

Limited License FAQ'S

What is the scope of practice for a physician with a limited license?

A limited license is a training license, and only allows a physician to practice medicine under the direct supervision of the institution's faculty at the health care facility issuing the limited license, or at its affiliates. A limited licensee may not "moonlight" either at or outside of the training facility.

What are the requirements for a limited license in Massachusetts?

Limited licenses are issued to physicians enrolled in post-graduate medical education programs in health care facilities in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. All training must be done in an ACGME-accredited program, or in a subspecialty clinical fellowship in a training facility that has an approved program in the parent specialty. A physician who holds, or who has ever held, a full Massachusetts license is not eligible for a limited license.

Where does an applicant apply for a limited license?

To obtain an application for a limited license, contact the residency program coordinator or medical education coordinator at the Massachusetts hospital where the training will be undertaken. The limited license application must be completed and returned to the training hospital with the required documentation and application fee. The residency program coordinator will forward the application to the Board of Registration in Medicine.

How long does it take to get a limited license after the application is submitted to the Board?

Processing time for an initial limited license application is approximately six to eight weeks after the Board receives licensing documents from all primary sources. Some applications may require a longer processing time if the Board needs additional information.

What education requirements must a U.S. or Canadian medical school graduate have in order to obtain a limited license?

- completion of two years of a pre-medical course of study in a college or university; and
- not less than three and one-half years of study in a legally chartered medical school having the power to grant degrees in medicine.

What education requirements must an international medical school graduate have in order to obtain a limited license?

- completion of minimum of two years of a premedical course of study in a college or university;
- completion and attendance of four academic years of instruction at a medical school which education is substantially equivalent to that of graduates of U.S. medical schools; and
- completion of medical school clinical training, which is substantially equivalent to the minimum standards required of U.S. medical school graduates, and done under the direct control of the medical school dean and under onsite supervision and evaluation by the faculty of the medical school in which the applicant was enrolled. Limited license applicants who cannot meet this requirement must submit a request for a waiver.

What documents must an international medical school graduate submit to the Board in order to obtain a limited license?

- a notarized copy of the medical school diploma and a notarized copy of the English translation, if applicable;
- medical school transcripts with evaluations received directly from the medical school(s);
- a notarized copy of a valid as of the date of licensure ECFMG certificate; and
- a completed request for a waiver of substantial equivalency requirements, if applicable.

What are the requirements for an ECFMG certificate?

Graduates of international medical schools are required to have a valid ECFMG certificate in order to be eligible for a limited license in Massachusetts. The ECFMG certificate must be valid as of the date of licensure. Contact ECFMG at (215) 386-5900 for information on the examination requirements.

International medical graduates must have passing scores on USMLE Steps 1 and 2, or NBME Parts I and II, or both components 1 and 2 of FLEX, or a combination of these examinations. FMGEMS is not a qualifying examination.

What kind of visa is required to obtain a limited license?

A visa is not a requirement for obtaining a limited license. If you need information regarding obtaining a visa, please contact: the person or agency responsible for helping you obtain your current visa; the medical staff registrar, medical education coordinator, or the human resources department at the Massachusetts hospital where your training will be undertaken; the Department of Immigration and Naturalization at its Boston telephone number of (617) 565-3879; or U. S. consulates or embassies abroad.

For information about the Exchange Visitor Sponsorship Program and eligibility requirements for the J-I Visa, contact the ECFMG Exchange Visitor Program at (215) 662-1445.

What is a Fifth Pathway program?

Fifth Pathway means a program of medical education, which meets the following requirements:

- completion of two years of pre-medical education in a U.S. college or university;
- completion of all the formal requirements for the degree corresponding to doctor of medicine, except internship and social service, in a medical school outside the U.S. which is recognized by the World Health Organization;
- completion of one year of graduate medical education in an ACGME-approved program.

What are the eligibility requirements for a physician in a residency program in another state who is seeking residency training in Massachusetts?

To be eligible for a limited license, a physician must be accepted in a post-graduate training program at a teaching hospital in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. A limited license in another state is not transferable.

Who must complete a State License Verification form?

Any applicant who has ever held a full license in another state must complete the License Verification form and forward it to the state licensing agency that issued the license. The License Verification must be sent to you in a sealed envelope and sent to the training program with your limited license application.

What are the licensing requirements for clinical rotations at another hospital?

If the applicant's teaching institution has an affiliation agreement with the healthcare facility, the clinical rotations are covered by the applicant's current limited license. If an affiliation agreement does not exist, a physician who holds a limited license may rotate between teaching hospitals with three or more ACGME-accredited programs without prior approval of the Board for up to eight weeks in any single year of residency. Contact the residency program coordinator at the training facility for details.

When can a limited licensee apply for a full license?

Education requirements for a full license are similar to those for a limited license. In addition, an applicant must pass Steps 1, 2 and 3 of USMLE, and complete one year of post-graduate training for U. S. and Canadian graduates, or two years of post-graduate training for international graduates in an ACGME-approved training program.

When does a limited license expire?

A limited license expires at the end of each academic year and/or upon the completion date on the license. A limited licensee who plans to continue in the same program must contact the residency program coordinator at the health care facility in order to obtain a renewal application. The completed renewal application must be completed and submitted to the Board of Registration in Medicine at least one month before the expiration date.

A limited license is not valid if the licensee leaves the training program for any reason, or if the training program terminates the licensee's participation in the program.

How many times may a limited license be renewed?

A limited license may be renewed up to four times. Requests for additional renewals must be submitted to the Board, in writing, detailing the reason for the renewal. The Board may grant a limited license for additional years only when extraordinary circumstances exist.

All limited licensees are responsible for ensuring that they have current valid limited licenses. Limited licensees may not practice without current valid limited licenses, even if they are continuing to practice in the same residency-training program.

What is the difference between a renewal application and a change of program application?

The renewal application is for a limited licensee who is continuing in the same program at the same hospital as the previous year.

The change of program application is to be used under the following circumstances:

- a change of specialty e.g. general surgery to neurosurgery;
- a change of specialty to subspecialty e.g. anesthesia residency to cardiac anesthesia;
- a change of specialty, e.g. anesthesia residency to pediatric anesthesia fellowship;
- a change of hospital e.g. Massachusetts General Hospital to Boston Medical Center.

If the change of program is not a pre-requisite for the program the limited licensee is entering, a letter must be sent directly to the Board from the program director stating the circumstances under which the physician is leaving the program, and his or her current standing.

Whom do I notify if I change my name?

You must complete the Name Change form at the Board's website. A notarized copy of a marriage certificate or a certified copy of the court order with a written request for a formal name change must be forwarded to the Board with the Name Change form and fee.

For additional information please visit the Board's web site at <http://www.massmedboard.org>.