

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA COLLEGE OF MEDICINE JACKSONVILLE
Office of Educational Affairs

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Resident Eligibility: Applicants with the following qualifications are eligible for appointment to residency and fellowship programs at the UFCOMJ:

- a. Graduates of medical schools in the United States and Canada accredited by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME).
- b. Graduates of colleges of osteopathic medicine in the United States accredited by the American Osteopathic Association (AOA).
- c. International Medical Graduates (IMGs) are required to meet all of the eligibility requirements of the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education. Graduates of medical schools outside the United States and Canada must meet one of the following qualifications:
 - (1) Have received a standard certificate from the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG)
 - OR**
 - (2) Have a full and unrestricted license to practice medicine in a US licensing jurisdiction.
- d. Candidates for residency programs must have passed USMLE Step 2 or COMLEX Level 2 prior to appointment.**
- e. Candidates for fellowship programs must have passed USMLE Step 3 or COMLEX Level 3 prior to appointment.**
- f. Dentists with the following qualifications are eligible to enter advanced specialty education programs accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation:
 - a. Graduates from institutions in the U.S. accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation;
 - b. Graduates from institutions in Canada accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation of Canada
- g. All medical graduates must be one of the following:
 - (1) United States citizen
 - OR**
 - (2) Lawfully Employable (i.e., EAD, PR or RA card holder – see definitions below)
 - OR**
 - (3) Eligible for an ECFMG sponsored J-1 Visa
 - OR**
 - (4) Rarely, an H-1B visa will be considered (see attached policy)
- h. Graduates of medical schools outside the United States who have completed a Fifth Pathway program provided by an LCME-accredited medical school (see below).
- i. All programs must select from among eligible applicants on the basis of their preparedness, ability, aptitude, academic credentials, communication skills, and personal qualities such as motivation and integrity. Programs must not discriminate with regard to sex, race, age, religion, color, national origin, disability, or veteran status. IMGs should be of the same high quality as U.S. applicants.
- j. All programs must participate in the National Resident Matching Program (NRMP) where available. Any exception to residents taken outside of the NRMP must be approved by the Director of Graduate Medical Education.
- k. When applicants apply through the Electronic Residency Application Service (ERAS), they may indicate one of the following Visa types as their current status:

F1 = Student Visa – this individual is currently in the US attending a US medical school. This individual would meet the eligibility requirements for an H1B visa.

B1 = Visitor Visa – this individual is in the US as a tourist. If this person graduated from an international medical school, they would qualify for a J-1 Visa through the Exchange Visitor Sponsorship Program

EA = Employment Authorization Card holder – is eligible for employment regardless of medical school type

PR = Permanent Resident Card holder - is eligible for employment regardless of medical school type

RA = Resident Alien Card holder - is eligible for employment regardless of medical school type

Refugee/Asylum = Granted asylum in the United States – these individuals are employable without any Visa sponsorship if they have their letter granting the asylum or refugee/asylum stamp in their passport.

A Fifth Pathway program is an academic year of supervised clinical education provided by an LCME-accredited medical school to students who meet the following conditions: (1) have completed, in an accredited college or university in the

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United States, undergraduate premedical education of the quality acceptable for matriculation in an accredited United States medical school; (2) have studied at a medical school outside the United States and Canada but listed in the World Health Organization Directory of Medical Schools; (3) have completed all of the formal requirements of the foreign medical school except internship and/or social service; (4) have attained a score satisfactory to the sponsoring medical school on a screening examination; and (5) have passed either the Foreign Medical Graduate Examination in the Medical Sciences, Parts I and II of the examination of the National Board of Medical Examiners, or Steps 1 and 2 of the United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE). Fifth Pathway graduates are not required to have an ECFMG certificate.

ECFMG Certification

Required of all International Medical Graduates, with the exception of Canada and Puerto Rico. Certification provides assurance to the residency and fellowship program directors that the IMG has met minimum standards of eligibility required to enter such programs. ECFMG Certification is one of the eligibility requirements to take Step 3 of the United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE), and is required by most states to obtain a license to practice medicine in the United States.

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H-1B Visa Sponsorship Policy

The University of Florida College Of Medicine (UFCOM) will, at its sole discretion and in conformity with the guidelines set forth below, sponsor temporary H-1B petitions for foreign nationals who seek employment/appointment at the UFCOM. Consultation with the UFCOM campus administrative offices about H-1B requirements, feasibility, and anticipated processing times is required prior to initiation of the H-1B visa petition process.

