

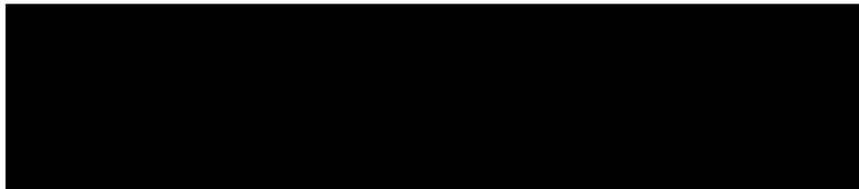
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U.S. Citizenship
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Services

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FILE: EAC 06 157 53431 Office: TEXAS SERVICE CENTER Date: DEC 13 2007

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, Chief
Administrative Appeals Office

DISCUSSION: The Director, Texas Service Center, denied the nonimmigrant visa petition. 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 accounting and consulting services corporation organized in the State of Maryland and established in 1996. It employs an indeterminate number of personnel and has an unknown gross annual income.¹ It seeks to employ the beneficiary as an accountant. Accordingly, 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 determining that the beneficiary is not qualified to perform the duties of the specialty occupation.

The director denied the petition because the petitioner failed to establish that the beneficiary is qualified to perform the duties of a specialty occupation. On appeal, petitioner contends that the director erred in denying the petition, and that the beneficiary is qualified to perform the duties of a specialty occupation.

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

The record does not establish that the beneficiary is qualified to perform the duties of a specialty occupation. 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

¹ The Form I-129 states that the petitioner employs 23 individuals. In response to the RFE, counsel submitted a quarterly taxable wage report for the second quarter of 2006 listing 14 employees. The Form I-129 states that the petitioner's gross annual income and net annual income are "confidential."

occupation, and have recognition of expertise in the specialty through progressively responsible positions directly related to the specialty.

In making its determination as to whether the beneficiary qualifies to perform the duties of a specialty occupation, the AAO turns to the criteria at 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(C), as described above. The beneficiary did not earn a degree from a United States institution of higher education, so she does not qualify under the first criterion of this subsection.

Nor does the beneficiary qualify under 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(C)(2), which requires a demonstration that the beneficiary's foreign degree has been determined to be equivalent to a United States baccalaureate or higher degree required by the specialty occupation from an accredited college or university.

The record does not demonstrate, nor has the petitioner contended that the beneficiary holds an unrestricted state license, registration or certification to practice the specialty occupation; therefore, she does not qualify to perform the duties of a specialty occupation under 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(C)(3).

The fourth criterion, set forth at 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(C)(4), requires a showing that the beneficiary's education, specialized training, and/or progressively responsible experience is equivalent to the completion of a United States baccalaureate or higher degree in the specialty occupation, and that the beneficiary also has recognition of that expertise in the specialty through progressively responsible positions directly related to the specialty.

Thus, it is the fourth criterion under which the petitioner seeks to classify the beneficiary's eligibility to perform the duties of a specialty occupation. Pursuant to 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(D), to succeed in equating the beneficiary's credentials to a United States baccalaureate or higher degree under 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(C)(4), the beneficiary would have to present one or more of the following:

- (1) An evaluation from an official who has authority to grant college-level credit for training and/or experience in the specialty at an accredited college or university which has a program for granting such credit based on an individual's training and/or work experience;
- (2) The results of recognized college-level equivalency examinations or special credit programs, such as the College Level Examination Program (CLEP), or Program on Noncollegiate Sponsored Instruction (PONSI);
- (3) An evaluation of education by a reliable credentials evaluation service which specializes in evaluating foreign educational credentials;
- (4) Evidence of certification or registration from a nationally-recognized professional association or society for the specialty that is known to grant certification or registration to persons in the occupational specialty who have achieved a certain level of competence in the specialty;

- (5) A determination by the Service that the equivalent of the degree required by the specialty occupation has been acquired through a combination of education, specialized training, and/or work experience in areas related to the specialty and that the alien has achieved recognition of expertise in the specialty occupation as a result of such training and experience.

