

## **F-1 Visa Embassy Interview Tips**

When you apply for an F-1 visa at an American embassy or consulate, a consular official will interview you. The interview usually lasts only two or three minutes. It is good to understand that the main purpose of the visa interview is for you to show strong reasons why you **WILL RETURN** to your home country after finishing your academic program. You can reassure the consular officials by talking about the things that tie you to your home: family, property, and job opportunities when you return home.

Here are some specific suggestions to help you prepare for your visa interview:

1. You need to know and show what you will do with your degree from a U.S. institution (or, if you want to attend an English language program, with your better English) when you return home. You need to have good (plausible) future plans in your own country. You should know what the job situation is in your field in your home country.
2. You may be asked how you or your family will pay for your education at St. Norbert College. Be prepared to show the visa officer your parents' bank books, not just bank statements.
3. You may be asked why you want to go to such a "small" or "unknown" college. Be prepared to explain St. Norbert College's ranking in U.S. News & World Report. Explain the advantages of a small university (2,000 students) compared to a large university where you may not get much personal help and attention. Also, discuss the major field you will study at St. Norbert College.
4. You should practice for the interview with friends. The practice interviews should be no more than three minutes long and very unfriendly. While the consular officer will probably be friendly in the real interview, it is best to be prepared for the worst. If you do not know very much about Saint Norbert College and the degree program that you want to study, the consular official may refuse to give you a visa. Consular officials may think that you are not really planning to go to school but are simply trying to enter the U.S. to work.

5. If your financial status is an issue, you may want to pay tuition to the school in advance and present the receipt to the consular official. The official will almost certainly respect this gesture. Bank loans are NOT good evidence of financial support for students. Consular officials think that people with loans are more likely to seek employment in the U.S. so they can pay back the loan.
  
6. You should be honest with consular officials at all times. For example, applicants in some countries might not want to show their true financial status because they may be trying to "shield" income from taxes. Thus, their financial statements may not show this "black money" and so may not show enough money for education in the U.S. But, U.S. consular officials actually don't care at all if your family is hiding income from your own government. They will, however, appreciate your honesty and be much more likely to grant the visa if they know your true financial status. Conversely, if the consular officials believe that you are lying or have lied in a previous interview--about anything--they will probably not issue the visa.

**This page is adapted from the Oregon State University English Language Institute.**