

# **USA STUDENT VISA INTERVIEW**

**| Confidence | Communication | Clarity |**

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The questions and answers presented in this document are more generalized and should only be used as reference. You should not use the same answers during your visa interview. Please note, this document has been downloaded by hundreds of student everyday and giving the same answer will have negative outcome.

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# Top 50 F1 Visa questions & answers

## Country Related

### 1) Why are you going to US?

This is a straight forward question and nearly 90% of students get this question as a starter. So how can you provide yourself a good start? Be confident and look into VO eyes before answering. Don't rush for answers. It's ok to take 2 sec's before you can answer. A good answer would be

To study masters in chemical Engineering at Texas Tech University

### 2) This subjects are taught in India why specifically US?

Before you answer this question you need to know more about your university and your program you are planning to attend. Browse through the university website and you will find answer. Your answer should be mid-level technical answer. In other words, your answer should include technical details to a level that VO will understand. Make sure you don't give too many details or talk too much. The best answer would be

Universities in US, especially Texas Tech offer specialization in my area of interest and has strong research faculty. I am planning to major in operations research and simulation modeling techniques which are not offered in my country. Moreover, I will gain international experience and will be a valuable asset when I return to my country

From above example see how a technical detail is included. Also try to use words like "when I return to my country". This is where you tell VO that you intend to return back to your country after completing your studies which is very critical to visa approval.

## University Related

### 3. Which universities accepted you?

Try to give 3-4 universities. Don't say this is the only one I got. Also don't give any information on universities that you got rejected unless asked.

Texas Tech University, North Carolina University, University of Idaho

### 4. Where did you complete your Bachelor's degree?

Just tell where you graduated from. Again don't get excited and talk about your percentage and how great you did in bachelors. The best answer would be

I graduated from Jawaharlal Nehru University

It's ok to say when you graduated if you want to

I graduated from Jawaharlal Nehru University in 2010

## 5. What is your Percentage?

64.3 Percentage

Give decimal. This will give an impression to VO that you are precise

## 6. Tell me about the university you are going?

Obviously, you need to know good things about your university. Giving statistics will certainly impress VO

- My university ranks 4<sup>th</sup> in Operations research according to Forbes magazine in 2010 and
- Supports approximately 1.2 million in research in this field.
- Texas Tech professors hold publications at international level and some of their researches are implemented in UN army.
- Above, this TTU offers multicultural student community from more than 56 countries that I am really proud to be part off.

4 – 5 strong statistical details would be good enough

## 7. Mention some professor's names?

Dr. John Smith, Dr. Mike Kobza, Dr. Henry Neugen

Always mention "DR" before name and tell professors full name as Dr. John Smith

## 8. When did you get your bachelor's degree?

I graduated in 2010

This should be good. Again please keep in mind, if you are a talkative person this is not the place to talk too much...Give answer in 1 line unless asked to explain.

## 9. Why did you select this university over other universities?

- Outstanding faculty reputation
- Active research in my field of specialization
- Tuition and living cost is less compared to other universities and
- Certainly a beautiful campus to study

You should give at least 4 strong reasons. 2-3 will not be sufficient. You should be loud enough when you communicate with VO. That will show that you are confident. Not too loud

## 10. How long will you study in USA?

Till May 2012.

For masters usually it's 2 years. You should see duration of course in I-20. Tell exactly the month and year.

If you are undergrad "Till May 2014"

For PhD the time varies from 3-5 years depending on research. 4 years would be ideal.

### 11. Where did you hear about this university?

- I came to know about this university through my undergrad professor who did his PhD in this University.
- I came to know about this university through my senior who graduated from this university.
- I came to know about this university through a college fair last year held in Chennai.

Any of the 3 answers would be good. Please provide only 1 line answer as much as possible

### 12. What is your academic background?

- I graduated with Mechanical Engineering and planning to specialize in Operation research
- I graduated with civil engineering and planning to specialize in environmental engineering
- I graduated in Physics and planning to specialize in atomic physics

Any of the 3 answers would be good. Please provide only 1 line answer as much as possible

### 13. Do you plan to study Ph D after MS?

Say "YES" if you are planning for a PhD or "NO" if you are not. Your answer should be in a single line. Try to avoid single word answers like "YES" and "NO". Your answer should be

"NO" I don't have any such plans at this time.

