Preparring For Your F-1 Visa Interview

This information is for people who plan to enter the United States for the first time to study. For information on bringing dependents to the U.S., returning to continue studies, or renewing your visa, or for more details on how to apply for a student visa, refer to the U.S. Department of State website, at: http://travel.state.gov/visa/tempvisitors_types_students2.html

STEPS

1. Contact your local U.S. Consulate or Embassy to ask about how to get an F-1 international student visa. A list of Consulates and Embassies can be found at http://usembassy.state.gov/.

2. After you receive an I-20 form from the school that you want to attend, follow the U.S. Embassy/Consulate’s instructions to schedule an interview for your F-1 student visa. It is important to apply for your student visa as far in advance as possible. Many consulates recommend that appointments be made no more than 90 days from the intended date of travel, but some can make earlier arrangements for interviews.

3. Complete the following forms:
   a) Online Nonimmigrant Visa Application, Form DS-160 – Learn more about completing the DS-160. You must: 1) complete the online visa application and 2) print the application form confirmation page to bring to your interview.
   b) Photo – You will upload your photo while completing the online Form DS-160. Your photo must be in the format explained in the Photograph Requirements.

4. Pay the visa application fee by following instructions on your local U.S. embassy or consulate’s web site.

5. Pay the SEVIS Fee ($200 U.S.) – All instructions for this are located at: www.fmjfee.com
   a. Be sure to print or make copies of your receipt, and keep it with your other important immigration documents

You must bring the receipt of fee payment with you to the interview. If you have lost the receipt, the Visa Officer should be able to view your payment history in his or her database.

If you are transferring schools, extending your program, applying for an F-2 dependent visa, or have paid this fee and been denied a visa within the last twelve months, you do not need to pay the $200 SEVIS fee.

6. Prepare and bring to your visa interview the following:
   (a) A passport valid for at least six months
   (b) Form I-20 (sign the form under Item 11)
   (c) School admission letter
   (d) Receipt showing completed visa applications
   (e) Photos are uploaded to the website already
   (f) A receipt for the visa application fee
(g) A receipt for the SEVIS fee. If you have not received an official receipt in the mail showing payment and you paid the fee electronically, the consulate will accept the temporary receipt you printed from your computer. If you do not have a receipt, the consulate may be able to see your payment electronically if your fee payment was processed at least 3 business days before your interview.

(h) Financial evidence that shows you have sufficient funds to cover your tuition and living expenses during the period you intend to study.

(i) Any information that proves that you will return to your home country after finishing your studies in the U.S. This may include proof of property, family, or other ties to your community.

7. Remain calm and answer all the Visa Officer’s questions to you openly and honestly.

If you have any questions, please contact Paige Ramsey-Hamacher at paige.ramsey.hamacher@saintleo.edu or (352) 588-8489.