

Visa Appointment Tips

Academics- Be clear and informed about your educational plans. You should be able to explain precisely what you wish to study and why you chose Southeastern for your education. Be especially prepared to explain reasons for studying in the United States rather than your country.

English- Anticipate that the visa interview will be conducted in English. Do not bring parents or family members with you. The consular official will want to interview you, not your family. A negative impression is created if you either appear uncomfortable with your English or are not prepared to speak on your own behalf.

Ties to Your Home Country- Demonstrate convincing reasons for consular officials to believe that you intend to return home after studies in the U.S. Emphasize ties to your home country such as employment, family obligations, bank accounts, family members at home, property or investments that you own or will inherit, and clear explanations of how you plan to use your education to help your country or pursue a career when you return home.

Financial Documentation- Be prepared to prove financial ability to pay for your education and living expenses. While some students will be able to work part time during their studies, such employment is incidental to their main purpose of completing their education. You must show the consular officer that you have the annual amount in United States dollars listed on your I-20 or DS-2019 form. Your financial evidence should be in the form of bank statements, affidavits of support, scholarship award letters, etc.

Be Concise- Because of the volume of visa applications, all consular officials are under considerable pressure to conduct a quick and efficient interview. They must make a decision, for the most part, on the impression they form during the first minute or two of the interview. Consequently, what you say first and the initial impression you create are critical to your success. Keep your answers short and to the point.

Not all countries are the same- Applicants from countries suffering economic problems or from countries where many students have remained in the U.S. as immigrants will have more difficulty getting visas. Statistically, applicants from these countries are more likely to be intending immigrants. They are also more likely to be asked about job opportunities in the United States.

Dependents Remaining at Home- If you have a spouse and/or children remaining behind in your home country, be prepared to address how they will support themselves in your absence. This can be an especially tricky area if you are the primary source of income for your family. If the consular official gains the impression that your family members will need you to remit money from the U.S. in order to support them, your student visa will almost surely be denied.