Your answer should not be derived from question such as NO I am not planning to study PhD after MS

### 14. Why did you apply to these universities?

- All the universities I applied are public universities and are actively conducting research in my area.
- These universities rank within top 50 in my field of study
- The courses offered from these universities are more in line with my future goals and

To answer this question you need know more about universities that you applied. Scan through University website and you will find strong answers. Always give at least 3-4 good reasons.

### 15. Who is sponsoring you?

My Dad

Only 1 line answer

### 16. What does your father do?

He is an architect

It's ok to tell where he working

He is an architect with L&T

### 17. What is your father's income?

He earns 12.3 lakhs per year

Try to be precise. This will tell VO that you are prepared.

### 18. What is your university yearly expense?

Give the exact number as in I-20.

My Tuition is \$ 6320 and my Total expense is \$11,415 per year.

Always say the figure for a year

### 19. Have you got any loans?

Say "YES" if you got one or "NO" IF doesn't have

- YES Sir, I am took loans from SBI
- NO Sir, I haven't taken any loans. My dad is sponsoring my education

### 20. Show your Pass Book/ Bank Statement?

Show your passbook. Your passbook should have sufficient number of transactions and recommended bank statement amount is 1.28 \* yearly expenses in I-20.

### 21. How will you finance your education?

My dad is sponsoring me for my 1 year and I am taking loan from SBI for my 2<sup>nd</sup> year

Carry documents related to loans. Loan application not accepted. Loans should be approved and should be ready to use

### 22. Your passbook shows that a large amount of money has recently been deposited? How do you explain that?

- We recently sold one of our land/Property to finance my education. That's what you see in passbook.
- My dad recently received a savings from PF and he plans to utilize for my education. That's what you see in passbook

You should carry documentary evidence to prove whatever you are saying

### 23. What is your father's salary? / How long has he been working here?

He earns 12.3 lakhs per year. He has been with L & T for 14 years.

## Family Related

### 24. How many brother and sisters do you have?

I have 2 elder brothers and 1 younger sister

Be precise. Include whether they are elder or younger in your answer. Don't just say 2 brothers and 1 sister

### 25. Do you have any relatives in USA?

Say "YES" if you have any relatives or "NO" if you don't have one.

- YES I have a distant cousin in Seattle working with Microsoft.
- NO I am the first one to study in US in my family

I have 2 brothers in New York and a sister working in Microsoft is way too much. So avoid such answers.

Please note more relatives and siblings already settled in US implies that you "MAY" also settle in US, that might lead to 214(b) potential immigrant

### 26. What is your mother?

- She is a home maker
- She helps my dad in his business
- She is a nurse in Apollo Hospital

Keep it simple.

### 27. Where did your brothers/sisters complete their studies?

My elder brother completed his B.Tech in Pune University and my elder brother is still in high school

If your siblings have completed any of their degree in US. Then

My elder brother completed his MS from University of Alabama now he is assisting my dad in his business here.

The idea is to turn the negative scenario to your favor. Even though your brother completed studies in US he returned back to his country, which is a good thing.

### 28. Where do your parents live?

They both live here in Chennai

**29. Do you have a brother/ sister, or any other relative already at this university?**

- “NO” none of my siblings study in this university
- “YES” my cousin does his PhD in chemistry in Texas Tech

### Work Related

**30. Why are you leaving your current job? (if you are working)**

To do Master's in Mechanical Engineering at Texas Tech University

**31. Show your experience certificate?**

Make sure you carry an experience certificate showing the number of years you worked, salary in employers letter head

**32. Are you planning to work after graduation?**

The best answer would be

“YES” I am planning to work for 1 year during my OPT before I return to my country.

(This is a honest answer and make sure you use the word during my OPT period which is F1 status)

Avoid giving answers like this.

