



## III. PREPARING FOR YOUR F-1 VISA INTERVIEW

This information is for individuals who plan to enter the United States for the first time for the purpose of enrolling in an academic institution. For information on bringing dependents to the U.S., returning to continue studies, renewing your visa, or for more details on how to apply for a student visa, refer to the U.S. Department of State website at <http://travel.state.gov/visa>.

### STEPS:

- **Contact your local U.S. consulate or embassy** to ask about how to get an F-1 international student visa. A list of consulates and embassies can be found online at <http://usembassy.state.gov>. This can be done at any time, even prior to receiving offers of admission or receiving an I-20 certifying your eligibility to apply for a student visa. Procedures for visa application and scheduling visa interviews vary from one country to another, and even from one consulate to another within the same country. It is important that you learn the most recent policies at the location where you intend to apply for your visa.
- After you receive an I-20 form from the school that you plan to attend, follow the embassy/consulate's instructions to **schedule an interview** for your F-1 student visa. It is important to apply for your student visa as far in advance as possible. Many consulates recommend that appointments be made no more than 90 days prior to the intended date of travel, but some allow a broader time frame for interviews.
- **Obtain and complete the following forms from your local embassy or consulate in person, by mail, or on their website:**
  1. DS-156 Nonimmigrant Visa Application Form
  2. DS-158 Contact Information and Work History for Nonimmigrant Visa Applicant
  3. If a male between the ages of 16 and 45, DS-157 Supplemental Nonimmigrant Visa Application.
- **Pay the visa application fee** by following instructions from your local U.S. embassy or consulate.
- If your I-20 is marked for "initial" attendance (see #3 on your I-20 form), **you will also need to pay a US \$200 SEVIS fee** and bring the receipt to the interview. A record of the payment will be noted in your electronic SEVIS record if processed at least 3 days prior to the interview. See accompanying instructions for *Paying the SEVIS Fee*.
- **Prepare and bring to your visa interview the following:**
  1. A passport valid for at least six months beyond your intended period of stay.
  2. Form I-20 (sign the form under Item 11).
  3. Letter of admission and any scholarship awards from Knox College, as well as any local scholarship awards or other sources of funding.
  4. Completed visa application forms (DS-156, DS-158, and, if applicable, DS-157).
  5. One 2"x 2" photograph in the required format (see <http://travel.state.gov>).
  6. A receipt for the visa application fee.
  7. A receipt for the SEVIS fee.
  8. Academic documents, such as high school diploma, exam certificates, SAT and TOEFL exam reports, and/or other test reports or documents recommended by the local U.S. embassy or consulate.
  9. Financial evidence that shows you have sufficient funds from family or sponsor resources to cover all your tuition and living expenses not covered by scholarship and financial aid from Knox College, for the duration of the period you intend to study. See item #8 on the I-20 for expected annual contribution from student/family/sponsor resources.
  10. Any information that "proves" that you intend to return to your home country after finishing your studies in the United States. This may include proof of property or family business, extended family, or other ties to your community.
- **In your interview, remain calm and answer all of the visa officer's questions openly and honestly.**

### IF YOUR VISA IS DENIED

The two most common reasons for visa denial are (1) insufficient documentation of adequate financial resources and (2) insufficient evidence of intention to return to your country of citizenship or residency. To appeal a denial decision, consult the local consulate about their policy and procedures for making an appeal. You will need to provide additional documentation relevant to the reason given for the denial. **If your visa is denied, be sure to contact Knox College for advice regarding your appeal.**

If you have questions, please contact Milena Evtimova, coordinator of international admission at Knox College at [mevtimov@knox.edu](mailto:mevtimov@knox.edu) or by phone at +1-309-341-7129.