

Fall 2007–Spring 2008

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' SECTION

Any student who is not a US Citizen or a US Permanent Resident is considered an INTERNATIONAL STUDENT.

- **UNDERGRADUATE**
- **GRADUATE**

**CONGRATULATIONS ON BEING ACCEPTED TO PRATT INSTITUTE.
PLEASE CAREFULLY READ THE FOLLOWING SECTIONS, WHICH
ARE CREATED FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS:**

- Welcome Letter from the Office of International Affairs, p.52
- Instructions for All International Students, p.53-55
- International Student Form for All International Students, p.57
- SEVIS I-20 Request for All International Students p 57-64
- Basic Travel Documents, p.65
- F Visa Application Process, p.67



Pratt Institute
200 Willoughby Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11205

Dear International Student:

We are delighted that you have been accepted to Pratt Institute for the upcoming semester. Coming to a new place and to a new culture is an exciting experience, but the adventure is also filled with uncertainty. We in the Office of International Affairs (OIA) have had many international experiences and probably have had some of the same questions you now have. Therefore, the OIA is your main contact at Pratt Institute. For many students, our office becomes a home away from home.

Office of International Affairs

Telephone:
718 636-3674

Facsimile:
718 636-3497

oia@pratt.edu
www.pratt.edu/oia

We are here to assist you in many different ways. We start our assistance during orientation. We will help you to become familiar with the federal regulations that pertain to you and your studies, adjust to a new culture, achieve your educational goals, encourage you to meet American students, and to be active in social events. You are required to attend Orientation that begins in the fall on August 15, 2007 or in the spring on January 9, 2008. Orientation dates and more information are available at www.pratt.edu/orientation

We have a wonderful International Student Association (PISA) that we know you would be interested in joining. PISA plans many interesting programs that are both international and American in nature. The big event in the fall is International Education Week and the main event in the spring is the International Food Fair. You may contact PISA at pisa@pratt.edu.

Metro International is another wonderful organization where you can meet other international students and people from your home country in the New York Metropolitan area. Please visit their website at <http://www.metrointl.org/index.html>

Immigration regulations require you to check in with the Office of International Affairs (OIA). To check in, you must bring your stamped SEVIS I-20, passport and stamped I-94 to our office within 10 days of your arrival in the U.S.A. Students who fail to check in with the OIA will be reported to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) as non-arrivals, which will lead to termination of your student status and may be grounds for deportation.

If you need additional information, you may write, fax, or email the Office of International Affairs and we will be glad to help you in any way we can. Please refer to the top of this page for our address, fax and email address.

Sincerely yours,

The staff of the Office of International Affairs

L. Jane Bush
Director

Jason Cummings
Assistant to the Director

Saundra Hampton
Associate Director

Mia Schleifer
Assistant Director

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ALL INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

- **To obtain a SEVIS I-20 to study full-time in F1 status, please complete the International Student Form and SEVIS I-20 Request Form in this guide. It is also available on-line at www.pratt.edu/oia/checklist**
- **For those of you in non-immigrant statuses, for example, visa classifications A, E2, H1B, L2, etc., who are planning to retain your status, please complete and send to us only the International Student Form, which includes the Student Classification and Biographical Information sections with supporting documentation so that we can create a file and clear you for registration.**

F-1 students

You need a SEVIS I-20 in order to apply for the F-1 entry visa. Please complete the International Student Form and SEVIS I-20 Request which follows. Please read it carefully and note the list of required documents. You must send all the documents at one time.

Students who are transferring their F1 status from another University within the US to Pratt Institute are required to submit a transfer form. The first section must be completed by the student and the second section must be completed by an International Student Advisor at his or her current or previous school.

If you have dependents (spouse/child), additional documents and financial support are required.

We have included a checklist for your convenience (p.54) and on the return envelope. When we receive your completed International Student Form and SEVIS I-20 request form with supporting documents, you will receive a confirmation email. Students requesting a SEVIS I-20 for the undergraduate or graduate program will send their International Student Form and SEVIS I-20 Request form to the Office of International Affairs. (All SEVIS I-20's will be sent to students by UPS EXPRESS MAIL. UPS is the service Pratt has approved us to use. You will be notified of the tracking number by email, so that you can track your package.

