

10 POINTS TO REMEMBER IN YOUR VISA INTERVIEW

1. TIES TO YOUR HOME COUNTRY

US Consular Officials want verification that you intend to return home after your studies. If they believe that you plan on immigrating to the US, they will be negatively concerned.

2. ENGLISH

Anticipate that the interview will be conducted in English. One suggestion is to practice English with a native speaker immediately before the interview, but do NOT prepare speeches!

3. SPEAK FOR YOURSELF

Do not bring family members with you to the interview. The consular officer wants to interview you, not your family. A negative impression is created if you do not speak for yourself.

4. KNOW THE PROGRAM AND HOW IT FITS YOUR CAREER PLANS

You must be able to express the reasons why you are enrolling in your academic program. If you cannot do this, the consular officer may not believe that you are serious. You should be able to explain how this academic experience relates to your future professional career when you return home.

5. BE BRIEF

Because of the thousands of applications received, consular officers are under time pressure to conduct a quick and efficient interview. They often make a visa decision during the first minute of the interview. Therefore, 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 direct.

6. ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

It should be immediately clear to the consular officer what written documents you are presenting and what they signify. Lengthy written explanations cannot be read or evaluated. Remember that you will only have 2-3 minutes of interview time.

7. NOT ALL COUNTRIES ARE EQUAL

Applicants from countries suffering economic problems or from countries where many students have stayed permanently in the US will have more difficulty getting visas. Applicants from those countries are likely to be asked about potential job opportunities at home after they complete their stay in the U.S.

8. EMPLOYMENT

Although the J-1 and F-1 visa programs do allow some students in certain circumstances to accept paid employment to gain work experience, you must be clear that your main purpose in coming to the U.S. is to study (not work!). All of the costs on your I-20 or DS2019 must be fully covered by your financial resources and you cannot consider "work" as a method to pay your student costs.

9. DEPENDENTS REMAINING AT HOME

If your spouse and children are remaining in your country, be prepared to address how they will support themselves in your absence. If the consular officer thinks that your family will need you to send money from the U.S. to support them, your visa application will be denied. If your family decides to join you at a later time, it is helpful to have them apply at the same consulate where you applied for your visa.

10. MAINTAIN A POSITIVE ATTITUDE

Do not engage the consular officer in an argument. If you are denied a U.S. 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 obtain the reason you were denied in writing.

Be. Real. Amazing.

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