

# Preparing for Your F-1 Visa Interview

## Plan in Advance

It's very important to carefully prepare in advance for your F-1 visa interview. Start by looking at this site for more information: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/student-visa.html>. Then, please review the "[10 Points to Remember When Applying for a Nonimmigrant Visa](#)" article that Ms. Amy Weir sent to you with your initial I-20. Finally, please read and understand the website for the US embassy or consulate where you will be applying very thoroughly. **F-1 visa application procedures vary from one US embassy or consulate to another, so you must be certain to follow the guidelines for the office you'll be visiting.**

## Be Ready on the Day of the Interview

Get a good night's sleep before your interview so you will feel good and have a clear mind. Be sure to eat prior to the interview too—you may have to wait at the US embassy or consulate for some time before your interview, and you don't want hunger to keep you from giving a good interview.

Of course, please bring all the items required for the visa interview with you, according to the directions provided by the US embassy or consulate where you're applying. Also, be sure to read the list of items that are NOT allowed at the US embassy or consulate. In most cases, visa applicants cannot bring any other person, cellular phones, electronic devices, or baggage, and even sharp metal (like a compass)

You should plan to arrive early for the interview, following the guidelines provided by the US embassy or consulate. However, don't panic if you arrive late. Check at the main desk to inquire if you can still interview as planned. Depending the date and the region of your interview, you may see long lines of people waiting, and it's possible that you may not be interviewed at the scheduled time and will be interviewed later in the day.

## What to Expect at the Interview

Nonimmigrant visa interviews generally only last from 90 seconds to 3 minutes. The officer must make a quick assessment of your situation, and you will be asked a few questions.

When you are called for your interview/to be interviewed, try to remain calm. The officer conducting the interview will expect that you'll be nervous, but **excessive nervousness on your part may be interpreted by the officer as deceptive or suspicious behavior.** So take a few deep breaths and try to remain calm and focused.

Also, look at the officer when you speak. From an American perspective, good eye contact indicates honesty. A lack of eye contact could indicate deception from an American cultural viewpoint.

Don't speak too quickly, and be as patient and polite as possible.

Here are some questions you may be asked during your visa interview:

1. **What is your expected major/minor? Why? What are your academic plans?** *Be prepared to explain that at Wabash students don't declare a major until the end of their sophomore year, so all new students are considered "Liberal Arts" majors until that time. You can state what your current interests are, though, and your intended major/minor.*
2. **How long are you going to stay in America?** *Check your I-20; to earn a degree at Wabash, students usually study for 4 years or around 48 months.*
3. **Do you plan to come back home after graduation?** *You should answer "YES" to this question. An F-1 visa is a nonimmigrant visa, and nonimmigrants are expected to return home after completion of their activities abroad. This is one of the most important questions to answer correctly.*
4. **What do your parents do? Who will finance your study? Do they have enough resources to support you?** *These questions all have to do with the funding of your studies. The consular officer is charged with making sure s/he believes that you have enough financial resources to afford to study in the US (which can be pretty expensive!). Make sure you come with copies of your proof of finances and be ready to respond to these questions.*
5. **Where are you going to stay in the U.S?** *Reply that you plan to live on campus.*

If you took a gap year for more than two years, be ESPECIALLY PREPARED to answer the officers. They will ask you a lot of questions; some may intrude into your personal life but please be patient and calm. Your behavior matters as much as your records. Additional documents may be required.

### What to Expect after the Interview

If your visa has been approved, follow the US embassy or consulate's directions for collecting your passport. (Your new visa stamp will have been added to your passport.) Some embassies and consulates mail your passport to you once the visa has been added; others require visa applicants to return to the embassy or consulate on a later date to collect the passport.

**Once you have received your passport, please check your new F-1 visa stamp for accuracy.** Is your name spelled correctly? Is your birthdate listed correctly? (Remember, in the US system, we list dates this way: day/month/year.)\*

Please scan a copy of your visa stamp to Ms. Amy Weir, so she can add it to your file.

Congratulations! You've made it.

\*If there are any mistakes on your new F-1 visa stamp, please contact the US embassy or consulate immediately to learn the procedure for correcting the erroneous information.