



Tips for a Successful Visa Interview

The visa interview is your opportunity to tell the consular officer about your plans while in the United States and what you will do when you have completed your studies. You should be prepared to show the following:

1. You have received acceptance to an SEVP-certified school. Your Form I-20 verifies this.
2. You have the financial ability to pay for school costs plus living expenses (the amount shown on Form I-20). You may want to bring copies of financial documents you provided to the school where you want to enroll. These documents are evidence of the preparations you have made to finance your stay (e.g., bank statements).
3. You are prepared for the academic program in which you plan to enroll. You may want to bring copies of any standardized test scores, academic transcripts, diplomas or certificates from previous study you provided as part of your application to the school where you want to enroll.
4. Your stay in the United States is temporary (i.e., you are not permanently immigrating).
5. The interviewing official may be interested in how you intend to use the education you receive in the United States when you return home.

In addition, be prepared to:

SPEAK FOR YOURSELF

The consular officer wants to interview you, make a good impression by being prepared to speak on your own behalf. If you are a minor and need your parents there in case there are questions, for example, about funding, they should wait in the waiting room.

BE CONCISE

Because of the volume of applications that are received, all consular officers are under considerable time pressure to conduct a quick and efficient interview. They must make a decision, for the most part, on the impressions they form during the first minute or two of the interview. Consequently, what you say first and the initial impression you create are critical to your success. Keep your answers to the officer's questions short and to the point.

MAINTAIN A POSITIVE ATTITUDE

Do not engage the consular officer in an argument. If you are denied a student visa, ask the officer for a list of documents he or she would suggest you bring in order to overcome the refusal.



Knowing what questions to expect can be a huge advantage! Most questions will be related to these 5 categories:

- Your study plans
- Your university choice
- Your academic capability
- Your financial status
- Your career plans

Here are some sample questions you might encounter during your interview.

Questions about your study plans

These questions will be similar to your university application essays and interviews. Your interviewer is interested in your choice of pursuing higher education and in your choice to study in the US versus your home country or any other place.

- Why are you going to the US?
- What will you specialize in for your degree?
- What will be your major?
- Where did you go to school now?
- Who is your current employer? What do you do?
- Why are you planning to continue your education?
- Can you not continue your education in your home country?
- How will this study program relate to your past work or studies?

Questions about your university choice

Similar to your study plans, your choice of university is of interest to your interviewer.

- How many colleges did you apply to?
- How many schools did you get admitted to?
- How many schools rejected you?
- Have you been to the US before?
- Do you know your professors at that university? What are their names?
- What city is your school located in?

Questions about your academic capability

You will need to show your capability to succeed in a US university during your interview. Your test scores, previous GPA, and previous study abroad can all be evaluated to determine your likelihood of success during your program.

- What are your test scores (GRE, GMAT, SAT, TOEFL, IELTS)?
- What was your previous GPA?
- How will you manage the cultural and educational differences in the US?
- How good is your English?
- Why do you want to pursue a degree in the US?
- Why not study in Canada, Australia or the UK?



- What do you know about US schools?
- Can I see your high school/college diploma?

Questions about your financial status

Regardless of your academic qualifications, you cannot be awarded an F-1 student visa without the means to finance your education. The cost of education in the US is much higher than other countries. It is important to investigate and have a solid financial plan. This plan should include more than just tuition expenses. You should consider housing, food, transportation, and all other relevant expenses.

- What is your monthly income?
- What is your sponsor's annual income?
- How do you plan to fund the entire duration of your education?
- How much does your school cost?
- How will you meet these expenses?
- Who is going to sponsor your education?
- What is your sponsor's occupation?
- How else will you cover the rest of your costs?
- Do you have a copy of your bank statements?
- Did you get offered a scholarship at your school?

Questions about your post-graduation plans

Technically, the F-1 student visa is only granted to those who plan to return to their home country after graduation. Although it is not impossible to stay in the US after your graduation, through programs such as Optional Practical Training and H1B, it will be important for you to prove that you have ties and obligations, including family, property, or a job offer, that will lead to your return to your home country.

- Do you have relatives or friends currently in the US?
- What are your plans post-graduation?
- Do you have a job or career in mind after you graduate?
- Do you plan on returning back to your home country?
- What are your plans after graduation?
- Are you sure you won't stay in the US?
- Will you continue to work for your current employer after you graduate?

The most important thing to remember during your F-1 visa interview is to remain calm! Being well prepared is extremely important. Be sure to have all of the required documents and receipts with you so that you can focus on your interview questions. Answer all of the questions asked of you, and remember to be open and honest!