“NO” I will return back to my country after my graduation (even though you may...it will create skepticism in VO's mind)

“NO” I planning to work for 2-5 years before I return to my country (The goal of F1 visa is only to study in US. If you have plans to work after graduation...your intention is clear to VO)

**33. How a US degree will help you to find a job here?**

Getting an international degree from US will not only heighten my technical knowledge, but also will give an edge over others when I apply for Jobs here. I will have unique skills and experience including working in a multicultural environment and strong

### General Questions

**34. What kind of good things do you know about America?**

- Majority of scientists who receives noble price, which is the highest in the world are from US.
- Interstate highway system that's been backbone to US economy
- Entrepreneurs who started Google & Face book are from US



3 things should be good enough

### 35. What do you expect after returning back?

I expect to work for a multinational company at mid-level position for 5-7 years and I am planning to start my own software development firm.

I am planning to help my dad in his textile business and I want his business to take it to next level after I return

Any strong 2 line positive statement would be good.

### 36. Why do you plan to do MS?

- First, I will get the best international education in my field.
- Second, I will possess up-to-date recent technical skills to compete with others here
- Third, my overall personality will improve interacting with professors and students of International caliber.

### 37. Why are your GRE/ TOEFL scores low?

Don't give a lame excuse

I believe most of it is due to course work load during my final semester. I have to do my final year project, 6 courses in addition to preparing for GRE/TOEFL. That was a good experience and I am learning how to better manage multiple things.

Make sure you include that you are learning from the mistakes that you have done. The last line is critical to this answer.

### 38. You look like a potential immigrant or I don't think you will come back?

VO is trying to stir what you think. So take a 2-3 sec breath. Don't panic. You just have to give a strong reason that you will come back after your studies.

Sir, all my family members are married and settled in Chennai. My dad owns a textile industry and I am the only hope for him to run his business and that's the reason he is sending me to gain the best education.

Sir, my sisters are married and settled in different cities in India. I am the only hope for my parents to take care of them after they retire in next 2 years. As a son, I want to carry my parents burden during their old age.

2 lines should be sufficient. Don't extend your answer and talk too much.

### 39. What do you know about US education?

- US education is more focused towards practical curriculum than the theoretical knowledge
- US education will provide a challenging environment during my course work to come up

- with new ideas in my research field
- Public university Student-Professor Ratio is 17:1 which is best compared to any other country

You need to give at least 2-3 strong information about US.

### 40. Why are you applying for Fall only?

I completed my bachelors in May and I want to start my masters immediately in Fall. I just don't want to wait till spring

The course Advanced VLSI Design is offered only in fall and that's one of the course I intend to take to improve my technical skills

### 41. What will you do after completing MS? What are your plans after graduation?

VO is asking for short term goals in this question

My immediate goal is to find a mid-level career position in Chennai with a multinational IT company after competing MS

My goal is to give a smallest and most efficient electronic chip to humankind. Hence I am planning to continue my career with a PhD

Use similar goals in your field

### 42. Did you get any scholarship?

- "YES" I received partial scholarship that will cover 50% of my tuition
- "NO" I didn't receive any scholarships

### 43. Tell me how you can prove that you are going to come back?

Same as answer 38

VO is trying to stir what you think. So take a 2-3 sec breath. Don't panic. You just have to give a strong reason that you will come back after your studies.

Sir, all my family members are married and settled in Chennai. My dad owns a textile industry and I am the only hope for him to run his business and that's the reason he is sending me to gain the best education

Sir, my sisters are married and settled in different cities in India. I am the only hope for my parents to take care of them after they retire in next 2 years. As a son, I want to carry my parent's burden during their old age.

2 lines should be sufficient. Don't extend your answer and talk too much.

### 44. Have you ever been to US?

- "NO" Sir. This is my first visit
- "YES" Sir. I have been to US once for a trip.

### 45. What will you do after coming back?

Same as answer 41

My immediate goal is to find a mid-level career position in Chennai with a multinational IT company after completing MS

I am planning to assist my dad in his Textiles business for couple of years, before I can take responsibility in his organization.

### 46. Do you know anyone in your university?

“YES” one of my senior is majoring in chemistry in this university and helping me to find Accommodation

“NO” I don’t know anyone in this university

### 47. What will you do if your visa is rejected?

Again don’t panic. He just likes to know what your plan is if your visa is rejected. Take 2 -3 sec’s before answering. Look into VO’s eyes and answer confidently.

