Visa Tips for a Successful Interview
When Applying For an F-1 Student Visa

You are required to have a face to face interview at the U.S. embassy or consulate in the area where you live. This interview is very important in determining whether or not you will be issued a visa to study in the U.S. An application form can be downloaded at the U.S. Department of State website at: http://travel.state.gov/visa. To schedule an appointment, contact or visit the web site of your local embassy or consulate office.

Possible Visa interview questions:
Q: Why do you want to study at Sierra College?
Q: What do you plan to study?
Q: How do you plan to pay for your education?
Q: Where will you live while you study at Sierra?
Q: What are your plans after you finish your studies?

• Be prepared for your interview. It will most likely be conducted in English. Practice English conversation preferably with a native speaker before you go to your interview.

• Expect a quick and efficient interview. Consular officers are under a considerable amount of time pressure, and they must make decisions, for the most part, on those impressions they form during the first minute or two of the interview. It may be very difficult to overcome a negative impression and convince the consular officer to change his/her mind.

• Keep your answers short and to the point. Listen carefully and make sure you understand the question; if you are not absolutely sure you heard the question correctly, politely ask the officer to please repeat it.

• Organize your supporting documentation so that it can be presented without hesitation. Do not take papers with you unless you are willing to show them to the officer. Your visa will most likely be denied if you refuse to show all of the documents you are carrying with you to the officer.

• Do not take parents or older brothers or sisters with you to the interview. The officer wants to interview you, not your family. It creates a negative image if you are not prepared to speak on your own behalf.

• Maintain a positive attitude. Do not argue with the consular officer. If you are denied a student visa, be sure to ask the officer for a written list of those documents he/she needs in order to grant the visa. Most importantly, request in writing the reason why you were denied your visa and the officer’s name.

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• Indicating that you intend to work in the United States, even temporarily, after completing your studies may not be viewed favorably. Although some of our students work on-campus while they study, your main focus should be completing your education.

• Be prepared to discuss what you expect to get out of your education. Look for an opportunity to volunteer (without being asked) how you will use your education upon return to your country.

• Try to impress the consular officer with the academic success you have achieved thus far. If you achieved an especially high honor in completing secondary school, don’t hesitate to mention it during the interview.

• If you have a family member who has completed higher education in the U.S. and has returned to your country, mention it. It will greatly strengthen your own application if you have a brother or sister who has returned and is successfully pursuing a career in your home country.

• Be aware that an F-2 dependent CANNOT, under any circumstances, be employed in the U.S. If your spouse will be accompanying you, be prepared to address what he/she intends to do with his/her time while in the U.S. Attending school part-time is permitted if the classes are not academic. Doing volunteer work is permitted, but be careful that the consular officer does not think that your spouse will be illegally employed.

• Be prepared to discuss social ties you intend to maintain with your own country. If given the opportunity, you may want to discuss professional interests, associations, memberships, etc., which tie you to your home country.

• Be prepared to address a mandatory military service if your country has one. You should be prepared to explain how you intend to fully comply with your own country’s laws concerning military service.

• If you are married, especially with children, and your family is remaining behind in your country, be prepared to address how they will support themselves in your absence. This is important if you are the primary financial support for your family. If the consular officer thinks that your family will need you to send money from the U.S., your student visa application will almost certainly be denied.

• At all times, be friendly, courteous, and appear confident that you will receive the visa.