

STEP ONE: Pay SEVIS Fee

F-1 visa applicants entering the U.S. for the first time must complete the SEVIS Form I-901 and pay the SEVIS fee **BEFORE** their visa appointment. **Fill in your name exactly as it appears on your I-20.** After paying, print a copy of the online receipt.

STEP TWO: Complete Visa Application Form

Form DS-160*: Online Nonimmigrant Visa Application

*Make sure the U.S. Embassy/Consulate you will attend has transitioned to this online form. If not, follow the instructions on the U.S. Embassy/Consulate's website.

STEP THREE: Pay Visa Fee

Follow the instructions found on the U.S. Embassy/Consulate website.

STEP FOUR: Make Visa Appointment Early

After you receive your I-20, follow the U.S. Embassy/Consulate instructions to schedule your visa interview appointment. **Apply as far in advance as possible.**

STEP FIVE: Gather Documents for Visa Interview

- Visa appointment letter
- A passport valid for at least six months into the future.
- Transcripts and test scores
- I-20 (Be sure to sign the bottom of the form).
- Liberty University admission letter.
- SEVIS fee receipt.
- Visa application fee receipt.
- Confirmation page from your DS-160 visa application.
- Two 2"x 2" photographs in the prescribed format on website.
- Original bank statements, Affidavit of Support (It is very important that IN ADDITION to the Affidavit of Support that you be able to produce documents proving source of income. Many times these documents are more important the actual Affidavit of Support) showing sufficient funds to cover your expenses as listed on I-20.
- Documents that prove you will return to your home country after finishing your studies in the U.S. These may include proof of property, family, or other ties to your community.
- Confirm with the appropriate U.S. Embassy/Consulate that you have prepared all required documents.

Exceptions

1. Special situations such as transferring between U.S. schools or applying for a dependent visa may not require paying the SEVIS fee. Check with the U.S. Department of State for details
2. F-1 students who are not required to obtain a visa to enter the U.S. must still pay the SEVIS fee. An example of this is a Canadian citizen.
3. For additional information on bringing dependents to the U.S., returning to the U.S. to continue previous studies, or renewing your visa, refer to the U.S. Department of State website

STEP SIX: Prepare for Visa Interview

- Interview generally lasts only 2-3 minutes.
- Under U.S. law, all nonimmigrant visa applicants are viewed as intending immigrants unless they convince the Consular Officer otherwise. You must show your reasons for returning to your home country following your studies.
- Be prepared to use English and speak for yourself.
- Be ready to answer questions about Liberty University and your specific degree program
Liberty Facts.
- Answer all of the Officer's questions concisely and honestly.
- Be able to explain how studying in the U.S. relates to your future career plans.
- Know that lengthy supplemental documents cannot be quickly read or evaluated.
- People from certain countries and those studying certain technology majors may experience processing delays due to security background checks.
- Remember that the purpose of a student visa is to study and return home, not to work in the U.S.
- Be prepared to address how your dependents, if any, will support themselves in your absence.
- Keep a positive attitude. If denied, understand the reason why and what to do the next time.

Liberty University

Office of International Students Services
Liberty University
1971 University Blvd, Lynchburg, VA
24515 USA
Phone: (434) 592-4118
Fax: (434) 582-2969
Email: intlstucenter@liberty.edu
Website: www.liberty.edu/international

STEP SEVEN: Attend Visa Interview

Arrive Early: remain calm!

Show Ties to Home Country

Under U.S. law, all applicants for non-immigrant visas are viewed as intending immigrants until they can convince the consular officer that they are not. 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 U.S. Examples of some reasons, are a job in your home country, an inheritance, investments and family.

Speak English

Anticipate that the interview will be conducted in English and not in your native language. Practice answering interview questions in English.

Speak for Yourself

Do not bring parents or family members with you to the interview. The consular officer wants to interview you, not your family. The officer knows that you must have a certain amount of confidence and self-sufficiency to succeed on your own in the U.S. You must convince the officer that you can succeed.

Do NOT Lie

Many times a student be rejected for a student visa because they are not completely honest with the consular officer. It is VERY IMPORTANT to always tell the truth and give the honest answer to every question. Consular officers are trained to use various methods to find out if a person is lying in the interview so it is always best to be completely honest.

Know Your Academic Program and Your School, and How They Fit Into Your Career Plans

If you are not able to explain the reasons you want to study in a particular program at Liberty, you may not succeed in convincing the consular officer that you are planning to study rather than immigrate.