In accordance with 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(D)(1), the AAO does not accept the conclusion, reached by ██████████, Ph.D., that the beneficiary has attained the equivalent of a Bachelor's degree in business administration with a concentration in accounting and finance. The evaluator based his evaluation on the beneficiary's education and work experience. In a letter dated August 17, 2006, ██████████ states that he has advisory authority to grant college-level credit for training and/or experience in the field of business administration. However, the record does not contain a letter from a dean or provost of any university establishing that ██████████ has such authority or that the university has a program for granting credit based on training and/or experience. Thus the petitioner has not established that the beneficiary is qualified to perform the services of a specialty occupation under 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(D)(1). Citizenship and Immigration Services (CIS) uses an evaluation by a credentials evaluation organization of a person's foreign education as an advisory opinion only. However, this evaluation is based upon the beneficiary's work experience. A credentials evaluation service may not evaluate an alien's work experience or training; it can only evaluate educational credentials. See 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(D)(3). Thus, the evaluation carries no weight in these proceedings. *Matter of Sea, Inc.*, 19 I&N Dec. 817 (Comm. 1988).

No evidence has been submitted to establish, nor has counsel contended, that the beneficiary satisfies 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(D)(2), which requires that the beneficiary submit the results of recognized college-level equivalency examinations or special credit programs, such as the College Level Examination Program (CLEP), or Program on Noncollegiate Sponsored Instruction (PONSI).

As section 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(D)(3) recognizes a foreign credentials evaluation service's opinion only to the extent that is an "evaluation of education," not work experience, the AAO does not accept Dr. Koulamas's conclusion that the beneficiary possesses the equivalent of a U.S. bachelor's degree in business administration with a concentration in accounting and finance.

No evidence has been submitted to establish, nor has counsel contended, that the beneficiary satisfies 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(D)(4), which requires that the beneficiary submit evidence of certification or registration from a nationally-recognized professional association or society for the specialty that is known to grant certification or registration to persons in the occupational specialty who have achieved a certain level of competence in the specialty.

The AAO next turns to the fifth criterion. When CIS determines an alien's qualifications pursuant to 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(D)(5), three years of specialized training and/or work experience must be demonstrated for each year of college-level training the alien lacks. The regulation states that it must be clearly demonstrated (1) that the alien's training and/or work experience included the theoretical and practical application of specialized knowledge required by the specialty occupation; (2) that the alien's experience was gained while

working with peers, supervisors, or subordinates who have a degree or its equivalent in the specialty occupation; and (3) that the alien has recognition of expertise in the specialty evidenced by at least one type of documentation such as:

- (i) Recognition of expertise in the specialty occupation by at least two recognized authorities in the same specialty occupation²;
- (ii) Membership in a recognized foreign or United States association or society in the specialty occupation;
- (iii) Published material by or about the alien in professional publications, trade journals, books, or major newspapers;
- (iv) Licensure or registration to practice the specialty occupation in a foreign country; or
- (v) Achievements which a recognized authority has determined to be significant contributions to the field of the specialty occupation.

For the following reasons, the petitioner has failed to meet the beneficiary qualification requirements of 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(D)(5). The former employer's letter describes the beneficiary's experience in terms that are too general to clearly demonstrate that the beneficiary's training and/or work experience included the theoretical and practical application of a body of specialized knowledge. Further, the letter does not clearly demonstrate that the beneficiary's experience was gained "while working with peers, supervisors, or subordinates who have a degree or its equivalent in the specialty occupation," as the regulation requires. Finally, the record of proceeding lacks documentation of the type specified at subsections (i) through (v) to establish that the alien has achieved the appropriate level of recognition in a pertinent specialty occupation.

As such, the beneficiary does not qualify under any of the criteria set forth at 8 C.F.R. §§ 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(D)(1)(2)(3)(4), or (5), and therefore by extension does not qualify under 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(C)(4).

Thus, the beneficiary does not qualify to perform the duties of a specialty occupation.

The petitioner has not established that the beneficiary is qualified to perform the duties of a specialty occupation. Accordingly, the AAO shall not disturb the director's denial of the petition.

² *Recognized authority* means a person or organization with expertise in a particular field, special skills or knowledge in that field, and the expertise to render the type of opinion requested. A recognized authority's opinion must state: (1) the writer's qualifications as an expert; (2) the writer's experience giving such opinions, citing specific instances where past opinions have been accepted as authoritative and by whom; (3) how the conclusions were reached; and (4) the basis for the conclusions supported by copies or citations of any research material used. 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(ii).

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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.