

Visa Questions

- Why the specified University.
- Which Universities did you apply to (both admits and rejects).
- Show me your GRE scorecard.
- Where did you Undergraduate from.
- Who is sponsoring you.
- What does your father do.
- What is your father's Income.
- How many brothers and sisters do you have.
- Do you have any relatives in USA.
- What will you do after completing MS.
- Show your Experience Certificate.
- Why Study in USA.
- Did you got Scholarships.
- Have you got any Loans.
- Show your Pass Books/Bank statements.
- What is your Undergraduate GPA/Percentage..
- Parents retired? How will they pay.
- Tell about your university.
- Mention some professor names
- Tell me how can you prove that you are gonna come back ...
- Where did your brother/parents completed their studies.
- What's your Religion.
- Why are you leaving your current job?
- Have you ever been to US?
- What will you do after coming back to Home.
- You have so...brothers and sisters so your fathers saving is for all how will u finance..
- Where do your parents live (If they live in USA).
- Do you know anyone (in USA) in your University?
- Do you know anyone in US?
- What will you do if your Visa is rejected.
- Will you come back to home during summers.
- What do you think. Why University is giving Scholarship to you...

Info Regarding VISA

Applying for Your Student Visa

Students who reside outside the United States and who do not hold permanent residence of citizenship in the United States will usually need to apply for a student visa to study in the US. The information below is from the US State Department Student Visa Information page available at http://travel.state.gov/visa/tempvisitors_types_students2.html.

How Do I Apply for My Student Visa?

In most countries, first time student visa applicants are required to appear for an in-person interview. However, each embassy and consulate sets its own interview policies and procedures regarding student visas. Students should consult Embassy web sites or call for specific application instructions.

Keep in mind that June, July, August, and September are the busiest months in most consular sections, and interview appointments are the most difficult to get during that period. Students need to plan ahead to avoid having to make repeat visits to the Embassy. To the extent possible, students should bring the documents suggested below, as well as any other documents that might help establish their ties to the local community.

When Do I Need to Apply for My Student Visa?

- Students are encouraged to apply for their visa early to provide ample time for visa processing. Students may apply for their visa as soon as they are prepared to do so.
- The consular officer may need to get special clearances depending on the course of study and nationality of the student. This can take some additional time.
- Students should note that Embassies and Consulates are able to issue your student visa 90 days or less, in advance of the course of study registration date. If you apply for your visa more than 90 days prior to your start date or registration date as provided on the Form I-20, the Embassy or Consulate will hold your application until it is able to issue the visa. Consular officials will use that extra time to accomplish any of the necessary special clearances or other processes that may be required.
- Students may enter the US no earlier 30 days in advance of the course of study start/report date as shown on the Form I-20. Please consider this date carefully when making travel plans to the US.

What is Needed to Apply for a Student Visa?

It is important to remember that applying early and providing the requested documents does not guarantee that a student will receive a visa. Also, because each student's personal and academic situation is different, two students applying for same visa may be asked different questions and be required to submit different documents. For that reason, the guidelines that follow are general and can be abridged or expanded by consular officers overseas, depending on each student's situation.

All applicants for a student visa must provide:

- A Form I-20 obtained from a U.S. college, school or university. Please be sure to give us all four pages of the I-20 form. The form must also be signed by you and by a school official in the appropriate places;
 - An application Form DS-156, together with a Form DS-158. Both forms must be completed and signed. Some applicants will also be required to complete and sign Form DS-157. A separate form is needed for children, even if they are included in a parent's passport. The DS-156 must be the February 2003 date, either the electronic "e-form application" or the non-electronic version. You may download the DS-156 and other forms online at <http://www.state.gov/m/a/dir/c4456.htm>. You may also check with the Embassy Consular Section where you will apply to determine if the hard-copy blank DS-156 form is available, should you need it.
 - A passport valid for at least six months after your proposed date of entry into the United States;
 - One (1) 2x2 photograph. See the required photo format explained in nonimmigrant photograph requirements (http://travel.state.gov/visa/tempvisitors_info_photo.html).
 - A receipt for visa processing fee and a receipt for SEVIS fee. These receipts showing payment of the visa application fee for each applicant, including each child listed in a parent's passport who is also applying for a U.S. visa, is needed. Follow instructions on your local US embassy or consulate's website.
- All visa applicants should be prepared to provide:

