

HOW TO APPLY FOR A VISA

To enter the United States with your Form I-20 or DS-2019 and attend Idaho State University in Pocatello, Idaho, you must make an appointment at the nearest United States embassy or consulate and apply for an F-1 or J-1 visa.

Before you apply for the visa, you should understand the process and the rules governing visas. Many visa applications fail. In some countries, **most** applications fail. Often it is because the student did not know the rules or was not prepared. We do not want this to happen to you. Please read what follows very carefully and write to us if you need more information on our school or your course of study.

UNDERSTAND THE RULES

The most important rule may seem strange to you. The consular officer who makes the decision on your visa application is required to think of you as someone who plans to come to the U.S. permanently and you must prove that you intend to return to your country after completing studies. U.S. law very clearly states that F and J visas may be given only to persons who intend to remain in the U.S. temporarily. This rule is the number one reason for denials of student visa applications.

The other important rules are: (1) You must have a definite academic or professional objective. You must know what you are going to study and where it will lead. (2) You must be qualified for the program of study. (3) You must be definite about your choice of schools. If you do not seem certain that you want to attend Idaho State University, you will not get a visa. (4) You must be adequately financed and have documents to prove it. Except in the unusual case when employment is **particularly** authorized on the Form I-20, you may not plan to use employment as a means of support while you are in the U.S.

U.S. Government officials are much more easily convinced by documents than by spoken statements. When possible, have papers to show your connections to your home country. The consular officer will take a very legalistic view. In the U.S., it is considered important to be **impersonal** when administering laws. This is considered rude or improper in many countries, but not in the U.S., where the ideal is to apply laws equally to all regardless of status or sex. Do not try to negotiate or discuss personal matters. **DO NOT SOUND AS IF YOU HAVE BEEN COACHED.**

(PLEASE TURN OVER THE PAGE)

BE PREPARED

Be sure that your passport is valid.

Consult this website for comprehensive information: http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/types/types_1268.html

Be clear and definite about your studies. Be ready to say what you want to study and what kind of career it will prepare you for in your home country. Be prepared to explain why it is better for you to study in the U.S. than at home. If you need more information on the program to which you have been accepted, write to us before you apply for a visa.

With papers, show ties to your home country. If your family owns a business, take letters from a bank, describing the business, to the visa interview with you. If your family owns property, take the deeds. If you have a brother or sister who studied in the U.S. and then returned home, take a copy of the brother's or sister's diploma and a statement from an employer showing that they have returned home. If possible, show that an individual or company in your home country will give you a job when you return. If you cannot get a **promise** of a job, try to get a letter saying that you will be **considered** for a job, or that the company needs people with the kind of education you are coming to the U.S. to receive.

Do not emphasize any ties you may have to the United States or to family members in the United States. Your visa application is stronger and better if at least part of your financial support comes from your home country, even if most of it comes from the U.S.

Do not speak of working in the United States unless employment is authorized on your Form I-20. Though limited work permission is possible for students in F-1 and J status (but not for dependents in F-2 status), employment is **not guaranteed** and cannot be used as part of your financial support for visa purposes.

Read your Form I-20. Some of the rules you must obey are printed on page 2. Be aware of these rules—especially the requirement that you study full-time. Look at the date entered in item #5 for reporting to the school. You must apply for the visa in time to reach the school no later than that date. You may obtain the visa and enter the U.S. up to 30 days before that date.

DEPENDENTS

Your spouse and children may apply for visas with you or they may apply to join you after you come to the U.S., **but only if dependents are mentioned** in item #7c of your Form I-20. Please note that F-2 dependents cannot work in the U.S.

IF THEY SAY “NO”

If your visa is denied, e-mail or fax us with complete details of everything that was said at your interview.

Tell us the name of the consular officer and send a copy of any written answer you may receive.

Contact: Tami Carson, International Student Admissions, e-mail at carstami@isu.edu. You can also fax us at (208) 282-4511.