility requirements for any of the above exams, read information bulletins published on the ECFMG web site at www.ecfm.org. Also consult this web site for information regarding re-taking tests, scheduling tests, scoring tests, and any other information regarding these tests.

VISA REQUIREMENTS

ECFMG is authorized by the United State Information Agency (USIA) to sponsor international physicians as Exchange Visitors (J-1 Visa) in graduate medical education programs which lead toward American Board Certification and which are **affiliated with accredited medical schools in the United States**. The duration of stay of the Exchange Visitor is limited to the time typically required to complete such programs. To be eligible for sponsorship, foreign nationals must hold a valid ECFMG certificate, have a houseofficer agreement (contract) in a program accredited by the ACGME, and complete an application for sponsorship.

Application Forms for Initial Sponsorship, or for Continuation of Sponsorship, are available on the ECFMG web site (www.ecfm.org). Once the documentation required is received by the ECFMG and is processed, the Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor Status will be sent to the institution providing the education or training, to be forwarded to the foreign national physician. The Form DS-2019 (Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor Status) is used to obtain a J-1 visa to enter the United States. **All non-US-citizen medical graduates who train in an ACGME-accredited program at the University of Utah Affiliated Hospitals must obtain a J-1 visa.**

Research fellows not providing any patient care, and whose status is not that of "housestaff," may work through the International Student Office at the University of Utah, and do not need to go through the ECFMG. However, it should be noted that if an international medical graduate enters this country to do research, he or she cannot switch to a clinical program later on, because the ECFMG will not sponsor such individuals.

The University of Utah Affiliated Hospitals does not accept H-1 visas for

residencies or fellowship.

If an applicant is a "Permanent Resident" or has a "Green Card," there is no visa requirement. If an applicant is in the process of obtaining a "Green Card" or "Permanent Resident Work Authorization," the requirement for J-1 visa may be waived by the Director of Graduate Medical Education on the condition that the applicant provides documentation of approval of his/her application for Green card status from the bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (form I-140), which approval is subject to change at the discretion of the bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services. The applicant must also have an Employment Authorization Card (EAC) and must provide that to the GME Office with the Form I-140. A valid Form I-140 and EAC may take the place of a Green Card temporarily. The Green Card must be presented to the GME Office as soon as it is received.

ELIGIBILITY FOR RESIDENCY OR FELLOWSHIP POSITIONS

Applicants must be qualified for a residency or fellowship program according to the same criteria used for all applicants to the program. In addition, they must have a valid ECFMG certificate before they can be considered. A J-1 Visa (or citizenship or permanent residency or approval of application for permanent residency and EAC) is required for all non-US citizens in a training program who provide patient care. This visa can be obtained by working through the ECFMG Training Program Liaison, by the process explained above.

MEDICAL LICENSURE REQUIREMENTS

The Graduate Medical Education Committee of the University of Utah Affiliated Hospitals requires that all housestaff apply for a Utah medical license by July 31st, or within 30 days of hire, of their second year of training. Many international medical school graduates will not have the required United States training in order to be eligible for a Utah medical license. As a result, all program directors must obtain approval from the Graduate Medical Education Committee to hire any international medical graduate who may need an exception to the licensure requirement. This approval must be granted **before** an offer of training can be extended to the physician. No exceptions to the licensing requirement will be granted to fellows in non-ACGME accredited programs.

CONTACTING ECFMG

The ECFMG may be contacted through its web site at www.ecfm.org. The web site contains detailed and specific information about all ECFMG functions. The web site contains complete informational bulletins on all exams and has downloadable application forms for all exams. It also contains downloadable application forms for all certification and sponsorships. International medical graduates inquiring about residency positions, and applicants to residency positions, are encouraged to visit the ECFMG web site to answer any questions

and obtain information. The Office of Graduate Medical Education is also willing to answer questions and provide assistance.

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