- Transcripts and diplomas from previous institutions attended;
- Scores from standardized tests required by the educational institution such as the TOEFL, GRE, GMAT, etc.;
- Financial evidence that shows you or your parents who are sponsoring you have sufficient funds to cover your tuition and living expenses during the period of your intended study. For example, if you or your sponsor is a salaried employee, please bring income tax documents and original bank books and/or statements. If you or your sponsor own a business, please bring business registration, licenses, etc., and tax documents, as

well as original bank books and/or statements.
Applicants with dependents must also provide:

- Proof of the student's relationship to his/her spouse and/or children (e.g., marriage and birth certificates.)
- It is preferred that families apply for F-1 and F-2 visas at the same time, but if the spouse and children must apply separately at a later time, they should bring a copy of the student visa holder's passport and visa, along with all other required documents.

What Items Does a Returning Student Need?

All applicants applying for renewals must submit:

- A passport valid for at least six months;
- An application Form DS-156, together with a Form DS-158. Both forms must be completed and signed. Some applicants will also be required to complete and sign Form DS-157. Blank forms are available without charge at all U.S. consular offices and on the Visa Services website under Visa Applications Forms;
- A receipt for visa processing fee. A receipt showing payment of the visa application fee for each applicant, including each child listed in a parent's passport who is also applying for a U.S. visa, is needed;
- A new I-20 or an I-20 that has been endorsed on the back by a school official within the past 12 months;

All applicants applying for renewals should be prepared to submit:

- A certified copy of your grades from the school in which you are enrolled;
- Financial documents from you or your sponsor, showing your ability to cover the cost of your schooling.

How long may I stay on my F-1 student visa?

When you enter the United States on a student visa, you will usually be admitted for the duration of your student status. That means you may stay as long as you are a full time student, even if the F-1 visa in your passport expires while you are in America. For a student who has completed the course of studies shown on the I-20, and any authorized practical training, the student is allowed the following additional time in the U.S. before departure:

- F-1 student - An additional 60 days, to prepare for departure from the U.S. or to transfer to another school.
- As an example regarding duration of status, if you have a visa that is valid for five years that will expire on January 1, 2001, and you are admitted into the U.S. for the duration of your studies (often abbreviated in your passport or on your I-94 card as "D/S"), you may stay in the U.S. as long as you are a full time student. Even if January 1, 2001 passes and your visa expires while in America, you will still be in legal student status. However, if you depart the U.S. with an expired visa, you will need to obtain a new one before being able to return to America and resume your studies. A student visa cannot be renewed or re-issued in the United States; it must be done at an Embassy or Consulate abroad.

Don't Worry!

Simply be on time for your interview with the Embassy and answer all of the visa officer's questions openly and honestly.

US Embassy Contact Information

For a list of US Embassy websites, you may go to the US State Department website:

<http://usembassy.state.gov/> .

ABOUT CREDIT SYSTEM IN US

Semester system

Most US universities have tri-semester system - the fall, spring and summer.

The fall semester (Starts in AUG/SEP)

This is the first semester of the year, which starts mid August and is less often called the autumn semester. The academic year begins in this semester and most aid and assistantships are offered during this period. More over most new intake is during this period.

The spring semester (Starts in Jan)

Classes begin around the first or second week of January. Most universities (say 85%) admit new students during this semester, but the student intake is less compared to fall. The chance of an aid is lesser but other on-campus part time jobs are available year round, good enough to take care of your living, accommodation and personal expenses. Some universities call this the winter semester.

The summer semester (Starts around.. Beginning of Jun)

This is the shortest of the three semesters and spans for a period of two months and usually begins in June. Very few universities have summer intake. Although the university on the whole may have summer intake but make sure the department accepts new students (this is applicable to spring as well). In several cases regular students do not enroll for this semester and work full time on campus (40 hrs/week) or take up industrial training.

