



THE VISA INTERVIEW: PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

A most heartfelt greeting from Southwest Minnesota State University!

Congratulations on being admitted to Southwest Minnesota State University (SMSU)! This is an exciting time and one that will be very busy for you and your family. This communication concerns your interview appointment at the U.S. Embassy.

As you schedule your visa appointment at the US Embassy, I want to send a note of encouragement. I know this should be common knowledge, however, I will state it anyway: Make sure that when you go for your appointment, you are respectful and polite. Answers like: "Yes sir"/"No sir" or "Yes ma'am"/"No ma'am" will be appreciated by the officers. Yes, the US consulates can be intimidating; however, smile, be relaxed and you should be fine. **Above all, come prepared and be straight-forward with your responses.**

The following are key items in helping you prepare for a successful interview.

- 1). Many times the officers will make their decision based on whether they feel your intent is to immigrate to the United States (not good) or if your intent is to return to your home country (what they want). Any assurance you can provide indicating that you will be returning to your home country will help you get an F1 Visa. The more you can show that you have deep economic, social, familial, and career connections to your home country, and that you are planning to return after your U.S. education, the better your chances of being granted a Visa. (See the U.S. government website on F-1 VISAs: <http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/english/study-exchange/student.html#overview>). Because it is so important, I will state again, the embassy officer believes that you are intending to immigrate to the U.S. and it is your challenge to convince the officer you are indeed coming back to your home country!
- 2). Always be forth coming and honest with information. It is OK for you to have family in the United States. The officer will most likely know this information anyway so when/if they ask "Do you have family that are already in the United States?" be sure to tell them the truth. If you have a cousin, tell them, if you have a brother, tell them, if you have an uncle or aunt, tell them. **Having family in the US does NOT mean you will be denied a VISA. Not being truthful to the officer DOES mean you will most likely be denied a VISA.**
- 3). Be sure to go to the Embassy's website and bring **all of the requested documentation**. If the embassy has requested something, **bring it!** Do not second guess the documentation... if they have requested it, please get it.
- 4). Your financial statement and documentation are very important. Be sure that you have recent and accurate information.

One problem that many students have encountered is that they do not know enough about Southwest Minnesota State University.

You need to be able to answer questions such as :

"Why did you choose SMSU?"

"What can you tell me about your academic program?"

"Where is SMSU? How many students attend?"

"Are you familiar with the weather in Minnesota?"

If you come from a warm climate a suggested response: "I really don't know what the extreme cold will be like, but I want to experience the global community and I know that there are millions of people who do really well in northern climates. I am looking forward to the challenge."

"What can you tell me about Marshall, Minnesota?" http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marshall,_Minnesota

Please spend time on the SMSU website <http://www.smsu.edu/> and become familiar with SMSU and Marshall, Minnesota <http://marshallmn.com/main/> . BEFORE YOU CONTACT ME TO ASK QUESTIONS, PLEASE SPEND TIME STUDYING THE WEBSITE AND REVIEW WHAT IS EASILY ACCESSABLE.

This website has helpful information on the interview:

http://www.educationusa.info/5_steps_to_study/undergraduate_step_4_apply_for_your_student_visa.php#top

This website has information on studying in the United States. Please take some time and review the entire website. http://www.educationusa.info/for_international_students.php

Here is a link for a YouTube video explaining the interview:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RREHFY-a8JM> .

*IF YOU ARE DENIED A VISA, REQUEST THAT THE OFFICER PROVIDES THE REASON YOU ARE DENIED **IN WRITING**. If you do this, you will have more information to help you prepare for a successful follow-up interview.

Remember that all of your documents need to match. Be sure your name is **spelled exactly** as it is on your **passport** in ALL of your papers – including your I-20 and that your date of birth is correct on your I-20. **Be sure to exam your I-20 as soon as you receive it!**

Once you are finished with your appointment; please contact us so we can keep track of all students who will be arriving at the start of the semester. Good luck with your appointments! I hope to meet you Fall semester.

If you have questions about travel or what to bring, please contact myself or our International Coordinator, Michael Kurowski at michael.kurowski@smsu.edu. He will be in further contact regarding travel arrangements, dates and Fall orientation.

Sincerely,



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