

# How to Prepare for Your Visa Appointment

Have you received acceptance by the [Student and Exchange Visitor Program \(SEVP\)-certified school](#) where you want to enroll? Have you also received a Form I-20, “Certificate of Eligibility for [Nonimmigrant](#) Student Status,” from a designated school official (DSO) at that school and paid your [I-901 Student and Exchange Visitor Information System \(SEVIS\) fee](#)? When you have done all of these things, you need to [apply for a student visa](#) next.

The [Department of State](#) issues visas at U.S. embassies and consulates. A [visa](#) allows you to travel to the United States for a specific purpose. To identify the [U.S. embassy or consulate](#) that is most convenient for you to visit, go to the website of the embassy or consulate and follow the instructions on the site to do the following:

- Pay your visa fee
- Obtain acceptable photographs
- Complete your on-line DS 160 visa application
- Schedule an appointment for your visa interview

You should make your appointment for your visa interview as soon as possible after receiving your Form I-20 and paying the I-901 [SEVIS](#) fee. When you come for your appointment, a consular official will electronically scan your fingerprints. You must bring the following documentation to the interview:

- Form I-20 issued by a DSO at the school where you wish to enroll
- Printed Form DS-160, “Online [Nonimmigrant Visa](#) Application,” confirmation page
- Passport valid for at least six months after you plan to enter the United States
- Two-inch by two-inch photo of yourself (learn more about [photo requirements](#))
- Receipt for your \$160 visa application fee payment
- Receipt for your I-901 SEVIS fee payment

The visa interview is your opportunity to tell the consular officer about your plans while in the United States and what you will do when you have completed your studies. You should be prepared to show the following:

- You have received acceptance to an SEVP-certified school. Your Form I-20 verifies this.
- You have the financial ability to pay for school costs plus living expenses (the amount shown on Form I-20). You may want to bring copies of financial documents you provided to the school where you want to enroll. These documents are evidence of the preparations you have made to finance your stay (e.g., bank statements).
- You are prepared for the academic program in which you plan to enroll. You may want to bring copies of any standardized test scores, academic transcripts, diplomas or certificates from previous study you provided as part of your application to the school where you want to enroll.

- Your stay in the United States is temporary (i.e., you are not permanently immigrating).
- The interviewing official may be interested in how you intend to use the education you receive in the United States when you return home.

## Words of caution:

- Proofread all of your travel-related documents (i.e., Form I-20, Form I-901 SEVIS fee receipt and visa) to ensure they are correct. Especially make sure your name and birth date are written exactly the same way on all of your documents. If you find an error in a document, have it corrected by the people who completed the document before you apply for the next document in the process.
- Proofread your visa when the consular official returns your passport to you – mistakes in the visa information cannot be corrected once you travel. If you find a mistake in your biographical data or your visa type, contact the embassy or consulate to ask officials to correct the error.
- Be skeptical of anyone who claims the ability either to provide a document that you need or to get you a visa other than as this guidance suggests. If you are deliberate and prepare carefully for each of these steps in obtaining travel authorization and F or M nonimmigrant student status, you can succeed by yourself!

For more information on submitting a student visa application, visit [Travel.State.Gov](https://travel.state.gov), the official Department of State Bureau of Consular Affairs website.

For more detailed information on becoming an international student in the United States, visit [EducationUSA](https://educationusa.gov).