University at Buffalo Office of Graduate Medical Education

J-1 VISA PROCESSING FOR MEDICAL RESIDENTS

NOTE: This information has been copied and adapted from the ECFMG website

OVERVIEW

"To streamline the collection and maintenance of accurate J-1 physician data records, ECFMG has developed an on-line application system. This on-line application system, which launched in October 2011, will replace the paper application process for J-1 visa sponsorship."

Effective immediately, all applications for J-1 Sponsorship for UB residents will be submitted through ECFMG's Exchange Visitor Network (EVNet) in lieu of paper applications.

ON-LINE APPLICATIONS OVERVIEW

"To streamline the collection and maintenance of accurate J-1 physician data records, ECFMG has developed an on-line application system. The integrated system is designed to reflect the specific roles in the application process and coordinate required actions for submission of a J-1 sponsorship application. By logging in to ECFMG's secure on-line systems specific to their respective roles, the teaching institution and J-1 applicant are able to submit required program and biographic information to ECFMG in electronic format."

"Graduate medical education (GME) appointment profile details are submitted to ECFMG on-line by TPLs through the Exchange Visitor Network (EVNet). "

"J-1 applicants use the On-line Applicant Status and Information System (OASIS) to verify acceptance of an appointment profile and provide mandatory personal and immigration data to ECFMG."

"In accordance with current federal guidelines, copies of a dually signed contract, Statement of Need, passport, Form I-94, and other required documentation must be submitted to EVSP via fax, mail, or courier service. Once both parties have submitted the required on-line information and all supporting documentation, ECFMG proceeds with an evaluation of sponsorship eligibility."

THE TRAINING PROGRAM LIAISON SYSTEM ACCESS, EVNet

"EVNet is an on-line application system designed for designated TPLs for the submission of appointment details and the management of the J-1 sponsorship process. **An official contract or letter of offer must be signed by the program and J-1 applicant prior to initiating an on-line sponsorship application through EVNet.**"

THE PHYSICIAN APPLICANT SYSTEM ACCESS, OASIS

"OASIS is ECFMG's web-based information system used by ECFMG applicants and ECFMG-certified physicians.

J-1 applicants use the "J-1 Visa Sponsorship" section of OASIS to provide ECFMG with information required for sponsorship. Once an authorized TPL has initiated a J-1 visa sponsorship application in EVNet by submitting official training appointment profile details, individual J-1 applicants are directed by e-mail to complete their portion of the on-line application in OASIS. Through OASIS, applicants can also track the status of a pending application.

It is expected that future enhancements to OASIS will enable J-1 applicants to view notices of application deficiencies, notify ECFMG of their initial arrival to the training program, request travel validation, and request J-2 sponsorship for eligible dependents."

ECFMG RECORDS AND U.S. GOVERNMENT DATABASE, SEVIS

"Once a J-1 visa sponsorship application is complete and all regulatory requirements are satisfied, ECFMG creates an electronic record for the J-1 applicant and each J-2 dependent in the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS). SEVIS is a database jointly administered by the U.S. Departments of State and Homeland Security. ECFMG issues Form DS-2019, *Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor (J-1) Status*, through SEVIS to confirm J-1 sponsorship approval."

"ECFMG, as a non-governmental organization, has no authority to issue visas or confer visa status. If seeking ECFMG-sponsored J-1 visa status for the first time, a foreign national physician with an initial SEVIS record and an original Form DS-2019 must apply for a J-1 visa at a U.S. embassy abroad (or, in the United States, for J-1 visa status through the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services). Those applicants who are extending J-1 sponsorship through ECFMG and are already participating in a program of GME (or research for "J-1 Research Scholars") may continue their training based on the updated Form DS-2019 reflecting their new end date, provided Form I-94 remains valid."

"TPLs and J-1 physicians must collaborate directly with ECFMG to ensure the maintenance of accurate J-1 sponsorship records in ECFMG's sponsorship database and SEVIS."

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How does the on-line J-1 sponsorship application process work?

Both the teaching institution's TPL and the J-1 applicant are responsible for electronic submission of their respective portions of the on-line J-1 sponsorship application.

