

F-1 Visa Interview Guide

Now that you have been admitted and issued your Form I-20, Certificate of Eligibility for F-1 Student Status, the next step is to apply for your F-1 Student visa! For complete information on this process, visit U.S. Homeland Security's website: <http://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/students/getting-a-visa/>.

It is very important that you understand the process and rules for obtaining the F-1 Student Visa or status.

If you are exempt from the visa requirement (for example, a Canadian citizen), you must still follow all of the following rules and procedures when you are inspected at the U.S. Port of Entry.

Know The Rules

- 1. Pay the U.S. SEVIS Fee of \$350** and have a printed receipt that proves payment before your visa interview. Find out how to pay your SEVIS Fee at www.FMJFee.com.
- 2. Apply for your visa as soon as possible:** There may be considerable wait time for both the visa interview and visa processing. Wait time information for specific embassies and consulates is available at: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas.html>
- 3. The embassy/consulate can issue your visa up to 12 months before your Form I-20's program start date.**
- 4. You must overcome the presumption of immigrant intent.** Because the F-1 visa is a non-immigrant visa category, it is important that you can show your ties to your home country. The most common reason for visa denial is not showing that you have strong ties to your home.
- 5. You must have a good educational or professional objective for coming to study at Haverford College** that will prepare you for a career back home. You also must be able to prove that you are academically qualified and have the financial means to pursue it.
- 6. Be brief.** Answer questions directly and to the point.
- 7. Consuls are impersonal when administering laws.** In the U.S., laws are applied equally to all people regardless of status or gender. It is not possible to negotiate with a consular officer, and their decision is final.

- 8. U.S. Government officials require evidence to prove that you qualify for the F-1 visa.** Carefully follow our instructions and take all necessary documentation with you.

What to Expect During the Visa Interview

- Ink-free digital finger scan (biometrics)
- Possible additional scan screening
- Answering questions in a very short interview
- Demonstrate that you intend to return to your home country upon completion of your program of study through family ties, use of education in your home country, employment, or assets (house, land, apartment, etc.).

Checklist of Documents to Bring to Visa Interview

1. Your acceptance letter from Haverford College
2. DSO Letter with orientation confirmation dates
3. I-20 Form
4. Financial evidence that shows you or your parents, who are sponsoring you, have enough funds to cover your educational, travel, and living expenses during the period of your intended study. Proof of Financial Support documents such as Bank Statements and/or Affidavit of Support (amounts should match your I-Form or exceed it).
5. A completed DS-160 Nonimmigrant Visa Applicant application form and fee, (<http://evisaforms.state.gov/>)
6. A passport valid for travel to the United States and with validity dates at least six (6) months beyond the applicant's intended period of stay in the United States unless [country-specific agreements](#) provide exemptions).
7. Proof of English Skills (Scores from standardized tests required by the educational institution such as the TOEFL, SAT, etc.)
8. The SEVIS I-901 Fee Receipt
9. Visa Application Fee Receipt
10. One (1) photograph of yourself - For detailed guidelines, see <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/photos.html>.

11. Evidence of your educational qualifications – this can include original copies of your transcript(s) and test scores.
12. Proof of ties to your home country.

Points to Remember

Ties to Home Country

Under US law, all applicants for nonimmigrant visas are viewed as intending immigrants until they can convince the consular officer that they are not. You must, 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. "Ties" to your home country are the things that bind you to your hometown, homeland, or current place of residence: job, family, financial prospects that you own or will inherit, investments, etc. The interviewing officer may ask you about your specific intentions or potential for future employment, family or other relationships, educational objectives, grades, long-term plans, and career prospects in your home country. Each person's situation is different, of course, and there is no magical explanation or single document, certificate, or letter which can guarantee visa issuance.

English

You should expect that the interview will be conducted in English. Please note that you should not memorize answers/speeches. It's important to be able to engage with the consular officer naturally.

Speak for Yourself

We do not recommend that you bring parents or family members with you to the interview. The consular officer wants to interview you, not your family. It creates a more positive impression when you speak on your own behalf.

Know the Program and How it Fits Your Career Plans

You should also be able to explain how studying in the United States relates to your future professional career when you return home.

Be Concise

Consular officers are under considerable time pressure to conduct a quick and efficient interview due to the volume of applications they must process. The interview will likely be very short (around 3 minutes). Keep your answers to the officer's questions short and to the point.

Supplemental Documentation

It should be clear at a glance to the consular officer what written documents you are presenting and what they signify. Lengthy written explanations cannot be quickly read or evaluated. Remember that your interview will be very short.

Employment

Your main purpose of coming to the United States should be to study, not for the chance to work before or after graduation. While many students do work off-campus during

their studies, such employment is incidental, and the main purpose is to complete their US education. You must be able to clearly articulate your plan to return home at the end of your program.

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, and try to get the reason you were denied in writing.

Check Your Documents Before Leaving the Embassy

Once your visa is issued, be sure to check and see if your name and your status (F-1) are correct; if not, request the necessary corrections before you leave the embassy.

Visa Denial

Even if you provided all the required documents, it is still possible that your visa application is denied. If this happens, notify the Office of International Student Support(hc-isso@haverford.edu) at Haverford College immediately.

A denial of a visa to travel can be disappointing. To fully understand the reason for a denial, we suggest that you read the information about visa denials provided by the U.S. Bureau of Consular Affairs:

- <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/visa-denials.html>
- <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/waivers.html>.