The thesis and non-thesis option

This is mostly applicable to MS students. A thesis option requires taking up a thesis and at the end of which, a dissertation (should have genuine or original idea) has to be presented and defended orally. This is a must for students enrolling to masters programs leading to doctorate (Direct doctorate degree after under graduation). It is advisable for students having a desire, to pursuit up to doctorate level at a later stage, to choose this option. Non-thesis option typically requires a project to be completed by the end of the course. Student's opting the project option on an average graduate in 4 semesters (1.5 years) and with a thesis option it takes on an average two years, with exceptions in both the cases.

What are credit hours?

The US system usually allows a student to choose papers (apart from some mandatory basic papers) and each paper will carry certain number of credits say 3 or 4 (in case of project it would be 5 or 6). When the student full fills the required number of credits; he or she graduates. In most universities this requisite is 30 to 36 hrs for Non-thesis (usually carries a project) option. But for thesis option this requisite is much lesser, but with a thesis work to be presented.

General Difference between MS and ME

Master of Engineering Degree

- Application and practice oriented
- Accredited
- Relatively inflexible curriculum due to accreditation requirements
- Includes both a thesis option and a non-thesis option
- Thesis standards established by Speed Scientific School
- Degree granted through Speed Scientific School

Master of Science Degree

- Research oriented
- Not accredited (nationally, no engineering M.Sc. degrees are accredited)
- Flexible curriculum
- Thesis is required
- Thesis standards established by the University.
- Degree granted through the Graduate School

- 57) [How long will it take if I convert from an F1 to H4 visa and will I have to maintain F1 status till I get my H4 visa?](#)
- 58) [1. If I have an F-1 stamped in my passport but have not made my initial entry, can I apply for a H-4 without issues?](#)
- 59) [This is in reference to my H1B visa. I am on OPT right now and planning to visit India after 5-6 days. I got a job offer from a consulting company and they filed for my H1. I am supposed to join them after coming back from India in January. However, I tracked my status from my LIN and it says on the USCIS site that my case has been approved. But, I haven't received my approval notice yet. I am wondering if I do not get the approval notice before I leave or can I come back on F1?](#)
- 60) [In 1997 \(one year before I got my F1 visa in 1998\), I applied for an F1 visa and the visa officer said that he cannot give me a visa at the current time then he stamped the last page of my passport with the date and wrote 221-g right below that. My question now is how should I answer item 31 \(Yes or No\) and Does that reflect somebody's chances to get an H1b stamp?](#)
- 61) [I will be on F1 status while my husband will be submitting his Green Card application. Will it create any problems for me to get H1B before his green card is approved?](#)
- 62) [I am on a F1 visa. My visa is valid until May 2007. I am still active student and meeting all the requirements of F1 visa. My husband's attorney for some reason when filing for his H1B extension, also filed for my extension through form I539. With my husband's H1B approval they issued a H4 approval for me for the same period as his. Does receiving a H4 approval with a new I94\(which expires in February 2005\), change my F1 status. If so what should I do to get back on F1 status.](#)

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Q1 **Can one work as a consultant for more than one company while on F-1 practical training?**

A1 Employment Authorization allows just about any type of employment in the USA, if he/she has an EAD card. But rules for practical training have changed in the not-too-long-ago past. Please check with your foreign student advisor at last school for a copy of the rules.

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Q2 **If my current F-1 visa has expired, is it possible to obtain F-1 visa from Canada/Mexico?**

A2 It is possible, but difficult. There are several factors that go into the likelihood of success. If you already possess F-1 visa from your home country (and it has expired); if the completion of your course is not taking an inordinately long time; if you have not been out of status and if the consular officer is convinced of your good intentions, you MAY get the visa.