- Appointment profile details are submitted to ECFMG on-line by TPLs through EVNet.
- J-1 applicants are then notified by e-mail that an on-line application has been initiated through EVNet on their behalf. The e-mail includes instructions on how to use the [On-line Applicant Status and Information System (OASIS)](#) to verify acceptance of the electronic appointment agreement and to provide mandatory personal and immigration data to ECFMG.
- All supporting documentation for UB medical residents must be submitted to the TPL. Once all supporting documentation is received, the TPL will submit it to ECFMG.
- Once the TPL and the applicant have submitted the required information and provided all required supporting documentation, ECFMG will proceed with the evaluation of the J-1 sponsorship application.

What is a TPL?

A TPL is the designated representative of the teaching institution who serves as the official source of communication between the training program, J-1 physician, and ECFMG. The TPL provides required administrative oversight for all J-1 physicians and ensures compliance with federal regulatory guidelines. Among other things, the TPL is required to:

- coordinate the sponsorship application process to ensure timely submission of accurate and complete documentation, including primary-source verification of the GME contract.
- monitor the arrival and on-going participation of J-1 physicians.
- notify ECFMG in advance of any proposed changes in a physician's approved training program or activity.

What is the definition of a J-1 sponsorship "applicant"?

For the purpose of the on-line J-1 visa sponsorship application, the term "applicant" refers to a physician who has been issued an official GME or research contract and for whom an EVNet on-line sponsorship application has been initiated. Applicants may be physicians who are not currently sponsored by ECFMG ("initial applicants") or those seeking a renewal/continuation of ECFMG J-1 visa sponsorship ("currently sponsored applicants").

How does an "initial applicant" for J-1 sponsorship submit an on-line application?

A TPL must have the applicant's ECFMG/USMLE Identification Number to initiate an on-line application. Applicants who do not currently have a USMLE/ECFMG Identification Number must request one by following the process outlined below. The applicant must provide the TPL with the Identification Number once it is issued by ECFMG.

Once a contract has been issued, the following steps must occur in the order they that are listed below:

1. TPL submits an on-line appointment profile through EVNet.
2. Applicant accepts the on-line appointment profile and completes the electronic application through OASIS.
3. Applicant pays the $250 administrative/application fee through OASIS.
4. Applicant provides all requested supporting documentation to TPL. Supporting documentation should be submitted to TPL as soon as possible.
5. Required supporting documentation is submitted to ECFMG by the TPL. Supporting documentation submitted to ECFMG prior to completion of steps 1-3 cannot be tracked and may delay application review.
6. ECFMG reviews application.
7. If the application is approved, ECFMG sends DS-2019 to TPL.

Applicants will be unable to take any action in their part of the application process until they receive the e-mail notifying them that an on-line application has been initiated through EVNet.

What if an applicant does not have a USMLE/ECFMG Identification Number at the time a Training Program Liaison (TPL) initiates a sponsorship application in EVNet?

Applicants are required to use OASIS as part of the on-line application process. A valid USMLE/ECFMG Identification Number is required to create an OASIS account. Applicants who do not have a USMLE/ECFMG Identification Number must contact ECFMG to request one before a TPL can initiate a sponsorship application through EVNet. To do so, the applicant must contact evsp-support@ecfmg.org with the information listed below. TPLs are not permitted to request a USMLE/ECFMG Identification Number on behalf of an applicant.

Information required to request a USMLE/ECFMG Identification Number:

- Full Name of applicant physician
- Date of birth (mm/dd/yr)
- E-mail address
- Name and country of medical school

The need to request a USMLE/ECFMG Identification Number most commonly occurs when a graduate of an LCME-accredited U.S. or Canadian medical school program or a researcher seeks sponsorship for the first time. Once a USMLE/ECFMG Identification Number has been assigned, the applicant is notified via e-mail with instructions on how to create an OASIS account.

How does a J-1 "currently sponsored applicant" submit an on-line application to request continuation of sponsorship?

Once a contract has been issued, the following steps must occur in the order they that are listed below:

1. TPL submits an on-line appointment profile through EVNet.
2. Applicant accepts the on-line appointment profile and completes the electronic application through OASIS.
3. Applicant pays the $250 administrative/application fee through OASIS.
4. Applicant provides all requested supporting documentation to TPL. Supporting documentation should be submitted to TPL as soon as possible.
5. Required supporting documentation is submitted to ECFMG by the TPL. Supporting documentation submitted to ECFMG prior to completion of steps 1-3 cannot be tracked and may delay application review.
6. ECFMG reviews application.
7. If the application is approved, ECFMG sends DS-2019 to TPL.

