

THE VISA INTERVIEW

To obtain your F-1 student visa, you must complete an interview at a US consulate or embassy (Canadian students excepted*). The consulate does not need to be in your country of passport. Contact your nearest U.S. consulate or embassy regarding the procedure for obtaining such an appointment (offices vary in their specific requirements and procedures). You can also ask them what documents to bring. We recommend bringing the following, at a minimum:

- Your passport, valid for at least 6 months beyond the date of your expected stay
- SEVIS Form I-20 (*be sure to add your name and signature to page 1*)
- Official acceptance letter from TMU
- SEVIS I-901 fee receipt
- Supporting financial documents (see below)
- Completed visa application form(s)—contact embassy/consulate for details
- Money to pay any visa application fees, if applicable
- 2" x 2" visa photographs, if applicable

The consular officers are trained to conduct the visa interview to determine if the applicant can receive the visa. Remain calm and answer all questions openly and honestly.

The interview lets you explain to a consular officer why you desire to study in the United States, particularly at The Master's University. The officer wants to be assured that you intend to be a full-time student and that you desire to complete the degree program listed on your I-20.

During the interview, you must demonstrate proficiency in the English language. The officer needs to hear how well you communicate and understand English. It is to your advantage to converse a great deal with the officer and not just wait for a question.

The officer will also want evidence of your financial ability to pay for your first year of school and possibly additional costs needed for subsequent years of study. You must show the officer your financial aid award letter, copies of your affidavit forms with corresponding bank statements, and any other documents that establish that you have the financial means to attend school.

It is also significant to communicate to the officer evidence that you have thought through your decision to advance your education in the United States and how this will aid you in the future. For example, in some cases, a bachelor's degree from an American institution will guarantee someone a job in his or her home country.

Finally, you must explain your intent to return to your home country after receiving your degree. If you are planning to use your student visa as a "stepping stone" toward long-term residency in the United States, you should not be applying for a student visa in the first place.

** Canadian citizens do not need to set up such an appointment since the two nations currently have a visa waiver agreement. You will still have a "de facto" interview at your port of entry to the United States. Although you will not receive an actual F-1 visa, you must present your I-20 and financial documentation to obtain F-1 status. If the border official is satisfied with your documentation, he or she will place stamps on your I-20, I-94, and passport confirming your F-1 status.*