



## Madison College

# IMPORTANT POINTS TO REMEMBER FOR YOUR VISA INTERVIEW

### TIES TO YOUR HOME COUNTRY

You must convince the visa officer of your plans to return home in order to be seen as eligible for a student visa. You must be able to show that you have reasons for returning to your home country that are stronger than why you might be interested in remaining in the U.S. Be prepared to explain what binds you to your home town, homeland, or current place of residence, such as family responsibility, employment opportunities, or financial prospects that you own, will inherit, etc. The visa officer may ask about your plans or hopes for future employment in your home country, family or other relationships, educational objectives, grades, and long-range life plans. Each person's situation is different, so there is no magic explanation or single document, certificate, or letter that can guarantee visa issuance. If possible, bring documents that support your situation.

### PRACTICE IN ENGLISH

The interview will be conducted in English and not in your native language. Practice English conversation and answers to possible questions with a fluent English speaker before the interview.

### SPEAK FOR YOURSELF

Do not bring parents or sponsors with you to the interview. The visa officer wants to interview you, not whoever may be assisting you with your educational plans. You will give a negative impression if you do not speak on your own behalf.

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

If you are not able to explain the reasons you wish to study in a particular academic program in the U.S., you might not convince the visa officer that you are indeed planning to study. Instead, they may think you plan to immigrate, and deny a student visa. You should also be able to explain how studying in the U.S. relates to your future professional career when you return home.

### BE BRIEF

Because of the high number of applications received, all visa officers are under considerable time pressure to conduct a quick and efficient interview. They must make a decision, for the most part, on the impressions they form during the first minute or two of the interview. What you say first and the initial impression you create are critical to your success. Keep your answers to the officer's questions short, polite, and to the point.

### SUPPLEMENTAL DOCUMENTATION

The purpose of the documents you present should be clear at a glance to the visa officer. Lengthy written explanations cannot be quickly read or evaluated. Remember, you only have 2-3 minutes of interview time!

### NOT ALL COUNTRIES ARE TREATED EQUALLY

Applicants from countries suffering economic problems or from countries where many past student visa applicants have remained in the U.S. as immigrants will have more difficulty getting visas. Statistically, applicants from those countries are more likely to be intending immigrants. They are also more likely to be asked about job opportunities after returning home, so be well prepared to answer such questions.

### EMPLOYMENT

Your main purpose in coming to the U.S. should be to study, not for the chance to work before or after graduation. While many students do work on-campus during their studies, such employment should not be seen as more important than studying. You must be able to clearly explain your plan to return home at the end of your program. If your spouse is also applying for an F-2 dependent 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 plans to do with his or her time in the U.S. Volunteering and taking studying **part-time** are allowed.

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### **DEPENDENTS REMAINING AT HOME**

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 difficult question if you are the primary source of income for your family. If the visa officer gets the impression that your family members will need you to send money from the U.S., your student visa application will almost certainly be denied. If your family decides to join you at a later time, it is helpful to have them apply at the same post where you applied for your visa, and to give them your transcript as proof of your studies.

### **MAINTAIN A POSITIVE ATTITUDE**

Do not engage the visa officer in an argument. If you are denied a student visa, you may apply again, so politely ask the officer for a list of documents s/he would suggest you bring next time in order to overcome the refusal. Try to get the reason you were denied in writing. Immediately after the denial, write down all you can remember of the interview—questions asked, your response, documents requested, etc.—and provide this information to Madison College’s International Student Services for advice on how to approach the interview differently next time.