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U.S. Citizenship  
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DA

FEB 11 2004

FILE: WAC 02 076 52327 Office: CALIFORNIA SERVICE CENTER Date:

IN RE: Petitioner: [Redacted]  
Beneficiary: [Redacted]

PETITION: Petition for a Nonimmigrant Worker Pursuant to Section 101(a)(15)(H)(i)(b) of the  
Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1101(a)(15)(H)(i)(b)

ON BEHALF OF PETITIONER:  
[Redacted]

INSTRUCTIONS:

This is the decision of the Administrative Appeals Office in your case. All documents have been returned to the office that originally decided your case. Any further inquiry must be made to that office.

  
Robert P. Wiemann, Director  
Administrative Appeals Office

**DISCUSSION:** The service center director denied the nonimmigrant visa petition and the matter is now before the Administrative Appeals Office (AAO) on appeal. The appeal will be dismissed. The petition will be denied.

The petitioner is an information technology consulting business that seeks to employ the beneficiary as a programmer analyst. The petitioner endeavors to classify the beneficiary as a nonimmigrant worker in a specialty occupation pursuant to section 101(a)(15)(H)(i)(b) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (the Act), 8 U.S.C. § 1101 (a)(15)(H)(i)(b).

The director denied the petition because the proffered position is not a specialty occupation. On appeal, counsel submits a statement and an evaluation from a credentials evaluation service.

Section 214(i)(1) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (the Act), 8 U.S.C. § 1184 (i)(1), defines the term "specialty occupation" as an occupation that requires:

- (A) theoretical and practical application of a body of highly specialized knowledge, and
- (B) attainment of a bachelor's or higher degree in the specific specialty (or its equivalent) as a minimum for entry into the occupation in the United States.

Pursuant to 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(A), to qualify as a specialty occupation, the position must meet one of the following criteria:

- (1) A baccalaureate or higher degree or its equivalent is normally the minimum requirement for entry into the particular position;
- (2) The degree requirement is common to the industry in parallel positions among similar organizations or, in the alternative, an employer may show that its particular position is so complex or unique that it can be performed only by an individual with a degree;
- (3) The employer normally requires a degree or its equivalent for the position; or
- (4) The nature of the specific duties is so specialized and complex that knowledge required to perform the duties is usually associated with the attainment of a baccalaureate or higher degree.

Citizenship and Immigration Services (CIS) interprets the term "degree" in the criteria at 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(A) to mean not just any baccalaureate or higher degree, but one in a specific specialty that is directly related to the proffered position.

The record of proceeding before the AAO contains: (1) Form I-129 and supporting documentation; (2) the director's request for additional evidence; (3) the petitioner's response to the director's request; (4) the director's denial letter; and (5) Form I-290B and supporting documentation. The AAO reviewed the record in its entirety before issuing its decision.

The petitioner is seeking the beneficiary's services as a programmer analyst. Evidence of the beneficiary's duties includes: the I-129 petition; the petitioner's November 10, 2001 letter in support of the petition; and the

petitioner's response to the director's request for evidence. According to this evidence, the beneficiary would perform duties that entail: developing documentation, vendor correspondence, and project planning material; creating all life cycle phase/task deliverables; delivering product on time and within budget; participating in the creation and delivery of installation scripts/plans to target audience; ensuring that all change information is documented, reviewed, and approved by necessary parties; maintaining all relative process documentation for job function being performed; and providing mentoring and guidance to others. In his July 11, 2002 letter, the petitioner's director of human resources indicated that the beneficiary is qualified for the proffered position because he holds a Bachelor of Science degree in engineering.

The director found that the proffered position was not a specialty occupation because the job is not a programmer analyst position; it is a programmer used for business applications. Citing to the Department of Labor's (DOL) *Occupational Outlook Handbook (Handbook)*, 2002-2003 edition, the director noted that the minimum requirement for entry into the position was not a baccalaureate degree or its equivalent in a specific specialty. The director found further that the petitioner failed to establish any of the criteria found at 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(A).

On appeal, counsel states that the DOL's *Dictionary of Occupational Titles (DOT)* assigns the position an SVP rating of 7, which according to counsel, requires a degree to enter into the position. Counsel also submits an evaluation from Dr. M. Sambandham of Multinational Education & Information Services, Inc., who states, in part, that, based upon the level of expertise and knowledge required to perform the proposed duties, the proffered position is a specialty occupation.

Upon review of the record, the petitioner has established none of the four criteria outlined in 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(A). Therefore, the proffered position is not a specialty occupation.

The AAO turns first to the criteria at 8 C.F.R. § 214.2 (h)(4)(iii)(A)(1) and (2): a baccalaureate or higher degree or its equivalent is the normal minimum requirement for entry into the particular position; a degree requirement is common to the industry in parallel positions among similar organizations; or a particular position is so complex or unique that it can be performed only by an individual with a degree.

