

## Applying for an F-1 Visa to Attend Goucher College

The process of obtaining all of the items necessary for entering the United States as an F-1 student for the first time can be overwhelming. The U.S. Department of State has developed a helpful website for [Study and Exchange](#). Each country has different requirements with regard to obtaining an F-1 visa; however, in general, you should be prepared with the following:

- 1. Passport:** You must have a passport that is valid for at least six months after your proposed date of entry into the U.S.
- 2. Form I-20, Certificate of Eligibility (enclosed):** You must use the Form I-20 and the associated SEVIS ID number of the school that you plan to attend when paying SEVIS I-901 fee, applying for your F-1 visa and entering the U.S.
- 3. SEVIS I-901 fee printed payment confirmation:** You must pay the \$350 federal SEVIS fee and print a payment confirmation at [www.fmjfee.com](http://www.fmjfee.com). More information about this fee can be found at <http://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901>.
- 4. Nonimmigrant visa application, Form DS-160 confirmation page:** The online application can be found at <https://ceac.state.gov/genniv/>.
- 5. Visa application fee or payment receipt:** The application fee is currently \$185, however, there may be an additional fee based on your nationality. You can find the fee/reciprocity information and appointment wait times at U.S. Embassies and Consulates at <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/student-visa.html#fees>.
- 6. Photo(s):** Photos are uploaded with the online Form DS-160. Photo requirements can be found at <http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/english/general/photos.html>.
- 7. Financial support documents:** You should bring the documents that were used to obtain your Form I-20 including bank statements, affidavits of support, and scholarships award letters.
- 8. Evidence of intent to return to your home country:** You should bring proof of your family's residence, business and anything else that shows your ties to your home country.
- 9. Academic records:** You should bring transcripts, diplomas, or certificates from schools you attended as well as scores from the TOEFL, SAT, ACT or any other tests you took.

## Scheduling Your Visa Interview

The Department of State recently began allowing prospective students in F-1 status to apply for their visa up to one year in advance of the beginning of their program. This should remove the need to request an expedited appointment, but please contact the Director of the International Student and Scholar Services at [karen.sykes@goucher.edu](mailto:karen.sykes@goucher.edu) if you have trouble scheduling an interview prior to the program start date.

Please note that student are not allowed to enter the U.S. more than 30 days in advance of the program start date on the Form I-20.

## Strategies for the Visa Interview

Due to the volume of visa applications, all consular officials are under considerable pressure to conduct a quick and efficient interview. They must make a decision, for the most part, on the impression 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.

Anticipate that the visa interview will be conducted in English. Do not bring parents or family members with you to the visa interview, as the consular officer would like to hear you speak on your own behalf. Be prepared, but do not memorize a speech.

You should expect that the consular officer will ask you why you are hoping to study at Goucher College in the U.S. rather than your home country, how you will be able to afford the education, and what your plans are once you have obtained your degree. You should be prepared to indicate reasons for your return such as family obligations, property or investments that you will inherit or already own, employment opportunities and how you would like to use your education to improve life in your country.

For further discussion of this topic, visit the NAFSA: Association of International Educators web site on the topic, "10 Points to Remember When Applying for a Student Visa" at <https://www.nafsa.org/professional-resources/browse-by-interest/10-points-remember-when-applying-student-visa>. You may also want to visit <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/students> or your [local EducationUSA Office](#) for guidance.

## Visa Denial or Visa Delay

The Consular Officer must verbally inform you of the reason for the visa denial. If your visa is denied, please email [karen.sykes@goucher.edu](mailto:karen.sykes@goucher.edu) and provide the date and location of your visa interview, and details regarding the reason given by the visa officer for the denial. The most common reasons for visa denial are failure to prove sufficient ties to your home country or adequate funding.

## Contact at Goucher College

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