



California Institute of Integral Studies

Tips for a successful U.S. Consular Interview

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Many applicants for student visas are denied for reasons that can be avoided if a little advance knowledge and common sense are applied. Here are some tips prospective students should consider when preparing for an interview with a US consular officer (or at the border, for Canadians).

- Anticipate that the interview will be conducted in English. Keep in mind that all consular officials are under considerable time pressure to conduct a quick and efficient interview. Consequently, what you say and the initial impression you make are critical to your success. 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 in your own behalf.
- Maintain a positive attitude. Do not engage the consular official in an argument.
- Do not concede, in any circumstances, that you intend to work in the U.S. after completing your studies. While many students do work off-campus after their studies, this work is incidental to their main purpose of completing their education.
- If your spouse is also applying for an accompanying F-2 visa, be aware that F-2 dependents cannot, under any circumstances, be employed in the U.S. If asked, be prepared to address what your spouse intends to do with his or her time while in the U.S. Volunteer work and attending school part-time are permitted activities.
- If your spouse and children are remaining behind in your 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 in your family. If the consular officer gains the impression that your family will need you to remit money from the U.S. in order to support themselves, your student visa application may be denied.
- **If you are denied a student visa, ask the officer for a list of documents he or she would suggest you bring in order to overcome the refusal. Try to get the reason you were denied in writing.**