Visa Appointment at Embassy or Consulate: You must now pay a SEVIS fee of \$100 before making your visa appointment at the nearest Embassy or Consulate or arriving at the port of entry (for those who do not need a visa.) For complete details, see www.fmjfee.com. Prior to going to the Embassy or consulate, you will need to complete and submit the I-901 form in order to pay the mandatory SEVIS fee of \$100. We suggest that you complete the I-901 form and pay the SEVIS fee online at least three (3) days before your visa interview. (It can take 30-60 days to obtain the F1 visa, so please send us the forms along with original financial docu-

ments by June 1 or November 1). Please note that only students who have sent the \$200 deposit (to the Admissions Office) can be issued the SEVIS I-20 for the Graduate or Undergraduate programs.

You may want to contact the nearest American Embassy or Consulate to inquire about applying for a visa. Most Embassies require a visa interview. Please see the "F Visa Application Process" in the pages that follow. For students from Canada and Bermuda there is a "Special note for Canadians and Citizens of the British Territory of Bermuda" on page 67.

Arrival in the United States

Immigration regulations require you to check in with the Office of International Affairs (OIA) at Pratt Institute if you have used Pratt's SEVIS I-20 to enter the U.S.A. To check in, you must bring your stamped SEVIS I-20, passport and stamped I-94 to the OIA within 10 days of your arrival in the USA. It is essential that you check in with the OIA. Students who fail to check in with the OIA will be reported to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) as non-arrivals, which will lead to termination of their student status and may be grounds for deportation.

Transfer students

Students are considered transfer students for SEVIS I-20 purposes if they are attending a US institution and will transfer their F1 status from their current school to Pratt Institute. They must request a SEVIS transfer or release from their school to Pratt Institute. The student must submit a completed Pratt Transfer Certification Form (pg. 64), included in this guide, as well as inform their current international student advisor when they wish to be released/transferred to Pratt Institute. The SEVIS transfer can only begin once a student is accepted to Pratt and his/her current program has ended, however, the student must be in status. This includes the 60-day grace period following the completion of a program

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INSTRUCTIONS CONTINUED

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of study or the completion of an authorized period of post completion optional practical training. The Pratt program must begin within 5 months of the end date of the previous program or the last day of authorized employment. The student may remain in the US before the Pratt program begins or may leave the country. Transfer students must use the SEVIS I-20 from Pratt when re-entering the USA.

If you have not attended another school in the United States, you are not considered a transfer student for SEVIS purposes.

*Individuals applying for or currently in the U.S. in B1/B2 (tourist), C (transit), F2 (dependent of F1) and WB (Visa waiver for Business) or WT (Visa waiver for Tourism) statuses may not study at Pratt Institute.

Undergraduate and Graduate Students

SEVIS I-20 Request Checklist

Please check:

- \$200 tuition deposit to the Admissions Office by the May 1 or Nov. 1 deadline.
- International Student Form (Student Classification Page and Biographical Information)
- Copy of your passport picture and expiration page
- Financial Statement Page
- Affidavit of Support Page
- Certification of Funds Page

The documents above are required to issue an undergraduate and graduate SEVIS I-20. DEADLINE: June 1, 2007.

Transfer Students

Please check:

- All documents from SEVIS I-20 Request Checklist (to the left)
- Copy of Visa
- Both sides of I-94 card
- I have no I-94 card because I am outside of the U.S.A.
- F-1 Transfer Certification
- Copies of all previous I-20 forms pre SEVIS I-20 forms (pages 3 & 4) and SEVIS I-20 forms (pages 1 & 3)

For Students with Accompanying Dependents

Please check:

- If you have a spouse who will accompany you, submit a copy of your Marriage license
- If you have an accompanying spouse or children, submit a copy of their passports
- For accompanying dependents, you must have additional funds

Other Non-Immigrants- Visa Classifications (i.e. A, E2, H1B, L2, etc.)*

If you are in a status other than F-1, OIA must create a file for you and remove the International hold. This will save you valuable time during orientation. You will not need to go through "international student clearance" during Orientation. To create your file, please submit the following documents:

- International Student Form (Student Classification Page and Biographical information Page)
- Copy of your passport
- Copy of Visa
- Copy of both sides of I-94 card

*Individuals applying for or currently in the U.S. in B1/B2 (tourist), C (transit), F2 (dependent of F1) and WB (Visa waiver for Business) or WT (Visa waiver for Tourism) statuses may not study at Pratt Institute.

