



Standing for your US F-1 Student VISA

By Adnan M. S. Fakir

FIRST of all, a heartfelt congratulations to all those of you admitted! The gruesome applications procedure is finally over and only one last thing remains... the non-immigrant F-1 student VISA!

It is best to apply for the VISA as soon as possible keeping at least 2 months in hand before your departure date, just in case because it may take quite a while to process your VISA if they send it for security clearance. Those of you who think that standing for your VISA is an utterly harrowing issue and the US consulate is probably a very perilous, cruel, haunting person with an evil laugh attempting to devour and block your VISA at every chance they get... well, you are wrong! While they may be critical to ensure that you have everything in place, which is their job, they are nice people giving priority especially to student F-1 VISA applicants. Anyways, let's have everything about the VISA application processing cleared up one by one...

The SEVIS Fee and the VISA Forms

The first thing you should do after getting your I-20 is to pay your SEVIS Fee of US\$100 online via credit card and get a print out of the receipt which you'll need to show in the VISA interview. You can pay the SEVIS Fee by going first to www.ice.gov then clicking on "I-901 Fee" under "International Students" category. Then click on "File the I-901 Form Online" and simply follow instructions in the pop-up window. Make sure to get a print out of the receipt.

There are three VISA forms: DS-156, DS-157 and DS-158. The forms can be found at The Saimon Overseas Center (see below for address) or you can download them from the internet (just search for them in www.google.com) and fill them up using Adobe Acrobat Writer which is preferred more. If you can't find the forms, just e-mail me at adnanfakir@yahoo.com and I'll send them to you within a day. Oh and you'll also need to take a picture of yours of 50cm by 50cm for the application. Make sure you are honest with the forms. Also, make sure that your passport has at least 6 months validity from the day you plan to leave for the US... else you are gonna have to get a renewed passport and you better get moving then.

Take the completed forms along with your passport, 2 copies

of your VISA sized photo, and a photocopy of the I-20 form and SEVIS receipt to Saimon Overseas at House#4A, Road#22, Gulshan-1, Dhaka-1212; you can contact them at 9893964. For easier locations look for UDAY Tower in Gulshan-1 just opposite of Candyfloss;

1. I-20 and Acceptance Letter from University
2. Grants/Scholarship Documents
3. Educational Certificates and Mark Sheets (Originals)
4. Standardized Test & TOEFL Scores

interview they may want any supporting document about any issue or they may not want to see any document at all. For example, during my interview, they did not want to see any documentation but my financial files. However, it's best that you take all your support-

Arrive at the embassy 30 minutes earlier than the scheduled interview time. After much security checking you'll enter the waiting room. They'll first call you to take your fingerprinting, take the questionnaire given to you at Saimon Overseas and issue you in line. After sometime (around an hour if it's busy) they will call your name and ask you to come to a specific window, so be sure to keep your ears open.

Once you enter your window room, do not give any documents on your own unless they ask for it. They will want to be sure that you are a genuine student applying for studies and studies only and no other purposes. You HAVE to make them believe that you have ties to your country and will come back after your studies; else they will not give your VISA. The F-1 student VISA gets the top priority and hence they are less critical about it and are more willing to give the VISA.

Ties you can show that you'll come back are if you own any house, land property etc. here, if your parents' are well established here, if you are your parents' only child, if you or your parents' make frequent visit to countries abroad and come back and etc. reasons. Drawbacks can apply if you have any immigrant brother/sister/close relative in the US, if your VISA was refused any time before or if you have any university loan in your financial package and etc. Nonetheless, the issues can be talked and dealt with so it's best to go prepared with good real answers if you are in such a position.

The VISA Consulate will also want to be sure that you are financially stable and that you can pay for your education. They want verification of at least first year's payment, and best if all four is shown. This is where the financial documents come in. If all your documents are in order, there should be no problem. They might want a week or two to verify your documents though.

Other questions that they might ask is about your university, why you want to go there, the area you wish to study in, your future plan etc. which you should have no problem answering. In fact, if your intentions are all right and all documents are properly arranged and in order, there should be no problem at all.

So, that's pretty much about it. I do hope that this article was useful and best of luck for your VISA!



Saimon Overseas is located just behind it. There is total charge of Tk.7440 which you'll have to pay and they will give you a receipt with the interview date and time in it. The interview date usually falls around a week to ten days from the day you submit your application. They will be keeping your passport, which they will send to the US embassy, and they'll also give you a questionnaire which you'll have to fill and take with you when you go for your VISA interview.

Getting your Documents Right

The following lists the basic documents which you should take for your interview:

5. Financial Documents: This requires the most time is a hassle. You'll have to show bank statements of your accounts along with past transactions made with the bank, which is a transaction report. This usually requires a few days so get started beforehand. You'll also have to prepare an Affidavit of Support from your parents that will include details about your parents' assets, their annual income and their willingness to financially support your education and amounts in US\$. Employer statements for your working parents are also required.

Okay, this is just a list of the basic documents and during the

ing documents along. Better safe than sorry!

Counseling for the US Student VISA is also done by Mrs. Arefin Jahan of The Public Affairs section of The American Center located at House#110, Road#27, Banani. You have to call them up and make an appointment with her first at 8813440-4. There is also a counseling fee of Tk.50 for one day and Tk.200 for a month.

The VISA Interview

During the VISA interview, keep two things in mind:

1. Do NOT be nervous
2. BE honest, especially about your financial documents