Immigration Updates

Regulations Changed for Optional Practical Training (OPT) for F-1 STEM-degree Students

In March 2016, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) published amended F-1 nonimmigrant student regulations on OPT for certain students with science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) degrees from U.S. institutions of higher education. The new regulation, which provides for an extension of the OPT period by 24 months (a STEM OPT extension), will go into effect on May 10, 2016. As part of the amended regulations, employers must develop a formal training plan that clearly identifies the STEM OPT student's learning objectives and the employer's commitments to helping the student achieve those goals. To capture this requirement, DHS introduced the Form I-983, “Training Plan for STEM OPT Students.”

In order to help school officials, students and employers understand the new regulations, the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) has created the STEM OPT Hub on the Study in the States website. This site also explains which international students are ineligible to benefit from the 24-month STEM OPT extension, and has information on how to complete the form I-983 Training Plan. The new STEM OPT regulations can be found in the Federal Register. The STEM OPT Hub can be accessed here on Study in the States.

Reminder to Check I-94 Expiration Dates

Each year, foreign nationals should double-check important dates related to their immigration statuses. Many aspects of immigration law are tied to expiration dates, grace periods, filing deadlines, and other date-driven matters. It is vitally important to keep informed and on top of important calendar items and timelines specific to one's immigration process. Perhaps the most important date an individual in nonimmigrant status needs to bear in mind is the expiration date on the I-94. In most situations, the I-94 reflects how long a person is permitted to stay in the United States, provided that s/he complies with the terms of his/her status. Individuals typically need to plan to depart the United States before the I-94 expires, or else make a timely request to change or extend status. To obtain the actual CBP I-94 information, it is necessary to log into the Admission (I-94) Number Retrieval page on the CBP website.

For more details on the I-94 records and other helpful reminders, read the full article here.
Dinner Invitation to International Medical Graduates (Faculty and Housetaff)

American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPI) Arkansas & OneBanc

Invite you and your spouse for a seminar on

Buying or building a home? Purchase/Refinance/Construction – Relationship Banking is Community Banking @ OneBanc

With Daniels Bynum, President, One Banc Mortgage & Construction Lending
dbynum@onebanc.com or 501-370-4565 direct

Thursday, May 12th at 6:30 PM
Taj Mahal Restaurant
1520 Market Street, Little Rock, AR 72211
501-520-4900

As space is limited RSVPs will be on a first come basis
RSVP to aapiarkansas@gmail.com

Did you miss the “Paths to Permanent Residency” presentation on April 12th?

On April 12th, we hosted UAMS-approved immigration attorney George Ernst on campus, who presented information on the various “paths to permanent residency.” If you missed this presentation, you may still access the information he shared by visiting our website and downloading the presentation slides:

Paths to Permanent Residency presentation

Help us to welcome the 32 new foreign national medical residents & fellows, who will join UAMS in June & July! Also, congratulations to all of you who are completing your residency or fellowship this summer! Well Done!
The Volga is the longest river in Europe; it is also Europe's largest river in terms of discharge and watershed. It flows through central Russia and into the Caspian Sea, and is widely viewed as the national river of Russia. The Volga and its tributaries form the Volga river system, which flows through an area of about 1,350,000 square km (521,238 square miles) in the most heavily populated part of Russia. The Volga Delta has a length of about 160 km (99 miles) and includes as many as 500 channels and smaller rivers. Eleven of the twenty largest cities of Russia, including the capital of Russia, Moscow, are in the Volga's watershed (drainage basin). Moreover, the capitals of eleven regions are situated on banks of the Volga River: Tver, Yaroslavl, Kostroma, Nizhny Novgorod, Cheboksary, Kazan, Ulyanovsk, Samara, Saratov, Volgograd, Astrakhan.

The area downstream of the Volga, widely believed to have been a cradle of the Proto-Indo-European civilization, was settled by Huns and other Turkic peoples in the first millennium AD, replacing the Scythians. The ancient scholar Ptolemy of Alexandria mentions the lower Volga in his Geography (Book 5, Chapter 8). Subsequently, the river basin played an important role in the movements of peoples from Asia to Europe. The river served as an important trade route connecting Scandinavia and Rus' with Khazaria and Persia. Khazars were replaced by Mongols, who founded the Golden Horde in the lower reaches of the Volga. Later their empire divided into the Khanate of Kazan and Khanate of Astrakhan, both of which were conquered by the Russians in the course of the 16th century. Interesting to note, that cities, Kazan and Astrakhan, still have the same names, and they are the capitals of big regions.
RUSSIA, CONTINUED

This river has a symbolic meaning in Russian culture and is often referred to as Volga-Matushka (Mother Volga) in literature and folklore. The Russian people's deep feeling for the Volga echoes in national culture and literature, starting from the 12th-century *The Tale of Igor's Campaign* and 15th-century *A Journey Beyond the Three Seas*.