Factors often considered by CIS when determining these criteria include: whether the *Handbook* reports that the industry requires a degree; whether the industry's professional association has made a degree a minimum entry requirement; and whether letters or affidavits from firms or individuals in the industry attest that such firms "routinely employ and recruit only degreed individuals." See *Shanti, Inc. v. Reno*, 36 F. Supp. 2d 1151, 1165 (D.Min. 1999)(quoting *Hird/Blaker Corp. v. Slattery*, 764 F. Supp. 872, 1102 (S.D.N.Y. 1991)).

The AAO routinely consults the *Handbook* for its information about the duties and educational requirements of particular occupations. The AAO does not concur with counsel that the proffered position is that of a programmer analyst. A review of the Computer Programmer job description in the *Handbook* confirms the accuracy of the director's assessment to the effect that, the job duties parallel those responsibilities of a computer programmer for business applications. No evidence in the *Handbook* indicates that a baccalaureate or higher degree, or its equivalent, is required for a computer programmer for business applications.

Counsel asserts that CIS has already determined that the proffered position is a specialty occupation since CIS has approved another, similar petition in the past. This record of proceeding does not, however, contain all of the supporting evidence submitted to the Service Center in the prior case. In the absence of all of the

corroborating evidence contained in that record of proceeding, the documents submitted by counsel are not sufficient to enable the AAO to determine whether the other H-1B petition was parallel to the proffered position.

It is also noted that on the second page of the petitioner's November 10, 2001 letter, the petitioner discusses an employee referred to as "Ms. Patinals" rather than the beneficiary of the instant petition. It is further noted that in the credentials evaluation submitted on appeal, Dr. Sambandham discusses a detailed list of proposed duties that appears nowhere else in the record. It appears, therefore, that Dr. Sambandham may be referring to someone other than the beneficiary as well. The record contains no explanation for these inconsistencies. Doubt cast on any aspect of the petitioner's proof may, of course, lead to a reevaluation of the reliability and sufficiency of the remaining evidence offered in support of the visa petition. It is incumbent on the petitioner to resolve any inconsistencies in the record by independent objective evidence, and attempts to explain or reconcile such inconsistencies, absent competent objective evidence pointing to where the truth, in fact, lies will not suffice. *Matter of Ho*, 19 I&N Dec. 582, 591-92 (BIA 1988). Furthermore, a credentials evaluation service may only evaluate educational credentials. See 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(D)(3). For this additional reason, the evaluation carries no weight in these proceedings. *Matter of Sea, Inc.*, 19 I&N Dec. 817 (Comm. 1988).

Counsel's reference to and assertions about the relevance of information the *DOT* are not persuasive. The *DOT's* SVP rating does not indicate that a particular occupation requires the attainment of a baccalaureate or higher degree, or its equivalent, in a specific specialty as a minimum for entry into the occupation. An SVP rating is meant to indicate only the total number of years of vocational preparation required for a particular position. The classification does not describe how those years are to be divided among training, formal education, and experience, nor specifies the particular type of degree, if any, that a position would require.

The record does not include any evidence regarding parallel positions in the petitioner's industry or from professional associations regarding an industry standard, or documentation to support the complexity or uniqueness of the proffered position. The petitioner has, thus, not established the criteria set forth at 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(A)(1) or (2).

The AAO now turns to the criterion at 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(A)(3) – the employer normally requires a degree or its equivalent for the position. It is noted that the petitioner's website at <http://www.aufregend.com/caspian/> reflects the following two job openings: "Directory Services Architect/Engineer" and "Oracle Database Designer/Developer." It is further noted that, although these positions require some of the same skills as the proffered position, neither position requires a baccalaureate or higher degree in a specific specialty. In addition, the record does not contain any evidence of the petitioner's past hiring practices and therefore, the petitioner has not met its burden of proof in this regard. See *Matter of Treasure Craft of California*, 14 I&N Dec. 190 (Reg. Comm. 1972).

Finally, the AAO turns to the criterion 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(iii)(A)(4) – the nature of the specific duties is so specialized and complex that knowledge required to perform the duties is usually associated with the attainment of a baccalaureate or higher degree.

To the extent that they are depicted in the record, the duties do not appear so specialized and complex as to require the highly specialized knowledge associated with a baccalaureate or higher degree, or its equivalent, in a specific specialty. Therefore, the evidence does not establish that the proffered position is a specialty occupation under 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(A)(4).

As related in the discussion above, the petitioner has failed to establish that the proffered position is a specialty occupation. Accordingly, the AAO shall not disturb the director's denial of the petition.

The burden of proof in these proceedings rests solely with the petitioner. Section 291 of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1361. The petitioner has not sustained that burden.

**ORDER:** The appeal is dismissed. The petition is denied.