



# US STUDENT VISA CHECKLIST

## 1. APPLY

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- Sign and date the front page of your I-20/DS-2019 in blue ink
- Contact the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate for an F-1/J-1 student visa appointment. See list here: [U.S. Embassy Website](#)
- Pay the [SEVIS I-901 fee](#) and review the student visa information on the U.S. Department of State [webpage](#)
- Complete a [student visa application form](#). If completed electronically, print the confirmation page to bring to your interview.
- Pay any additional fees that may be required for your home country to obtain a student visa.

## 2. PREPARE

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- Gather all required documents.
  - A valid passport
  - The Nonimmigrant Visa Application, Form DS-160
  - The application fee payment receipt
  - A passport photo
  - A Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant (F-1/J-1) Student Status (Form I-20/DS-2019)
- Gather additional documentation if required.

Some countries may be required to submit additional documentation. Ensure you carefully review the instructions provided by the U.S. Embassy or Consulate where your visa appointment will take place. Some examples of additional documentation include: academic transcripts, diplomas, degrees, or certificates. Test scores such as the TOEFL, SAT, GRE, or GMAT as well as proof of your intent to depart the U.S. after your program is complete and proof of your financial stability.
- Review “10 helpful points for applying for a US Visa”\* **on the UCM website.**
  - 1. Ties to your home country*

You must be able to show reasons for returning to your home country that are stronger than those for remaining in the USA. “Ties” to your home country include: a job, family, financial prospects, investments, etc. If the Consular Official believes that it is your intent to immigrate to the U.S. rather than return to your country after your studies are completed, your visa may be denied. This is one of the major reasons for visa denials.
  - 2. English*

The interview with the consular officer will most probably be conducted in English and not in your native language. If you are entering the USA only to study English, you should be prepared to explain how English will be useful to you.
  - 3. Speak for yourself*

You should not take family members along to the interview. The consular officer wants to interview only the visa applicant, and a negative impression may be created if you are not prepared to speak on your own behalf.

#### 4. Know your program and how it fits your career plans

You must be able to articulate the reasons for studying a certain program in the US and the significance this program has to your to career plans upon returning home. The consular official will be looking for specific information about how you decided to attend UCM. What process did you follow? Why did you choose UCM over other institutions?

#### 5. Be concise

Consular officers are under pressure to conduct a quick and efficient interview. Keep answers short and concise.

#### 6. Supplemental documentation

It should be immediately clear to the consular officer what documents are being presented, and what they signify.

#### 7. Not all countries are equal

Applicants from countries suffering economic problems or from countries where many students have remained in the USA as immigrants will have more difficulty getting visas.

#### 8. Employment

The main purpose in going to the USA should be to study. You must be able to clearly articulate plans to return home after graduation.

#### 9. Dependents remaining at home

If you are leaving dependents behind in the country of origin, you should be prepared to explain how the family will be supported in your absence.

#### 10. Maintain a positive attitude

Do not engage a consular officer in argument. If a student visa is denied, you should request a list of documents that should be presented to overcome the refusal, and try to get the reason for the refusal in writing.

\*Adapted from NAFSA publication "10 Points to Remember When Applying for a Student Visa" 2016

### 3. INTERVIEW

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- Arrive on time to your interview. Promptness is expected.

Your F-1/J-1 visa interview will determine whether you are qualified to receive an F-1/J-1 student visa for the U.S. Your visa may be approved or denied at the discretion of the consular officer.

- Be prepared to:

Pay visa issuance fee if required

Be fingerprinted

Show your passport and have it collected for visa issuance. You will be informed when you can get it back, either by pick-up or in the mail

- Remember, if the Consular Official believes that it is your intent to immigrate to the U.S. rather than return to your country after your studies are completed, your visa may be denied. This is one of the major reasons for visa denials.
- You should not be discouraged if you are denied a visa. If you are denied, the Consular Official is required to tell you why in written form. You can then reapply for a student visa after you are able to address your original denial reason and/or show additional documentation.