*The Volga Boatman's Song* is one of many songs devoted to the national symbol of Russia. *The Tale of Igor's Campaign* was adapted by Alexander Borodin as an opera and became one of the great classics of Russian theatre. *Barge Haulers on the Volga* (or *Burlaki*) is an 1873 oil-on-canvas famous painting by the realist painter Ilya Repin. The work is both a celebration of the men's dignity and fortitude, and a highly emotional condemnation of those who sanctioned such inhumane labor; although they *burlaki* presented as stoical and accepting, the men are largely defeated.

During the Russian Civil War, 1917-1922, which happened immediately after the Russian Revolution, both Red Army and White Army, fielded warships on the Volga; whoever held both sides of the river could move forces across the river, to defeat the enemy's fortifications beyond the river. There were an estimated 7 million casualties during the civil war and up to 12 million if it's considered together with civilians. In Europe, the Russian Civil War has been described as the greatest national catastrophe that Europe had yet seen.

Later on, during World War II, in which the Soviet Union lost totally 25.5 million people (19.5 m. men and 6 m. women), the Volga River was the site of a continual battle. The city on the big bend of the Volga, currently known as Volgograd (or Stalingrad, previously), witnessed the Battle of Stalingrad, possibly the bloodiest battle in human history, in which the Soviet Union and the German forces were deadlocked in a stalemate battle for access to the river. Marked by constant close quarters combat and direct assaults on civilians by air raids, it is often regarded as one of the single largest (nearly 2.2 million personnel) and bloodiest (1.7–2 million wounded, killed or captured) battles in the history of warfare.
RUSSIA, CONTINUED

Construction of Soviet Union-era dams often involved enforced resettlement of huge numbers of people, as well as destruction of their historical heritage. On the Volga River, for instance, the town of Mologa was flooded for the purpose of constructing the Rybinsk Reservoir, the largest artificial lake in the world; the construction of the artificial Uglich Reservoir caused the flooding of several monasteries with buildings dating from the 15th and 16th centuries. In such cases the ecological and cultural damage often outbalanced any economic advantage. The well-known cultural example of it is a the Bell Tower near Kalyazin, a part of the Monastery of St. Nicholas, which was flooded to create the Uglich Reservoir. The Bell Tower was saved for purpose to use it as lighthouse for ships, but this wasn’t realized. Now it’s a symbol of the widespread destruction of churches after the Russian Revolution.

In recent years, grain and oil have been among the largest cargo exports transported on the Volga. Tourism and historical sightseeing are very popular in almost all the places near the river. A large number of Russians spend vacations on cruise ships on the Volga; it takes two weeks to sail almost whole length of the Volga River, starting from Tver and ending at Astrakhan. Among the other things, a lot of interesting bridges cross the Volga River; they are different in sizes, functional purposes, etc.

I grew up near Tver city; Cheboksary is the home city for my wife. Dr. Ekaterina Galanzha, MD, PhD, DSc, came to UAMS from Saratov City. For Dr. Oleg Karaduta, MD, and his wife the home city is Volgograd. As was mentioned in the beginning, all these cities are the capitals of different regions of Russia, but all of them are located at the Volga River. At UAMS we are working in the field of cancer research for over 5-10 years.

With such an enormous campus and with some of the big names in the field of medical sciences working here, there is so much to learn and grow yourself that each day brings an exciting new feel to it. At the same time, not only cancer research unites us; the 2nd meaningful is that we are “from the Volga River” J, i.e. from different cities but from the same unique river.

![Fig.5. Kalyazin Bell Tower – a symbol of the old Russia that has disappeared after the Revolution.](image)

![Fig.6. Saratov Bridge, one of the longest across the Volga River (length of 2,803.7 meters or 9,198 ft).](image)

![Fig.7. Cruise ship on the Volga River.](image)
Announcements

Our UAMS family is growing!

Congratulations to….