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Q3 **What should I do if I am out of status on my F-1?**

A3 You should be able to regain status through departure and re-entering using a valid F-1 visa and Form I-20 (student copy) validated by your foreign student adviser if you can convince the USCIS (INS) of the following:

- 1) the status violation resulted from circumstances beyond your control or that failure to receive reinstatement would result in extreme hardship to you;
- 2) you currently are pursuing or intend to pursue a full course of study at the school listed on the I-20;
- 3) you have not engaged in unauthorized employment; and
- 4) you are not otherwise deportable.

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Q4 What financial requirements must be met to receive an F visa ?

A4 The applicant must demonstrate adequate financial support to cover him/her through the entire academic program will be available and that adequate funds are currently available for the coming academic year. Acceptable evidence may include school financial aid, personal and family funds and government assistance. Anticipated earnings from employment during school may not be used to show adequate financial resources.

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Q5 What are the procedures for applying for an F-1 visa ?

A5 Unlike most non-immigrant visas, it is not necessary to obtain prior clearance from the USCIS (INS). Rather, the student must obtain an I-20 A-B Certificate of Eligibility from the school where the student intends to enroll and submit together with the OF-156 Non-Immigrant Visa form and supporting documentation regarding financial resources evidencing an intent to return to the students home country to a U.S. Consulate in the students home country. After the visa is issued, the student applies at the U.S. border for admission. If the applicant is already in the U.S. in another non-immigrant status, the student applies to the USCIS (INS).

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Q6 Must an F-1 student be studying on a full-time basis ?

A6 Yes. At the undergraduate level, this normally means at least 12 academic hours. Graduate level full-time is left to the school to define (especially since work on a thesis or dissertation may constitute full-time work even though no credit hours are being taken).

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Q7 **How long can I stay on an F-1 visa ?**

A7 Foreign students are permitted to stay in the U.S. for the entire period of enrollment in an academic program plus any period of authorized practical training and a 60-day grace period to depart the U.S. The whole period is normally referred to as duration of status and is noted on the I-94 as D/S. The student must complete the academic program prior to the date of expiration listed by the designated school official on the I-20AB (a form issued by the school). Do note, however, that you must carry a full time course load (except if you are in your last semester of study). See the following answer.

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Q8 **Can I pursue an F-1 visa if similar training is available in my home country?**

A8 Yes. However, to pursue practical training, such training must not be available in the aliens home country. In most cases, however, USCIS (INS) does not make a big issues of it.

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Q9 **Who can apply for an F-1 visa ?**

A9 Any alien who has applied to and been accepted to enroll on a full-time basis in an academic education program which has been approved by the USCIS (INS) to accept F-1 applicants is eligible to apply if the student is proficient in English or engaged in English language courses leading to English proficiency. The alien must also demonstrate sufficient financial resources to study without having to work and he or she must also show that there is no intent to abandon residency in the students home country. Aliens who are already in the U.S. in a valid status may apply for adjustment of status to student status. See answer below.

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Q10 Can I transfer schools on the same F-1 visa ?

A10 Yes, if you are currently a genuine nonimmigrant student, you may have been pursuing a full course of study at the school you were last authorized to attend during the term immediately preceding the transfer, you intend to be a full-time student at the new school and you are financially able to attend the new school.

When you seek a transfer, you must notify the present school of the transfer and obtain the I-20 AB from the new school. You must complete the Student Certification portion of the I-20AB and deliver it to the foreign student officer at the new school within 15 days of beginning attendance at the new school. The foreign student officer will endorse the transfer on your I-20 copy and return it to you. The foreign student officer then sends the original I-20 to the USCIS (INS) and a copy to the old school.

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Q11 **Is an F1 visa holder permitted to start their own business in the US (as a sole proprietorship or corporation)? Is some sort of a USCIS (INS) permit required ?**

A11 While the possible permutations/combinations are many, overall, an F-1 student cannot engage in business. There are restrictions against off-campus employment and against unauthorized employment.

Technically, it may be possible to form a corporation, obtain pre or post completion employment authorization and then have the corporation hire you as an employee, but here is the catch-22 as I understand the law: while it is permissible to start your own company, it is NOT permissible to derive profit (including accrued profits or future profits) from it. The regulations for unauthorized employment define employment broadly. Thus, owning a company for almost any benefit could amount to unauthorized employment.