- I will improve my profile and will apply again (if you are planning to apply again)
- Studying in US has been my dream from my childhood. I haven’t decided anything yet. (If you are not planning to apply again)

### 48. Will you come home during summer?

- “YES” I am planning to visit my parents
- “NO” I am planning to take courses

### 49. Why do you think the university is giving you a scholarship?

I believe it’s due to International level publication I had in my resume and also may be due to be strong academic records.

### 50. Why did you change your field from Electrical Engg to Computer science?

Most of the courses I am planning to take are offered in computer science department such as embedded system design. I might take very few courses in Electrical Engineering department as well

## Do's & Don'ts during F1 interview

Before I write on tips, let me brief you how important is one's body language during F1 Interview especially when you stand at the front of the line and you are expecting you to be called. When you stand at the front of the line, there will be 4-5 counters where interview will be going on. You can be called from any of the counters. VO will look into you before you are called. It's really important you maintain good body language. Body confidence doesn't come overnight. It should be developed overtime. However, nearly 90% of students don't possess right body language. At least try to develop these habits a month before you go for interview. Following these tips on the interview day will make you look artificial, so practice well in advance. Here are few tips to show body confidence.

### **No.8 Avoid your pockets**

The first tip on our list is to keep your hands out of your pockets while standing in line before you are called by VO. We put our hands in our pockets when we're uncomfortable or unsure of ourselves. And as long as you have your hands stuffed down your pant, that's how other people will view you.



Instinctually we tend to hide our hands when we're nervous; keeping your hands out in the open indicates confidence and shows people you have nothing to hide. Also, recognize that putting your hands in your pockets encourages slouching, which isn't good. As an alternative, try putting your hands on your hips; it's a far more confident posture.

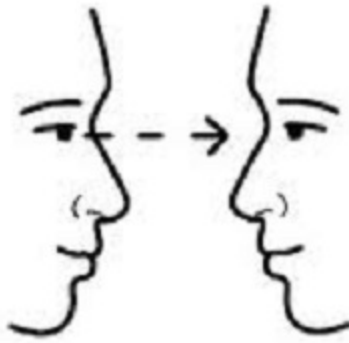
### **No.7 don't fidget**

Fidgeting is a clear sign of nervousness. A student, who can't keep still, is a student who is worried about visa, tense and certainly not confident. Your hands can be your worst enemies – fight to keep them still and steady. You can definitely talk with your hands, but keep your gesticulations calm and under control. Also, when seated, avoid that rapid leg-vibration thing that some students do.



### **No.6 Keep your eyes forward**

Keeping your eyes level might be one of the trickiest ways to show confidence in body language during your visa interview. When you're walking towards VO, it's often feels natural to lower your head slightly and watch your step, but this posture communicates that you don't want to engage in conversation or afraid of talking to VO. Keep your chin up and your eyes forward look into VO's eyes while walking.



### **No.5 Stand up straight with your shoulders back**

Standing up straight is one of the most important tips to project confidence through body language during your F1 interview. It can be a challenge especially if you've been a sloucher all your life, but get over it. Standing up straight is perhaps the most important means of communicating confidence. Concentrate on pushing your shoulders back slightly when standing and walking. Nothing major, just a little. That one simple motion does wonders for your posture. Again, don't try on the day of interview it will look funny. Try it in front of the mirror – you'll be surprised how much more confident it makes you look.



### **No.4 Take wide steps**

A confident student will never be described as “scurrying,” “creeping” or “sneaking,” so pay attention to the way you walk when you are called. If you want to show confidence with body language you want to take large steps. Wide steps make you seem purposeful and suggest a personal tranquility, which denotes confidence. When you walk towards VO see to that you take wide steps. Not too wide... You know what I am talking about right?



### **No.3 Proper grooming**

Grooming is an essential component of communicating confidence through body language. You want your hair, face and even your smell to work for you, not against you. Don't be afraid to experiment with new products to find the ones that work for you couple of weeks before the interview. Cut your hair 4-5 days before your interview not the day before or on the day of the interview.



