



U.S. Citizenship
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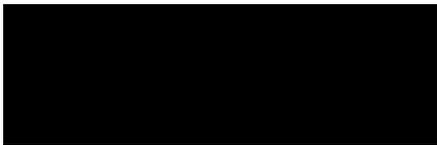


FILE: EAC 03 248 54575 Office: VERMONT SERVICE CENTER Date: OCT 14 2005

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:



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

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 The director's decision will be withdrawn and the matter remanded for entry of a new decision.

The petitioner is an international college that seeks to employ the beneficiary as a senior admissions officer. 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 beneficiary was not qualified to perform the duties of the proffered position. On appeal, counsel submits a statement.

Section 214(i)(2) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1184(i)(2), states that an alien applying for classification as an H-1B nonimmigrant worker must possess full state licensure to practice in the occupation, if such licensure is required to practice in the occupation, and completion of the degree in the specialty that the occupation requires. If the alien does not possess the required degree, the petitioner must demonstrate that the alien has experience in the specialty equivalent to the completion of such degree, and recognition of expertise in the specialty through progressively responsible positions relating to the specialty.

Pursuant to 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(C), to qualify to perform services in a specialty occupation, an alien must meet one of the following criteria:

- (1) Hold a United States baccalaureate or higher degree required by the specialty occupation from an accredited college or university;
- (2) Hold a foreign degree determined to be equivalent to a United States baccalaureate or higher degree required by the specialty occupation from an accredited college or university;
- (3) Hold an unrestricted state license, registration or certification which authorizes him or her to fully practice the specialty occupation and be immediately engaged in that specialty in the state of intended employment; or
- (4) Have education, specialized training, and/or progressively responsible experience that is equivalent to completion of a United States baccalaureate or higher degree in the specialty occupation, and have recognition of expertise in the specialty through progressively responsible positions directly related to the specialty.

The record of proceeding before the AAO contains, in part: (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; (5) the petitioner's motion to reopen; (6) the director's decision affirming her previous decision; and (7) 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 senior admissions officer. The petitioner indicated in its May 28, 2003 letter of support that it wished to hire the beneficiary because he is multi-lingual, possesses a bachelor's degree and several years of supervisory work experience.

The director found that the beneficiary was not qualified for the proffered position because the beneficiary's education is unrelated to the occupation. In particular, the director found that the occupation required a degree in marketing or public relations. On appeal, counsel states that while public relations or marketing are desirable skills for a senior admissions officer, the position requires many other skills, as well, and the beneficiary's education and experience are related to the skills needed for the proffered position.

Upon review of the record, the petitioner has established that the beneficiary is qualified to perform an occupation that does not require a baccalaureate degree in any specific field. The petitioner submitted an evaluation from World Education Services, Inc., which states that the beneficiary's foreign degrees are equivalent to bachelor's and master's degrees from a U.S. college or university in music and musical pedagogy.

The petition still may not be approved, however, as it does not appear that the position is a specialty occupation. The petition will be remanded, as the director did not address the issue of whether the proffered position is a specialty occupation. The AAO notes that the petitioner did not state that a degree in a specific specialty is required for the position. In addition, its other admissions officers have degrees in medicine, economics and social communications and journalism. The AAO also notes that the Department of Labor's *Occupational Outlook Handbook (Handbook)* indicates that admissions directors and registrars sometimes start in related staff jobs with bachelor's degrees—any field usually is acceptable—and obtain advanced degrees in college student affairs, counseling, or higher education administration. In addition, the Internet job listings submitted by counsel do not indicate that a bachelor's degree in a specific specialty is required for the position.

Section 214(i)(1) of 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 director may afford the petitioner reasonable time to provide evidence pertinent to the issue of whether the proffered position is a specialty occupation. The director shall then render a new decision based on the evidence of record as it relates to the regulatory requirements for eligibility. As always, the burden of proving eligibility for the benefit sought remains entirely with the petitioner. Section 291 of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1361.

ORDER: The director's May 17, 2004 decision is withdrawn. The petition is remanded to the director for entry of a new decision, which if adverse to the petitioner, is to be certified to the AAO for review.