

International (Foreign) Medical Graduates by Marlene Cooper and Rose Mary Valencia

ENTRY INTO GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION (GME) IN THE UNITED STATES

The [Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates \(ECFMG\)](#) and its sponsoring organizations define an International Medical Graduate (IMG) as an individual whose basic medical degree or qualification was conferred by a medical school located outside of the United States, Canada, or Puerto Rico.¹

Through its program of certification, ECFMG assesses the readiness of IMGs to enter US residency or fellowship programs that are accredited by the [Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education \(ACGME\)](#). Certification assures directors of ACGME-accredited residency and fellowship programs that IMGs have met the minimum standards of eligibility required to enter such programs. To be eligible for ECFMG certification, the physician's medical school and graduate year must be listed in the [International Medical Education Directory \(IMED\)](#)² of the [Foundation for Advancement of International Medical Education and Research \(FAIMER\)](#).³ The IMG also must meet the following requirements:

1. Satisfy the medical science examination requirement.
Within a seven-year time period, pass Step 1 (basic medical) and Step 2 (clinical knowledge [CK]) of the United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE), which are the exams currently administered that meet this requirement.
2. Satisfy the clinical skills requirement.
USMLE Step 2 Clinical Skills (CS) is the currently administered examination that satisfies this requirement.
3. Medical Education Credential Requirements.
Document the completion of all requirements for, and receipt of, the final medical diploma.
ECFMG issues the Standard ECFMG Certificate to applicants who meet all of the examination and medical education credential requirements. Certificates issued to applicants who satisfy the clinical skills requirement for ECFMG Certification by passing Step 2 CS remain valid indefinitely for the purpose of entering programs of graduate medical education. Once the IMG enters an ACGME-accredited program of graduate medical education in the United States (US) s/he can request permanent validation of his/

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