Change of Status

If you are changing from one non-immigrant status to F-1, you must first be eligible to obtain the SEVIS I-20. Please complete the International Student Form and SEVIS I-20 Request. The Office of International Affairs can help you change your status, or you may consult an attorney.

Change of Level at Pratt

If you have completed one program at Pratt and have been accepted into another program, you must request a new SEVIS CHANGE OF LEVEL I-20 from OIA. For example, if you completed the Certificate of English Program or a Bachelor of Fine Arts, and will continue into the Master of Architecture, please complete the International Student Form and SEVIS I-20 Request.

SEVIS I-20 Request Checklist for a Change of Program/Level at Pratt

Please check:

- All documents from SEVIS I-20 Request Checklist (page 54)
- Proof of completion of first program. i.e. Certificate of English Proficiency or Transcript from Bachelor or Masters Program
- Acceptance letter for Pratt program

UPS

Your SEVIS I-20 will be sent by UPS (United Parcel Service) Express Mail. You will be notified of the tracking number by email, so that you can track your package.

MAILING INSTRUCTIONS

SEVIS I-20 Requests for Graduate or Undergraduate students

- Deadline for fall requests: June 1, 2007
- Deadline for spring requests: November 1, 2007

Please send I-20 Request and accompanying documents in the envelope enclosed in this guide to:

PRATT INSTITUTE
Office of International Affairs
200 Willoughby Ave.
Brooklyn, NY 11205
USA

OFFICE OF
INTERNATIONAL
AFFAIRS

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STUDENT CLASSIFICATION

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT FORM

A. ACADEMIC CLASSIFICATION

Please check all that apply.

I have been accepted to the following program:

UNDERGRADUATE / GRADUATE

- Undergraduate _____ Fall 2007 Spring 2008
major
- Graduate _____ Fall 2007 Spring 2008
major
- Deadline: June 1, 2007 November 1, 2007

RETURNING AFTER AN ABSENCE

- I was a student at Pratt _____ and am returning _____.
Last semester at Pratt
- I am readmitted after withdrawing from Pratt or leaving Pratt without permission.
 Fall 2007 Spring 2008

(Please complete the Readmission Application form available at www.pratt.edu. Go to "Webadvisor for students." Students must be Readmitted before being issued a SEVIS I-20.)

- I am returning after an official Leave of Absence.
- Returning: Fall 2007 Spring 2008
- Deadline: June 1, 2007 November 1, 2007

The Summer Certificate Program (SCP) is an optional language training program.

- I have submitted an application and I-20 Request form for a Summer Certificate Program (SCP) in English Proficiency to the Intensive English Program.
- At Pratt Summer I Summer II
- At another institution _____
(name of school)

Comments:

Please comment here on what your plans are:

For example, "I will study English in Summer Session II at Pratt, and I will study Architecture as an undergraduate student in Fall 2007 at Pratt." Using this example, the boxes above would look like this:

- Undergraduate Architecture Fall 2007 Spring 2008
- I have submitted an application and I-20 Request form for a Summer Certificate Program (SCP) in English Proficiency to the Intensive English Program
- At Pratt Summer I Summer II

B. IMMIGRATION CLASSIFICATION

- I have never studied in the US and I will apply for a F-1 Visa
- I am currently in the US and my current visa status is (Check all that apply).
 - F-1 Visa
 - Other Visa _____
 - I will change my status to F-1
 - I will retain this status

If presently in the United States, attach a photocopy of both sides of your I-94 card to this application and answer the following questions.

