

## **Visa Interview Tips**

- Getting an F1 US visa is a long but equally important process to help you pursue your higher education abroad. However, it can be a daunting task for students because a lot of preparation is required. This document is intended to be a resource as you prepare for your F-1 student interview.

### **What are they looking for?**

#### **1. Ties to Home Country**

- Under U.S. law, all applicants for non-immigrant visas, which include F-1 student visa, are viewed as intending immigrants unless they can convince the consular officer otherwise. As an F-1 student visa applicant, you must therefore show that you have “strong ties” to your home country. Essentially, you must prove that you have stronger reasons to return to your home country than reasons to remain in the United States.
- “Ties” to your home country are the things that bind you to your hometown, homeland, or current place of residence (i.e., a lucrative job, immediate family, property, financial prospects that you own or will inherit, investments, etc).
- If you are a prospective student, the interviewing officer may ask about your specific intentions or promise of future employment, family or other relationships, educational objectives, grades, long-long range plans, and career prospects in your home country. Each person's situation is different, of course, and there is no magic explanation or single document, certificate, or letter, which can guarantee visa issuance.

#### **2. Limited Time**

- Visa interviews are short. Consular officers only have a few minutes to interview each candidate. Please be prepared to give short concise answers. We advise that you practice your answers ahead of time.

#### **3. Career Plans**

- If you are not able to quickly 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. You should also be able to explain how studying in the United States relates to your future professional career in your home country.

#### **4. English Proficiency**

- Anticipate that the interview will be conducted in English and not in your native language. One suggestion is to practice English conversation with a native speaker before the interview. If you are coming to the United States solely to study intensive English, be prepared to explain how English will be useful for you in your home country.

## 5. Application Documents

- **Passport:** Make sure you have a passport that is valid for at least 6 months. If the applicant has applied for and received a new passport, please ensure that the biographical information is correct. This will serve as your identity wherever you go, and most documents are created using your passport information as a guide.
- **Proof of Fee Receipts, including SEVIS and Visa Receipts:** Fee receipts are occasionally requested by the Visa office. As a result, you should bring all fee receipts with you.
- **Appointment Confirmation Letter:** You should have a letter confirming your visa appointment. That page must be displayed prior to entering the consulate building. As a result, make sure you have the stamped OFC documents on hand.
- **Confirmation Page for the DS-160:** Proof of Visa Application submission.
- **I-20 Form:** Before your interview, make sure you have signed the I-20 in the required location.
- **Any Proof of Strong Ties to Home Country:** For e.g. bank statements which show high balances, property, proof that you'll have a job when you return after your studies abroad, etc. See checklist provided. It is worthy of note that considering the limited time given to each applicant, we advise that you only take 3-5 pieces of your strongest evidence of strong ties. Consular officers do not have time to review too many documents. Also, ensure all your documents are organized in a folder, so you can access them quickly.

## 6. Academic Documents

- **Admittance Letter:** This document shows that you have been admitted to EMU and also includes the intended entry term.
- **Test Scores:** Bring your Official English Proficiency Exam scores with you (Duolingo, IELTS, TOEFL, etc.)
- **Transcripts:** Bring your High School and/or College transcripts with you.

## 7. Financial Documents

- **Bank Account Statements:** To demonstrate the available funds in your name or the name of a relative for the amount specified in the I-20 to be used to pay your Cost of Attendance. Six (6) months of bank statements provides sufficient evidence. Here are examples of the types of bank statements you can utilize:
  - i. Savings Account
  - ii. Checking Account
  - iii. Investments
- **Affidavit of Support (Sponsor Letter):** If a relative or someone you know is contributing to your cost of attendance, you will need a Affidavit of Support indicating the person's name, their contact information, their relationship to you, how much they are willing to provide, and for how many years. \*\*\*The availability of funds must be demonstrated with the use of Bank Account Statements as listed above\*\*\*

## **Do's and Don'ts**

### **Do's:**

1. **Do:** Dress appropriately
  - Dress appropriate for the occasion. You want to dress professionally while still keeping it simple. Arriving early ensures that you are not late and gives you time to prepare
2. **Do:** Maintain confidence and good communication
  - It's important that you are confident and communicating clearly during your interview. Make sure you are making eye contact with the interviewer. Keeping a **smile** and maintaining **good posture** shows that you are confident and glad to be at the interview. Speak slowly and clearly. Try to avoid filler words like "umm" and "like"
3. **Do:** Come prepared
  - Make sure you have all of the necessary documents with you when you arrive for your interview. Make sure that all your documents are properly organized so that you can quickly present them whenever you are asked. Prepare to answer questions about the school you are planning to attend and the program you applied for.
4. **Do:** Be honest
  - Do not lie about anything during the interview or provide any fake details.

### **Don'ts:**

1. **Don't:** Offer your documents unless asked
  - Only present documents when you are asked for them.
2. **Don't:** Fake or force an accent
  - You should not attempt to speak in an accent that is not your own. What matters is that you speak clearly and are able to communicate well.
3. **Don't:** Memorize your answers beforehand
  - While preparation is extremely important for your interview, it's also important to respond to the questions thoughtfully and genuinely.
4. **Don't:** Be late
  - Punctuality is key. If you are late, you may miss your appointment or risk making a bad first impression on the interviewer. You want to aim to arrive early. Arriving early ensures that you are not late and gives you time to prepare