Applicants will be unable to take any action in their part of the application process until they receive the e-mail notifying them that an on-line application has been initiated through EVNet.

OASIS

What is the On-line Applicant Status and Information System (OASIS)?

OASIS is ECFMG's web-based information service used by ECFMG applicants and ECFMG-certified physicians. Applicants for J-1 sponsorship can use OASIS to view and accept a sponsorship appointment profile; complete J-1 visa sponsorship applications; and submit payments to ECFMG.

What if an applicant does not have a USMLE/ECFMG Identification Number at the time a Training Program Liaison (TPL) initiates a sponsorship application in EVNet?

Applicants are required to use OASIS as part of the on-line application process. A valid USMLE/ECFMG Identification Number is required to create an OASIS account. Applicants who do not have a USMLE/ECFMG Identification Number must contact ECFMG to request one before a TPL can initiate a sponsorship application through EVNet. To do so, the applicant must contact evsp-support@ecfmg.org with the information listed below. TPLs are not permitted to request a USMLE/ECFMG Identification Number on behalf of an applicant.

Information required to request a USMLE/ECFMG Identification Number is:

- Full Name of applicant physician
- Date of birth (mm/dd/yr)
- E-mail address
- Name and country of medical school

The need to request a USMLE/ECFMG Identification Number most commonly occurs when a graduate of an LCME-accredited U.S. or Canadian medical school program or a researcher seeks sponsorship for the first time. Once a USMLE/ECFMG Identification Number has been assigned, the applicant is notified via e-mail with instructions on how to create an OASIS account.

Supporting Documentation

Can supporting documentation be submitted to ECFMG prior to creation of appointment details in EVNet and acceptance of the on-line appointment profile by an applicant through OASIS?

No. The application process requires completion of the following steps in the order that they are listed below.

1. TPL submits an on-line appointment profile through EVNet.
2. Applicant accepts the on-line appointment profile and completes the electronic application through OASIS.
3. Applicant pays the $250 administrative/application fee through OASIS.
4. Required supporting documentation is submitted to ECFMG in coordination with the TPL. Supporting documentation submitted prior to completion of steps 1-3 cannot be tracked and may delay application review.

Can supporting documentation be submitted to the TPL prior to creation of appointment details in EVNet and acceptance of the on-line appointment profile by an applicant through OASIS?

Yes. Supporting documentation should be submitted to the TPL as soon as possible in order to avoid delays in processing the request for sponsorship. Although the application checklist is not received until the applicant completes acceptance of the appointment profile through OASIS, standard documentation including the contract or letter of offer, copies of visas, passports and I-94's, fellowship descriptions, etc. may be provided to the TPL as soon as available in the application process.

What supporting documentation is required with a sponsorship application?

Application requirements vary according to program type. Therefore, applicants must carefully review the application checklist provided through OASIS at the time of acceptance of the appointment profile.

How is the required supporting documentation submitted to ECFMG?

Once a TPL creates an appointment profile and adds the applicant to it, a checklist of required supporting documentation becomes available for view on the applicant's record. The applicant and TPL must coordinate submission of supporting documentation to ECFMG at one time.

All supporting documentation for UB residents must be submitted to the TPL. The TPL will submit documentation to ECFMG once all documentation is received and the applicant has made the necessary payment of fees.

Keep in mind that prior to submission of any supporting documentation to EVSP, the TPL must submit the on-line appointment profile through EVNet and the applicant must accept the on-line appointment profile through OASIS.

Board Exams

Can an applicant apply for a sponsorship extension to sit for an American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) member board examination?

Yes. Applicants seeking an extension of sponsorship to sit for an ABMS member board examination are no longer under an appointment profile at a teaching hospital. As a result, the application process does not require a TPL to initiate an on-line application through EVNet. Instead, applicants seeking continued sponsorship to sit for an ABMS member board examination should login to OASIS and click on the "Board" field. Once the "Board" field is chosen, instructions for submission of the on-line application and required supporting documentation are provided.

J-2 Dependents

Can a request for J-2 dependent sponsorship be completed through OASIS?

Currently, an on-line request for J-2 dependent sponsorship can be made only at the time a J-1 applicant is completing his/her annual application through OASIS. A request for J-2 dependent sponsorship at any other time requires submission of a paper application form. The Application for Dependent Sponsorship can be found on the Forms and Memos page of the ECFMG website.