Getting ready for your visa interview
The U.S. Department of State website states “A citizen of a foreign country who wishes to enter the United States must first obtain a visa, either a nonimmigrant visa for temporary stay, or an immigrant visa for permanent residence. You must have a student visa to study in the United States.”

The school you wish to attend and the subject you wish to study help determine what kind of visa is required.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visa Type</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Employment</th>
<th>Degree Level</th>
<th>Sponsor/Endorsement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F-1</td>
<td>length of program</td>
<td>spouse/child can join with F-2 visas</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>any</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M-1</td>
<td>length of program</td>
<td>spouse/child can join with M-2 visas</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>vocational/technical</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J-1</td>
<td>length of program</td>
<td>spouse/child can join with J-2 visas</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>workplace exchange/on-job training</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>subject to approval</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>recreational or business only</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
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</table>
F-1 Visa
The most common is the F-1 student visa. The F-1 is given to any international citizen attending a U.S. high school, a specialized, non-vocational institution, seminary, college or university. Once you have received your F-1 visa, you must inform the school that the process is complete. When you arrive in the U.S., customs officials will give you an I-94 form that confirms you legal entry into the country. You should carry this (or copies) with you at all times.

M-1 Visa
The M-1 visa is for international residents who want to attend technical programs. With an M-1 visa, students are not permitted to work while they attend the university. In addition, some students may be required to pay their full tuition bill before the program begins.

J-1 Visa
The J-1 visa is for international residents who want to participate in a U.S.-based, on-the-job training course. Most J-1 visa holders are part of workplace exchange programs and live with host families while in the country. J-1 visas usually last for up to 18 months, at which point the student must go back to their home country.

B Visa
B Visas are for students who want to enroll in a brief recreational course of study, not for credit toward a degree. B-1 visas are for business and B-2 visas are for visiting and tourism.
As part of the visa application process, you will likely have to attend a visa interview in person.

This booklet contains some questions visa officers might ask and some tips on answering their questions. This is intended as a guide to help you prepare, but you could be asked anything.

Here are a few things to keep in mind:

**Do attend**
Failure to attend the interview may result in your application being automatically refused. In the event you cannot attend, contact the Visa Office to reschedule.

**Do answer**
You should always answer all questions fully and honestly.

**Do think**
You should think in advance about your course, the documents you provided in your visa application, and your intention to study. The Visa Official wants to know that you have given serious thought before choosing your course.

**Do speak in English!**
One of the most important things they will be checking is your level of English, so always answer in English, not via an interpreter. Practice answers to the sample questions below and be prepared.
Do ask
Ask for clarification if you do not understand a question to make sure you are providing the correct information.

Documents to bring to the interview
Check the documents required by your specific Embassy at http://www.usembassy.gov

In general, students are asked to provide the following documentation:

1. Original I-20
2. Proof of payment of SEVIS fee
3. Completed DS-160 form (Non-immigrant visa application)
4. Certificate of Enrollment
5. Passport
6. Academic transcripts (with translations)
7. Financial evidence used for the I-20
8. Passport-sized photograph
Visa Officials, and Americans in general, like to make casual conversation or “small talk”. They like to talk about weather, sports, travel, music, movies, theater, books, food, and entertainment. The purpose of “small talk” is to break the ice and get a good dialogue started.

Small talk is a great way to get an idea of what type of person you are. Are you shy or outgoing? Are you able to converse comfortably with strangers? Is your English strong enough to speak up in class? These are some reasons the Visa Official might start the conversation with small talk.

There is no wrong or right answer - just answer truthfully.
1. How are you?

2. Tell me about yourself.

3. What do you like to do for fun?

4. Are you a ________ fan? (e.g. Boston Red Sox, Oakland Raiders, etc)

5. How do you think you will like the weather in ________?

6. Do you like American food?

**Tips**

- Be prepared to be conversational with the Visa Official
- Be familiar with the area you wish to go to (i.e. local sports, cities in close proximity, foods, special terminology, etc.)
- Go on the school website to get to know the university you will be attending
- Know what airport you will fly into and how far away is it from the school
- Join the school’s facebook/social media page and start a dialogue with other students
## General information

1. What is the name of the school you wish to attend?

2. Did you use an educational agent at any stage? Who is/was your agent and why did you choose them?

3. Why do you wish to study in the U.S.? Did you consider any other countries?

4. How did you first learn about this school?

5. Why did you choose this university/college/school? Why did you choose this course and how does it relate to your previous study? Why not stay in your own country to study, if similar courses are available there?

6. What job opportunities with this degree provide?

7. What is your plan after completing the course? Do you intend to stay in the U.S. (for additional studies) or are you returning home?

8. Do you have any family living in the U.S.?

9. Do you plan to work in the U.S. during course or after you graduate?

## Tips

- Show that you are a genuine student looking to further your education
- Make it clear that you plan to return to your home country by showing strong ties – give reasons for returning to your home country that are stronger than those for remaining in the United States
**Intended Course(s)**

1. What is the course name and academic level? What qualification will you get after the course if you pass?

2. When does the course start and finish? How many terms/semesters is it?

3. What are the subjects of the course? What will you study during the course? How are you going to be assessed on the course?

4. Did you do any research before choosing the school/course? What other schools/courses did you consider, and why did you decide on this one?

5. How is this course going to benefit you for your future career and/or academic plans?

<table>
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<th>Tips</th>
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<td>- Become familiar with the information on our website and/or brochure</td>
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<td>- Bring a brochure with you to show the visa official</td>
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<tr>
<td>- If you are not able to articulate the reasons you will study in a particular program in the United States, you may not succeed in convincing the consular officer that you are indeed planning to study, rather than to immigrate</td>
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<tr>
<td>- You should be able to explain how studying in the US relates to your future professional career in your home country</td>
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Financial Circumstances

1. Who is going to pay your tuition fees and living costs?

2. Do you know how much it costs to live in the U.S. and also what you might spend on day-to-day items such as food, travel and accommodation?

3. Do you know the total cost of the course and have an idea on any future courses?

4. Are you receiving scholarships or will you be receiving student loans? If you are receiving loans, how will you repay them?

Tips

- Bring all required financial documents and anything else you may have that helps support your financial status
- If you’ve been awarded a scholarship, bring a certificate or proof of your award
1. Where is the school? What city is it in and what part of the U.S. does it belong to?

2. Where have you arranged accommodation?

3. How much does accommodation cost in the city/town where you will be studying?

4. How will you commute between your accommodation and the school (bus, train, underground etc)?

**Tips**
- Bring your accommodation confirmation if booked through our program.
Have questions? Contact us!

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