



# Preparing for Your Visa Appointment

You should apply for your student visa well in advance of the date you would like to depart for Wilkes-Barre. Remember that you are required to show proof of having paid the Federal I-901 SEVIS fee when you appear for your visa interview. Holiday and vacation periods are very busy times at the U.S. embassies and consulates worldwide, and it is important for you to have your visa in time to arrive and begin orientation and registration activities no later than the start date on your I-20.

The visa interview may be as early as 120 days prior to your planned arrival date in the United States. Keep in mind that wait times to get an appointment may take weeks! All U.S. embassies and consulates have a website where you can read the latest information on visa procedures. Visit [usembassy.gov](http://usembassy.gov) to locate the embassy or consulate near you. For information on waiting times for student visa appointments, visit [travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/student-visa.html](http://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/student-visa.html).

## WHAT TO BRING WITH YOU

Gather and prepare the following required documents before your visa interview:

- **Passport** valid for travel to the United States
- **Nonimmigrant Visa Application, Form DS-160 confirmation page**
- **Application fee payment receipt**, if you are required to pay before your interview
- **Photo** – You will upload your photo while completing the online Form DS-160. If the [photo upload fails](#), you must bring one printed photo in the format explained in the [Photograph Requirements](#).
- **Wilkes University Form I-20**
- **Federal I-901 SEVIS fee payment receipt**
- **Wilkes University acceptance letter**
- **Test scores and academic records**
- **Proof of English proficiency**
- **Proof of financial support**
- **Evidence of ties to your home country**
- **Any other documents required by the embassy or consulate**

# Some Helpful Tips

## BE CONCISE

Keep in mind that all consular officers are under considerable time pressure to conduct a quick and efficient interview. They must make a decision, for the most part, on those impressions 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. Maintain a positive attitude.

## KNOW THE PROGRAM AND HOW IT FITS YOUR CAREER PLANS

Be able to explain why you chose Wilkes University and how studying in the U.S. will relate to your future professional career when you return home. Be ready to explain why you want to study that particular program in the United States.

## ENGLISH

Anticipate that the interview will be conducted in English and not in your native language. One suggestion is to practice English conversation with a native speaker before the interview.

Keep your answers to the officer's questions short and to the point. Do not bring family members with you to the interview. The officer wants to interview you, not your family. A negative impression is created if you are not prepared to speak on your own behalf.

## FINANCIAL DOCUMENTATION

Be prepared to prove financial ability to pay for your education and living expenses. You must show the consular officer that you have the annual amount in United States dollars listed on your I-20 form. Your financial evidence should be in the form of bank statements, affidavits of support, scholarship award letters, etc.

## TIES TO YOUR HOME COUNTRY

You will need to show strong ties in your home country that will ensure your return home after your education in the U.S. Under U.S. law, all applicants for nonimmigrant visas are viewed as intending immigrants until they

can convince the consular officer that they are not. You must be able to show that you have reasons for returning to your home country that are stronger than those for remaining in the United States. "Ties" to your home country are the things that bind you to your homeland: job, family, financial prospects that you own or will inherit, investments, etc. Here are some tips to demonstrate students' strong ties to their home country:

- Convince the consular officer that the sole (not just "primary") purpose of the visit to the U.S. is to pursue a program of study.
- Outline post-graduation plans upon returning to home country.
- Document family ties, business interests and assets in home country.
- Discuss job prospects in home country upon completion of education in the U.S.

## 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 officer gains the impression that your family members will need you to remit money from the United States to support them, your student visa will almost surely be denied.

### F-1 STUDENT VISA INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FALL INTO THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES:

- Your study plans in the United States
- Why you chose the university you plan to attend
- Your academic history and record of achievements
- Your finances
- Your post-graduate plans

### YOUR INTERVIEWER WANTS TO KNOW THAT YOU ARE:

- A legitimate student;
- Able to pay for your education;
- Not planning to stay in the U.S. after you graduate.