Be Concise

Because of the volume of applications received, consular officers are under pressure to conduct a speedy and efficient interview. Keep your answers to the officer's questions short, articulate and to the point.

Organize Your Supplemental Documentation

You should make clear to the consular officer which written documents you are presenting and what they signify. Bring the envelope in which your documents were sent, as well as multiple bank statements from your sponsor, if possible.

Understand That 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 have more difficulty getting visas.

Come to the U.S. to Study

Your main purpose of coming to the United States should be to study, not for the chance to work before or after graduation. If you mention working in the United States during your visa interview, you will likely not be given a visa.

Be Prepared to Address Questions about Your Dependents

If your spouse and children are remaining behind in your home country, be prepared to answer questions about how they will support themselves in your absence. If you cannot prove that your dependent(s) can support themselves without you sending them money, your visa may be denied.

Maintain a Positive Attitude.

Do not argue with the consular officer. If you are denied a visa, ask for the reason for the denial in writing.

Apply Early!

The earlier you apply for your student visa, the better your chances are of getting it.

Familiarize yourself with Liberty and the Lynchburg, Virginia area before your interview with the embassy consular. For more information on Lynchburg, visit www.lynchburgonline.com or www.lynchburgva.gov.

If your visa is denied, you must submit the official visa rejection documentation in order to have your \$250 confirmation deposit refunded. Please submit your documentation to international@liberty.edu or fax to (434) 522-0430.

Important Guidelines to Follow When Going to Your Visa Interview:

- 1) Dress professionally (if in doubt, search for appropriate interview dress online).
- 2) Talk confidently.
- 3) Smile, it makes you and others feel good during the interview.
- 4) Don't panic.
- 5) Organize all your documents in order. Don't fumble when asked for documents.
- 6) Use "good morning", "good evening", and "thank you" in appropriate situations.
- 7) Do not lie.
- 8) Be courteous.
- 9) Be attentive.
- 10) Don't be in a hurry.
- 11) If possible, sit down and watch how the other candidates are responding to their interviews.
- 12) Clarify things when in doubt.
- 13) Don't jump queue.
- 14) Be friendly and courteous to your fellow attendees.
- 15) If you are feeling too tense, ask the volunteers for a cup of water.
- 16) Answer to the point, elaborate only if asked to by the visa officer.
- 17) Look at the visa officer.
- 18) Look into the officer's eyes and respond.
- 19) If possible, do not use the answers found on the web for the visa officer's questions. Other candidates at the interview might utilize answers from the web, and this will make you repetitive.
- 20) Give valid answers that are appropriate to your situation, Use your intelligence. Take the guidance, not the answers, from the websites.
- 21) NEVER threaten the visa officers.
- 22) Remember: U.S. visa officers do not care what/who you are, if you try to show attitude they will promptly reject your visa. Receiving a U.S. visa is a privilege, not your birth right.

Possible Questions That You Will Be Asked To Answer At Your Visa Interview

READ AND PRACTICE BEFORE VISA INTERVIEW

****Practice your answers to each question before the interview. Have an adult sit behind a desk and ask you these questions****

- 1) Which university awarded your diploma?
- 2) What was your major in your undergrad?
- 3) Why are you interested in this particular U.S. school?
- 4) What is so special about the U.S. school/university that you want to attend?
- 5) How are you going to fund your education in the U.S.?
- 6) Why are you interested in this major?
- 7) What is your main motive behind studying in the U.S.?
- 8) What are your future plans?
- 9) Do you want to return back?
- 10) Why don't you apply for good universities in your home country or other countries? Why only in the U.S.?
- 11) Do you have any relatives who study/reside in the U.S.?
- 12) How interested are you in pursuing your higher education in the U.S.?
- 13) What do you know about the U.S. school you are going to join?
- 14) Why this particular school and this particular major?
- 15) Are you expecting any funding from the U.S. school?
- 16) Do you have sufficient finances to fund your education?
- 17) Who will fund your education in the U.S. and why?
- 18) Why are you joining such a costly university in the U.S.?
- 19) How much loan are you taking for your education in the U.S.?
- 20) Will you work in the U.S.?
- 21) Will you settle in the U.S.?
- 22) Do you have any relatives in the U.S.?
- 23) What will you hope you will be doing in 5 years from now?
- 24) Do you know anybody at the school you are joining?
- 25) What will you do if you don't get a visa?
- 26) What role does your studies in the U.S. play in your and your family's life?
- 27) Can you afford the cost of the education in the U.S.?
- 28) Are your educational certificates fake?