### **No.2 Don't cross your arms when standing**

Crossing your arms during standing is a protective posture. VO does glance on people who are standing. So don't cross your arms. We do it when we're cold, nervous or on guard. Your job is to look likeable, open and confident. So relax a little and keep your arms uncrossed.



### **No.1 Smile**

Confident students smile because they have nothing to worry about. Try this as an experiment: smile at someone as you pass them on the street or walking around your college. Chances are good that they'll smile back. Now wouldn't you like to use it during your F1 interview? As you walk towards VO give a smile (not a big one )



All these things matter during your visa interview. Practice this body language in everyday life before your interview. See how your confidence level is after a week.

### Ideas to Convince Visa Officer

- Show your confidence in your body language, speech and in answering VO
- Always look into VO's eyes before answering
- To show confidence while answering you could move your hands within your body space.
- Your answers should be straight, simple and to the point in 1-2 sentences
- VO doesn't have time to look into all your documents. So arrange your documents and identify your documents with flaps.
- Your answers should be clearly structured .Go through top 50 questions in this document.
- Avoid giving unnecessary leads in your answers unless asked.
- Always be defensive in your speech. Never show your anger, frustration even if your visa is rejected.
- Take I-20 from good public schools. Don't take I-20 from unknown, unreputed colleges. Just by looking at the university VO know what the reputation of your university.
- Always provide a smile when answering. Not too big. OK
- Dress up to your best. Formal is the right attire for F1 visa for both Men's and ladies. Remember you are going for higher studies to US.
- Try to make VO job easier. Arrange your documents neatly and be ready to submit if asked.
- You have 2 minutes to convince VO. Every word you say must have a positive impact on the outcome of your visa. So practice, practice and practice
- Tune your ears to hear the questions properly. Don't ask to repeat questions
- Stand straight in the window. Don't lean
- Develop eye contact at least 2 months prior to your F1 interview. Try with your siblings, friends, when shopping etc...Bring that attitude...



## How to dress up for F1 visa interview

### Dress Your Best when going for F1 Interview:

Does it really make a difference how you dress for an F1 interview? In many cases, it does. Of course, there is no written policy or immigration rules that describe how one should dress for F1 interview. It's better to be conservative when it comes to dress code for F1 interview. This is your final chance and hurdle that will determine not only your academic future, but pretty much your life.

### Women's F1 Interview Attire:

- Solid color, conservative suit (Professional Salwars available for Indian students with one side shawl, some HR executives do wear such dress.) Saree not advisable for F1 interview
- Coordinated blouse
- Light colored lipsticks (light pink, very light red)
- Manicured nails and polish matches your lipstick color (light pink or very light red)
- Moderate shoes ,heels not more than 1 inch (color matches with your dress, black fits for all color)
- Limited jewelry (avoid nose piercing, flashy necklace).
- Neat, professional medium length hairstyle (not too short, not too long)
- Tan or light hosiery
- Sparse perfume
- Nice slim watch
- Professional file (dark brown leather matches pretty much for everything). Avoid colorful Files

### Men's F1 Interview Attire:

- Suit (solid color – navy or dark grey). Suit not really required if you live in hot region
- Long sleeve shirt (white or light blue coordinated with the suit)
- Belt (Black, dark brown, no big loops style)
- Tie (matching white or light blue shirt)
- Dark socks, conservative leather shoes
- Little or no jewelry (hand ring ok, bracelet & ear stud not acceptable)
- Neat, professional hairstyle (not too short or too long). Cut your hair 4-5 days before the Interview. Just trim. Don't do a summer cut. Light gel ok
- Neatly trimmed nails
- Professional file or Portfolio matching your dress (dark brown). Avoid colorful files
- Decent watch with leather strap (not Timex style sports watch)
- Make yourself fresh by having decent after shave and light perfume

Breath mint ok till enter consulate to make you fresh. This is not it. Your confidence level will show up when you are sitting and when you stand on line. Yes, it does matter. Do you think VO did not watch you? I will write a separate article on how to show your confidence in your body language before you are called. Visa officer does watch every one before you go to window.