

10 TIPS

FOR A SUCCESSFUL VISA APPOINTMENT

The information below will give you valuable tools to assure you have a successful visa appointment. There are several important key tips provided here that will help you prepare for your Visa appointment.

A successful visa appointment requires that a student be prepared by having all appropriate documents in order, answer questions with confidence and clarity, and, most importantly, good communication skills. Below are 10 tips on having a successful visa appointment.

① TIES TO YOUR HOME COUNTRY

In order to qualify for an F-1 or J-1 visa, you must prove that your visit to the U.S. will be temporary in nature and that you will return to your country after completion of your activities here. Consular officers call this “nonimmigrant intent.” You must, 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. The stronger your financial, employment or family ties to your country, the more likely it is that the Consular officer will believe that you intend to return home.

- **Evidence of Financial Ties**

If you or your family (your sponsor) own property or have financial investments in your country, documenting them may help prove you have strong financial ties.

- **Evidence of Employment Ties**

Providing some indication of possible jobs prospects in your home country can help prove that you are likely to return home for a job.

- **Evidence of Family Ties**

If all members of your immediate family live in your home country, the U.S. consular officer may understand that you have strong family ties which is an indicator that you will return.

Each person’s situation is different, and there is no single explanation or document, certificate or letter, which can guarantee visa issuance.

② COMMUNICATION IN ENGLISH

Your communication skills will be tested and it is important to practice English conversation with a native English speaker before the interview. The more you practice, the more confident you will be.

③ SPEAK FOR YOURSELF

Do not bring family members with you to your visa appointment. Be prepared to speak on your own behalf. The visa officer will expect to speak to you directly.

④ KNOW THE PROGRAM AND HOW IT FITS INTO YOUR CAREER GOALS

Why are you pursuing this degree and how will it help with your career? Why is the program at this university better than one at another university? These are all questions that you should think about and research so you can justify your choices and decision if you are asked about them.

⑤ BE BRIEF

Consular officers do not want a speech. Usually, there is not much time to talk with and review each person they meet. Be sure to keep your answers to the officer’s questions short and to the point.

- 6 ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION**
Your documents should be easily legible and organized. Lengthy explanations cannot be quickly reviewed. Remember, you may only have a few minutes of interview time.
- 7 NOT ALL COUNTRIES ARE EQUAL**
Applicants from countries suffering economic problems or from countries where many students have remained in the United States as immigrants will have more difficulty getting visas. If your country falls into this category, you are more likely to be asked about your job prospects in your home country.
- 8 EMPLOYMENT**
The main purpose of a student visa is to study, not for the chance to work before or after graduation. While some international students do work off-campus during their studies, such employment is incidental to the main purpose of completing their education in the United States. You must be able to clearly explain your plan to return home at the end of your education. If your spouse is also applying for an accompanying F-2 or J-2 visa, be aware that F-2 or J-2 dependents cannot, under any circumstances, be employed in the United States. If you are asked, be prepared to address what your spouse intends to do with his/her time while in the United States. Volunteer work and attending school part-time are permitted activities.
- 9 DEPENDENTS REMAINING AT HOME**
If your spouse and children are remaining behind in your country, be prepared to address how they will support themselves in your absence. This can be an especially tricky area if you are the primary source of income for your family. If the consular officer gains the impression that your family will need you to remit money from the United States in order to support them, your student visa application will almost certainly be denied. If your family does decide to join you at a later time, it is helpful to have them apply at the same post 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 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.

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