Next logical question. Can you invest in stock exchange and derive profit. The answer: that should be permissible. That is just like getting interest from the bank.

The distinction IMHO seems to be the distance between investment and control. The closer you are to control of the corporation, the more likely it is that your employment on F-1 is unauthorized.

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Q12 **Can a person keep two jobs while on F-1 practical training, considering both jobs are in the same field of study?**

A12 Yes
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Q13 **Can one work as a consultant for more than one company while on F-1 practical training?**

A13] Employment Authorization allows just about any type of employment in the USA, if he/she has an EAD card. But rules for practical training have changed in the not-too-long-ago past. Please check with your foreign student advisor at last school for a copy of the rules.
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Q14 **If my current F-1 visa has expired, is it possible to obtain F-1 visa from Canada/Mexico?**

A14 **Ans:-**[From Rajiv S. Khanna, rskhanna@immigration.com] It is possible, but difficult. There are several factors that go into the likelihood of success. If you already possess F-1 visa from your home country (and it has expired); if the completion of your course is not taking an inordinately long time; if you have not been out of status and if the consular officer is convinced of your good intentions, you MAY get the visa.

Vancouver, Canada

[From: "Rajesh G. Parekh" parekh@cs.iastate.edu]

Dear Rajiv,

I just got back from my trip to Vancouver B.C. The good news is that I got my F-1 visa renewed. I was not asked too many questions. I went there at about 7 am and they started taking people in at 8 am. My appointment was for 9 am. I got a token number (based on appointment). My interview was conducted at 11:40 am. The consular officer asked me the purpose of my visit and then asked for my transcript. She asked a question about the grading scheme, asked if I was on a scholarship and asked me to pay \$100 and return the next day for the visa. Just a few things you need to be careful about ---

1. There is a \$20 processing fee and the Vancouver office does not give change.
2. You must try and be there early as the queue does become quite long. I presume that it is the same queue for both immigrant and non-immigrant visas. The two groups are ofcourse interviewed separately but the initial processing of forms is done by the same person.
3. Once you have submitted your application and are made to sit in the waiting room please do not leave the room for any reason whatsoever. There was this one guard who was particularly rude and rough on people who stepped out to go to the rest room. I understand that they are possibly concerned about security.

I had taken the following documents with me

1. Appointment letter
2. Passport, I-20, I-94
3. Letter of intent (financial aid)
4. Letter from the conference organizing committee (I plan to attend a conference in France)
5. Letter from my advisor (describing my research and teaching accomplishments) and explaining why the conference is important for me
6. Letter from my chairman (again evaluating me as a student and also my performance as a TA)
7. Letter of full-time enrollment (from the International Students office)
8. Statement of support from my father (on stamp paper stating



Since we receive a large number of queries from individuals wishing to obtain a US visa, many of the FAQ's cater to queries regarding a US visa. These answer's are of a general nature and does not take into account any specific problems, or circumstances faced by a candidate.

1. What is a visa?

The visa is a document that grants you permission to travel to other countries, and also defines your status in that country. For example, all students going to the US get an F-1 status, which defines that you are a student primarily in the country for studying.

2. Where do I obtain my visa?

You can obtain a visa only from the respective countries Consulate office. You must approach the Consulate office that is designated for your region or the place where you have resided for the last six months or more.

3. What is the F1 visa?

The F 1 Visa is a student visa. The F 1 visa is issued only to persons for the explicit purpose of studying for a degree program in the United States. This is a non-immigrant visa and is temporary.

4. What is the I -20 form?

The I -20 is the document that you will receive from Universities in the USA that you have been accepted into. The I -20 will have the following details - your name and surname, date of birth, citizenship status and country of birth. It will also mention your degree, the major, the estimated length of your program and the financial expenses that you will incur.

5. How do you get a visa?

Most Consulates have a system where you visit them on any working day and then present your case. Or send the relevant documents to them by post and they stamp your passport and send it back. However at the US Consulate where the numbers applying for a visa are very large, a prior appointment has to be taken, and then a fixed date and time is issued to a candidate. After the interview the visa is issued.

