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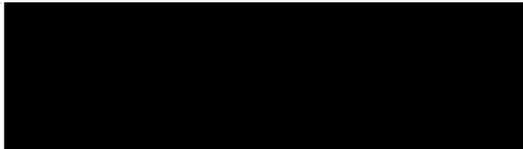
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
20 Mass. Ave., N.W., Rm. 3000  
Washington, DC 20529



U.S. Citizenship  
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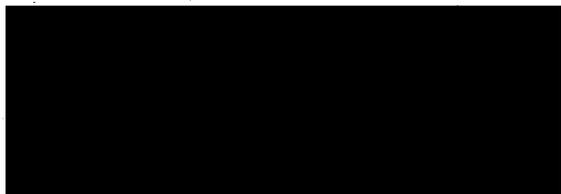
FILE: EAC 05 210 52214 Office: VERMONT SERVICE CENTER Date: APR 26 2007

IN RE: Petitioner:  
Beneficiary:



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.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert P. Wiemann".

Robert P. Wiemann, Chief  
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 sustained. The petition will be approved.

The petitioner is an animation studio and seeks to employ the beneficiary as a graphic designer. 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 stating that the proffered position does not qualify as a specialty occupation, and that the beneficiary is not qualified to perform the duties of a specialty occupation. On appeal, counsel submits a brief and additional information stating that the offered position qualifies as a specialty occupation and that the beneficiary is qualified to perform the duties of a specialty occupation.

The first issue to be discussed in this proceeding is whether the proffered position qualifies as a specialty occupation.

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), provides, in part, for the classification of qualified nonimmigrant aliens who are coming temporarily to the United States to perform services in a specialty occupation.

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.

The term "specialty occupation" is further defined at 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(ii) as:

[A]n occupation which requires theoretical and practical application of a body of highly specialized knowledge in fields of human endeavor including, but not limited to, architecture, engineering, mathematics, physical sciences, social sciences, medicine and health, education, business specialties, accounting, law, theology, and the arts, and which requires the attainment of a bachelor's degree or higher in a 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 are 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) the 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) the Form I-290B with supporting documentation. The AAO reviewed the record in its entirety before issuing its decision.

The petitioner is seeking the beneficiary's services as a graphic designer. Evidence of the beneficiary's duties includes the Form I-129 petition with attachment and the petitioner's response to the director's request for evidence. According to this evidence the beneficiary would:

- Use numerous publishing and computer graphic programs and equipment such as Adobe Illustrator 10.0, Adobe Photoshop 7.0, Adobe Pagemaker 7.0, Adobe Imagerready 7.0, QuarkXpress 4.0, Dream Weaver MX, and CorelDraw 10.0 to create and design characters, background, title, scenes and credit of animation products;
- Provide insight on the designs with respect to art décor, artistic impressions, use of space, and knowledge of layout principles;
- Prioritize, track, handle and maintain records of elements of costs and time schedules of multiple projects;
- Implement cost effective solutions in the production of animation; and
- Work closely with clients to comply with its demand in creating animation.

The petitioner requires a minimum of a bachelor's degree in graphic design or a related field for entry into the offered position.

The AAO routinely consults the U.S. Department of Labor's *Occupational Outlook Handbook (Handbook)* for information about the duties and educational requirements of particular occupations. The duties of the proffered position are essentially those performed by graphic designers. Upon review of the record, the

petitioner has established that a baccalaureate or higher degree or its equivalent is normally the minimum requirement for entry into the offered position. 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(A)(I). The *Handbook*, 2006-07 edition, notes that a bachelor's degree is required for most entry-level design positions and that bachelor of fine art degree programs in graphic arts are granted at 4-year colleges and universities. The 2000-01 edition of the *Handbook* notes that academic training leading to a bachelor's degree in art or design had virtually become a necessity in the industry. The proffered position does, therefore, qualify as a specialty occupation.

The final issue to be determined is whether the beneficiary is qualified to perform the duties of a specialty occupation. The director did not determine this issue as the petition was denied on another ground. The record is sufficient, however, for the AAO to make that determination. The petitioner submitted an evaluation of the beneficiary's education and work experience from Dr. [REDACTED] a professor at Duquesne University. Dr. [REDACTED] opined that the beneficiary's education and work experience is equivalent to a bachelor of art's degree in graphic design from an accredited college or university in the United States. The record further establishes that Duquesne University has a program for granting college level credit for student's past work/life experiences, and that Dr. Shepherd has authority to evaluate that experience for the purpose of granting college academic credit at the university. The degree equivalent possessed by the beneficiary is closely related to the duties of the proffered position, and the beneficiary is qualified to perform the duties of the position. 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(C)(4).

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 sustained that burden and the appeal shall accordingly be sustained.

**ORDER:** The appeal is sustained. The petition is approved.