

F-1 Visa information

Preparation for Visa Interview

EC Boston applicants who plan to enter the United States on an F-1 student visa will be issued an I-20 form, which they take to the US Embassy in their country to apply for the F-1 visa. When EC Boston sends the I-20 form to the student, we also send information about how to prepare for the visa interview and about required Embassy forms and fees. Here below is a general overview of the type of questions that will be asked in the visa interview. For more information, please feel free to contact EC Boston and look at some of the related links listed below.

At a visa interview, the consular officer wants to verify that all the information being presented is correct and authentic. Also, under U.S. law, all applicants for nonimmigrant visas, such as student visas, are viewed as intending immigrants until they can convince the consular officer that they are not. Therefore be able to show that you have reasons for returning to your home country that are stronger than those for remaining in the United States (these are your ties to your country).

“Ties” are aspects of your life that bind you to your place of residence. These include family relationships, employment, investments, property, possessions, educational background, the situation of your other family members, and your long-range plans and prospects in your home country. There is no set answer as to what constitutes sufficient ties because every person’s situation is different.

If you overstayed your authorized stay in the U.S. on a previous visit, you should be prepared to explain what happened and provide documentation, if available.

General tips

Apply in Advance

- It is more important than ever to apply for your visa well in advance of the date you will begin your studies. Try to apply at least three months before you plan to travel. This will give you extra time if there are delays at the embassy, or if you wish to appeal a decision in the event of a denial.
- All applicants’ names have to be submitted for a security clearance. Citizens of some countries have to undergo additional screening that takes several additional weeks of processing.

Presentation/Attitude

- Plan to speak in English (even if you plan to come to the US for English study). If you don’t speak any English, you can ask for an interpreter.
- Plan to go into the interview room alone and turn your cell phone off
- Get the name of the interviewer
- Be confident and dress well. First impressions are critical.
- Listen to what the officer says and be polite
- Tell the truth
- Do not give any information which is not relevant or is not being asked.
- Give brief, but definite and specific answers. However, don’t memorize a speech.

Financial Support

- Visa applications are generally stronger if the financial support comes from family, employers, or other institutional sponsors located in the home country.
- If your parents will pay for your education, be ready to document how your family gets its income. Bring a letter from your parent's employer stating what the parent's job is, how long they have worked at that organization, and how much they earn.
- Large sums of money in bank accounts may not be sufficient proof of financial support. When providing information about bank accounts, obtain a letter from your bank that states how long the account has existed, and what the average balance in the account has been.

The consular officer will likely ask you some of the following questions

1. Who is sponsoring you?
2. Has your employer given you a leave of absence so you may study and return to your position when you return to your country?
3. Who will look after your responsibilities (example: your business) in your absence?
4. Will your spouse and/or dependents accompany you? If so, what will they do while you study? If not, how can you support them while you are away without working illegally?

Document Preparation

- Write out your plan of study so it is clear
- Fill out all forms neatly and completely and make sure you know what is written on the forms.
- Bring clear and concise documents which support the validity of your statements. The interview will be very short (2-3 minutes), so lengthy, unorganized explanations will not be useful.

Program of Study and Career Plans

The officer may ask some of the following questions about why you want to study in the US and how your program realistically fits with your career plans. It is very important to be able to explain your education and career goals clearly in order to convince the officer that the F-1 student visa is the correct visa for you and that you plan to study, rather than immigrate to the US.

1. Why do you want to study in the US?
2. What do you do here in your home country?
3. If you are not currently employed, explain what reasonable job prospects you believe you will have upon your return from the US.
4. Which universities did you/will you apply to? Why did you choose those schools? (Make sure you know about the schools you apply to and their requirements for admission.)
5. What will you do after you complete your program of study in the US?
6. Why don't you want to study (English) in your own country?
7. Why do you want to study ____ (subject)?
8. Describe your educational background. Describe why you think you will be successful in the future with your educational and career goals.

Additional Questions about “Ties” to your Country

1. Do you have any family members living in the US?
2. Have you ever been to the US before?
3. What do your family members do and where do they live?
4. Where will you live when you are in the US?

Visa Denial

If you don't get the visa the first time, please do the following:

1. Ask for a letter explaining the reason for denial
2. Ask for a list of documents the officer suggest you bring in the future to overcome the denial
3. Ask when you can apply again
4. Contact EC Boston immediately

Useful Links

Visa wait time http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/wait/tempvisitors_wait.php

Visa Preparation <http://www.travel.state.gov/>

U.S Embassies Abroad <http://travel.state.gov/links.html>

USICE - Special Registration http://www.ice.gov/graphics/enforce/imm/imm_sr.htm

DHS Special Notice <http://travel.state.gov/specialnotice.html>

**Special Visa Processing for citizens of North
Korea, Cuba, Syria, Sudan, Iran, Iraq, & Libya** <http://travel.state.gov/section306.html>

Visas for Third Country Nationals in Canada or Mexico <http://travel.state.gov/tcn.html>

Fees for Visa Services <http://travel.state.gov/vofees.html>

Visa Photo Requirements <http://travel.state.gov/passport/pptphotos/index.html>

Visa Denials <http://travel.state.gov/visadenials.html>

U.S. VISIT

http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/interapp/content_multi_image/content_multi_image_0006.xml

Airport Security - Web videos in various languages

http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/interapp/editorial/editorial_0435.xml

Airport Status <http://www.fly.faa.gov/flyfaa/usmap.jsp>

What to expect upon arrival at a U.S. port of entry

http://www.ice.gov/sevis/factsheet/100104ent_stdnt_fs.htm