The H-1B Visa Category

The purpose of the H-1B temporary visa category is to allow sponsorship of *employment* by foreign nationals by U.S. employers in "specialty occupations", (i.e., positions requiring "theoretical and practical application of a body of highly specialized knowledge and attainment of a bachelor's or higher degree in the specific specialty or its equivalent as a minimum entry into the occupation in the United States.")

The H-1B Visa is specific to a single employer (sponsor) and allows the person to be employed at a specific employer location for a specific period of time, up to a maximum of six (6) years.

H-1B Visas for Clinical Residencies and Fellowships

Unlike the J-1 Exchange Visitor visa, the primary focus of the H-1B visa is *employment, not training*. Individuals enrolled in clinical residency and fellowship programs are enrolled in educational training programs and therefore, except in unusual circumstances benefiting the institution, the most appropriate visa category for these individuals at the UFCOM is the J-1 rather than the H-1B Visa.

The H-1B visa category may be used for clinical residencies and fellowships in graduate medical education (in lieu of J-1) under the following limited circumstances:

1. Where the foreign national is a graduate of a U.S. medical or dental school; or,
2. Where the foreign national currently holds an H-1B for clinical graduate medical education (at another institution); or
3. For competitive reasons in exceptional circumstance (guidelines attached)

In all cases involving clinical residencies and fellowships in graduate medical education where use of the H-1B visa category is contemplated, the foreign national must be H-1B eligible at the time of appointment, and there must be sufficient time for the UFCOM campus administrative offices and the University of Florida International Faculty and Scholar Services(UF/IFSS) to prepare, and the United States Citizen and Immigration Services (USCIS) to process and approve the H-1B petition before the start date of the program.

Other conditions include the following:

- The H-1B category will be used only where the program can be completed within the 6-year time limit of the H-1B.
- H-1B Visas are prohibited from outside employment/moonlighting.

UFCOMJ administrative offices shall consult with the University of Florida College of Medicine/Administrative Affairs, which shall determine or verify that the case qualifies under the applicable standards above, *before* appointment is extended to the individual foreign national candidate.

H1B Application Costs

Federal Regulations require the department to pay the H1B application processing fees. These fees include:

- New Petition or Portability Cases
(an H1B coming to our institution from another institution in the same status) require a one time fee (currently \$500) paid to DHS (Department of Homeland Security).
- H1B petition processing fee (currently\$320.00)
This fee is payable to USCIS and is due each time an H1B petition is processed. An H1B petition is approved for the length of time of the principal's training license. For Allopathic physicians the petition is renewed every 2 years, Osteopathic and Dental are renewed annually.

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Travel Costs

Visa application fees of the H-1B principal and H-4 dependents, required photos, border crossing fees, the cost of travel to/from a U.S. consular post abroad and to the United States, cost of lodging, meals, etc. will be the sole responsibility of the H-1B beneficiary (to the extent permitted by law).

Authorized Agents of the University of Florida for H-1B Purposes

The H-1B petition requires sponsorship by an employer. Only representatives of the UF/IFSS are authorized to sign all documents submitted to the USCIS and other state and federal agencies in which University of Florida is identified as the employer/petitioner. Any petitions submitted without the prior authorization and signature of a designated representative of the UF/IFSS may result in a request to the government for official withdrawal of the petition.

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Guidelines for Offering Exceptional H-1B Visas
For Graduate Medical Training of IMGs

Exception Criteria:

The following factors shall be considered in deciding whether to offer exceptional H-1B visa sponsorship to an IMG candidate for clinical residency/fellowship:

- The IMG is judged to be a strong future prospect for Attending Staff appointment;
- The IMG is a medical school honors graduate or otherwise achieved an outstanding GPA;
- The IMG achieved an outstanding score/percentile on the USMLEs;
- The IMG has professional achievements, recognition, awards, publications, etc. significantly above those of his/her peers; or

Procedure:

The following procedure will be used in considering a request for exceptional H-1B sponsorship of an IMG:

1. IMG submits request to appropriate Program Director with explanation and documentation addressing the above Exception Criteria;
2. Program Director reviews Exception Criteria to assess IMG's request and decides whether to request/recommend H-1B sponsorship;
3. Program Director recommends exceptional H-1B sponsorship to the Director of Graduate Medical Education (DGME)
4. The DGME will approve or deny the exceptional H-1B sponsorship request, and communicate that decision to the Program Director.