Marwan Moussa on the birth of his baby boy, Youssef.

Aparna Komarraju on the birth of her baby boy, Rahul.

Elise Gaudreau-Lavoie and Michael Fausther on the birth of their baby boy.

Recognition of Awards

Dr. Limaye’s “I Saved a Brain” Pin

Congratulations to Dr. Kaustubh Limaye, neurology resident physician and 2016 Resident of the Year, who received the “I Saved a Brain” pin in recognition of his quick response and successful treatment of a stroke patient.

Margaret Portlock:

Our Phenomenal Woman!

Immigration Services team member Margaret Portlock, HR Analyst, was honored as a UAMS Phenomenal Woman for 2016. She was one of 32 UAMS women who were nominated and recognized during Women's History Month in March. Congratulations, Margaret!

Ramadan Mubarak!

Ramadan, the 9th month of the Islamic calendar, begins June 5th, and is observed by fasting from dawn to sunset to commemorate the first revelation of the Quran to Muhammad, according to Islamic belief.
UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS

June
Anita Akbar Ali
Alberto Allegre Alonso
Ciji Arthur
Di Chang
Lakshminarayana Chekuri
Cui Cui
Malik Dawoud
Chitharanjan Duvoor
Emre Ermisoglu
Yuko Fujiwara
Ying Gao
Narendra Gutta
Shahanawaz Jiwani
John Jones
Sai Kode
Xiaocong Li
Zhongpeng Lu
Yesenia Mejia Chavelo
Jonathan Mhlanga
Sergey Nikitin

Bernice Nounamo
Alamelu Palaniappan
Naga Venkata Potheneni
Supraja Prakash
Rashmi Samdani
Carolina Schinke
James Sorensen
Marcus Trentzsch
Ying Xu
Shiqiao Ye
Suping Zhang

July
Orwa Aboud
Syed Ali
Dileep Atluri
Shobanababu Bommagani
Manuela Cerqueira
Divyan Chopra
Zufeng Ding

Faysal Fedda
Elise Gaudreau-Lavoie
Pooja Gurram
Rim Hasan
Yogesh Jethava
Amit Ketkar
Parisa Khalili Boroojeni
Shashank Kraleti
Ajay Kumar
Manoj Kumar
Pradeep Kumbham
Abdel Rahman Lataifeh
Yibo Li
Kaustubh Limaye
Mohammed Eid Madmani
Naveen Nagaraj
Preeti Preeti
Leticia Nunez Argote
Raja Pola
Muthukumar Radhakrishnan

Sai Kiran Raghavapuram
Malikarjuna Rettiganti
Shailesh
Alok Surana
Sandra Susanibar Adaniya
Gaurav Syal
Mahanazuddin Syed
Venkata Uppala
Umesh Wankhade
Shilpi Yadav
Li Yin

Little Rock Marathon & Half-Marathon Finishers

The 14th annual Little Rock Marathon and Half-Marathon took place March 6, 2016, with over 6,000 participants. Of those participants, at least two members of UAMS Immigration Services’ family were proud finishers. Courtney Richter, HR Senior Consultant in the Immigration Services office, completed the half-marathon (13.1 miles/21 km), and Dr. Yulian Menyaev, with the department of Otolaryngology Laser & Nanomedicine, completed the full marathon (26.2 miles/42 km). Dr. Menyaev went on to run another full marathon in April in Oklahoma City.

“My dream was realized twice!” said Dr. Menyaev of finishing the two marathons.

Congratulations to all of the finishers!

Have you recently accomplished a life goal, or have a personal passion you’d like to share? Tell us about it! Email your story to AskImmigration@uams.edu and we will feature your accomplishment in our next newsletter!
Upcoming Holidays

Sunday, May 8, 2016
Mother's Day

Monday, May 30, 2016
Memorial Day (UAMS Holiday)

Sunday, June 19, 2016
Father’s Day

Monday, July 4, 2016
Independence Day (UAMS Holiday)

Happenings Around Town

32nd Annual International Greek Food Festival
May 20-22
A celebration of the delicious, unique, and exciting food and culture of the Mediterranean, benefiting local charities. http://www.greekfoodfest.com/

Riverfest 2016
June 3-5
Little Rock's largest festival of visual and performing arts, with more than 250,000 annual visitors. Enjoy live music, games, food and fun during this 3-day event. http://www.riverfestarkansas.com