6. How long will the visa be valid for ?

Your visa will cover the duration of your degree program.

7. What should I wear for my interview?

As you are applying for a student visa, dress in a manner that indicates that you are a student. Jeans and T-shirts are preferable. You can avoid wearing formal clothes or salwar kameez in the

case of girls.

8. What is the balance that I need to have in my savings account?

You need to have a minimum balance of your first year's fees that you will require to pay for your educational expenses in the bank account.

9. Do I need to carry original documents?

Yes, you must carry all your documents in original. Photocopies are not acceptable, unless the Consulate asks for an additional set of your documents in the form of a photocopy. The visa officer will not keep or make any copy of the documents that you show him and they will be returned to you as soon as they have read through this.

10. What is the maximum assets that I need to prove?

There is no maximum or minimum figure. Remember that a visa officer wants to know whether you are able to afford this degree and secondly whether you have anything to return to, in India. The more you show the easier it is for the visa officer to comprehend your ability to pay and your ties to India.

12 Is the visa fee refundable if I do not get the visa?

No. The visa fee is not refundable.

11. Can I work while on an F 1 visa?

Yes. You can work while on an F 1 visa. But your jobs are limited to on-campus jobs for a maximum of 20 hours per week. You can work as an assistant, at the cafeteria, the library or any departmental office in the college. You are not allowed to work off-campus. Violation of the US law will result in deportation.

12. How soon can I transfer or change my university?

Once you have obtained a visa to attend a particular university in the US, you can transfer or change your University only after a minimum of one semester.

13. Can my parents accompany me for the visa interview ?

No, Parents are not allowed to attend the interview with you.

14. What is the F2 visa?

The F2 visa is a status given to the dependents of a student pursuing his academics in the United States. If you are married, your spouse and children become your dependents and are eligible to apply for the F2 visa. Your parents are not your dependents and cannot apply for an F2 visa.

15. Can I take my wife and children with me?

Yes, you can take your wife and children with you. They will need to first apply for the F2 visa which is a dependent visa.

What to expect at the Consulate

In most cases you are expected to attend the visa interview in person. However some Consulates follow a procedure whereby they first ask for your documents to be sent to them and then later if required they call you for a personal interview.

If you have to attend a personal interview, make sure you arrive at least half an hour early for your appointment. Once you have entered the offices or waiting areas of the Consulate that you expect to obtain the visa from e.g. US Consulate, you need to be alert. With no specific order, your name or number will be called out or can show up on the intercom system and you will be called to stand at a particular window for the interview. Do not panic. With calm poise and confidence approach the window where your interview is to be conducted.

Begin your interview by greeting the visa officer. At the end of the interview the visa officer will either say 'You have got the visa' or 'Sorry! We cannot issue you the visa'.

If granted the visa, the Consulate indicates the manner in which you will receive it, and when you will receive it. So ensure you understand this clearly.

When you receive your passport, be sure to check the visa stamped on it. Check that your name, the University's name and other relevant details are all correct.

In case you get a reject, politely thank the visa officer and leave. Do not argue with the officer, as this will not help you in any way. There is almost always a facility and procedure whereby you can approach the Consulate again for another attempt at the visa.

You could be asked any of the sample questions below at the interview. -

1. Good Morning, Can I see your I-20 please?
2. How many schools have you secured admissions to Mr. / Ms. _____?
3. Why did you choose ABC University over the rest?
4. What have you done prior to this?
5. Why this major?
6. What is your GRE / SAT / GMAT score?
7. How will you pay for such an expensive degree?
8. How will you pay your first years fees?
9. Are you married Mr. _____?

10. Will you get married as soon as I give you this visa?
11. How can you prove to me that you will come back to your country? Or I do not believe that you might come back to India.
12. Why do you want to study at such an expensive school?
13. Do you have any relatives in the USA?
14. What do you plan to do after your degree?
15. Why would you come back to your country after your degree? Would you rather not stay in the US?

