

Visa interviews are an important step in the J-1 process. The following guidance is designed to help incoming physicians prepare to clearly and accurately represent their educational pathway and intent to participate in graduate medical education in the United States.

1

PURPOSE OF YOUR J-1 VISA

Be prepared to clearly articulate:

- The residency or fellowship program you will enter
- The specialty in which you will train
- The temporary, educational purpose of the J-1 classification
- Your long-term professional plans in your home country after training

Answer all questions **honestly, directly, and consistently** with your application materials.

2

HOME COUNTRY TIES (INA §214(b))

Consular officers assess ties to your home country consistent with the visa's temporary nature. Be prepared to discuss:

- Family ties and relationships
- Property or financial commitments
- Professional and institutional affiliations
- Future career plans in your home country

Be truthful. Do not overstate or manufacture ties that do not exist.

3

PRIOR U.S. OBSERVERSHIP EXPERIENCES

Many IMGs participate in observerships, research, or conferences before residency. Certain observational activities are permissible in "B" visitor status when they do not involve direct patient care or unauthorized employment.

- Describe observerships as observational experiences
- Do not characterize them as "hands-on" training or employment
- Explain the purpose and duration of prior U.S. visits (e.g., observership was done to gain a better understanding of the U.S. system, etc.)

4

INTERVIEW CONDUCT

Visa interviews are often brief. To present yourself effectively:

- Answer questions directly and concisely
- Remain calm and professional throughout
- Avoid providing unnecessary information
- Respectfully ask for clarification if you do not understand a question

All responses must be truthful and consistent with your supporting documentation.

5

CONSISTENCY ACROSS CVs, APPLICATIONS & SOCIAL MEDIA

Carefully review your CV, LinkedIn profile, ERAS materials, and any public-facing content before your interview. Inconsistencies or exaggerated descriptions of prior observerships can create confusion during visa adjudication, especially if observational experiences appear to suggest direct clinical responsibility or unauthorized employment.

AVOID — if describing an observership:

- "Worked as a physician at..."
- "Provided patient care..."
- "Managed patients..."
- "Practiced medicine..."

...if the underlying activity was actually an observership or shadowing experience.

USE — accurate terminology:

- "Observer"
- "Observership participant"
- "Clinical observer"
- "Shadowing experience"

Accurate language protects you and reflects the true nature of your experience.