



# **Special Appeals to the US Department of State**

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March 25, 2009

# Special Appeals to the US Department of State

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- Changes in J-1 Visa Category
- Exceptional Extensions of Stay Beyond Seven Years
- Advisory Opinions in Unusual Circumstances

**Reviewed on case-by-case basis;  
contact EVSP directly for additional information**

# Overview of J-1 Changes of Category

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- Multiple J-1 categories; cannot move between categories without approval from US Department of State (DOS)
- Defined, consistent educational objective
- Support of mentor(s)
- Release from J-1 research sponsor
- High approval rate for well-documented cases

# Minimal Documentation for Changes in Category

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- Complete application
- Personal statement from applicant
- Research mentor letter of support
- Proposed program director letter of support
- Responsible Officer (RO) / Alternate Responsible Officer (ARO) acknowledgement
- SEVIS payment receipt
- Fees (current fees total \$606)

# Common Questions Concerning Change in Category Requests

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- Applicant made SEVIS payment upon initial entry to US. Does it need to be paid again?
- What are the processing times? Can the applicant begin the program while the case is pending?
- What needs to be done once a case is approved?
- If approved, does the applicant have seven years to participate in ECFMG-sponsored training?

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**QUESTIONS?**

# Overview of Exceptional Extensions of Stay

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- Based on documented “**exceptional need**” in home country
- ECFMG cannot allow an applicant to begin a program he/she does not have time to complete within seven-year limit
- *Generally* limited to one year maximum extension
- High approval rate for well-documented cases

# Minimal Documentation for Exceptional Extensions of Stay

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- Complete application
- Letter of exceptional need from home country Ambassador or Minister of Health
- Personal statement from applicant
- Current program director letter of support
- Proposed program director letter of support
- Fees (current fees total \$606)

# Common Questions Concerning Exceptional Extension Requests

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- What is the difference between the Statement of Need and the letter of “exceptional need?”
- What are the processing times? Can the applicant begin the program while the case is pending?
- What needs to be done once a case is approved?

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**QUESTIONS?**

# Advisory Opinions

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- Leaves of absence
- Previous DOS approval
  - Proposed change in location, duration
  - Advanced training
- Board certification and/or GME credits/requirements
- Recent “J” status
- Required documentation varies according to case type and specifics
- Current fees total \$606

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**QUESTIONS?**

# Need Additional Information?

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