Do you plan to leave the U.S. before beginning Pratt Institute?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please indicate your dates of anticipated travel outside the U.S.

Departure Date (mm/dd/yyyy) _____ Returning Date (mm/dd/yyyy) _____

Are you currently attending another U.S. institution or on Post Completion Practical Training and transferring to Pratt Institute?

- Yes
- No

(If yes, please complete and submit the Transfer Certification form page 64, and a copy of your OPT card.)

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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Today's Date _____ Pratt ID (if known) _____

Male Female

Family Name _____

First _____

Middle _____ Suffix _____
(as shown in your passport)

Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy) _____ Social Security # (if issued) _____

Citizenship Country _____

Residence Country _____

Birth City _____

Birth Country _____

Email _____

Home Country Address (Required) _____

Street Address _____

City _____ Province/Territory _____ Postal Code _____

Country _____ Foreign Phone Number _____

United States Address (if applicable) _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Postal Code _____

Phone Number _____

Send my SEVIS I-20 to: U.S. Address Home Country Address Address Below
(if different than above)

Address _____

City _____ State/Province/Territory _____ Postal Code _____

Country _____

Phone Number (required for UPS) _____

Marital Status (Check) Single Married

Dependents (Spouse) will apply for F-2 Visa Other

Family Name _____ First _____ Middle _____

Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy) _____ Relation _____ Country of Birth _____

Dependents (Child 1) will apply for F-2 Visa Other

Family Name _____ First _____ Middle _____

Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy) _____ Relation _____ Country of Birth _____

Dependents (Child 2) will apply for F-2 Visa Other

Family Name _____ First _____ Middle _____

Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy) _____ Relation _____ Country of Birth _____

If your spouse requires an F-2 Visa, you must submit a copy of your marriage license and your spouse's passport pages.
If you have children that require F-2 Visas, you must submit copies of their passport pages.
F-2 individuals cannot study at Pratt. If your spouse or child plans to study at Pratt, he/ she must be accepted in a full program of stud and acquire an F-1 Visa.
Individuals applying for or currently in the U.S. in B1/B2 (tourist), C (transit), F2 (dependent of F1), and WB (Visa waiver for Business) or WT (Visa waiver for Tourism) statuses may not study at Pratt Institute.

BASIC TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

You will need to carry the following documents any time you enter the United States. Make additional photocopies of all your travel documents and keep them in a safeplace. When you arrive at your U.S. port of entry, the immigration inspector will examine the following travel documents and determine whether you can be admitted into the U.S.:

- Valid passport
- Valid Form SEVIS I-20
- Valid U.S. entry Visa
- Proof of financial support
- Employment authorization card, if you have received one for Practical Training after completion of studies.
- After you start your studies at Pratt and exit and re-enter the U.S., the SEVIS I-20 will need to be endorsed on page 3 by an International Student Advisor and you must have the I-94 card (white card) in your passport when exiting the U.S.

Important: It is important that you apply for the F1 student visa and not enter as on the B1/B2 (business/tourist) visa. As of April 12, 2002, B1/B2 visa holder are not allowed to register for a full-time course of study. You will not be allowed to register unless you enter with the appropriate visa.

Passport

You should keep your passport valid for a minimum of six months into the future. You may consult your country's consulate or embassy in the U.S. to renew your passport when necessary. Consulate officials will tell you what forms and fee, if any, are required for renewal. If you are required to supply a letter affirming that you are matriculated at Pratt and are a full-time student, you can request such a letter from the Office of International Affairs or Registrar's Office.

Certificate of Eligibility (SEVIS I-20)

These basic travel documents are issued by Pratt. The SEVIS I-20 form describes your degree program and field of study, your expected date of completion and the means by which you will finance your U.S. study. This document also establishes your eligibility for such things as employment benefits and re-entry permission after travelling abroad. If you change your degree level, program or field of study, you must speak to an advisor in the OIA in order to have your record released to your new school.

Keep your SEVIS I-20 in a safe place with your passport and I-94 card. If you travel outside the U.S., your International student advisor must sign the back of your SEVIS I-20 form before you leave the country to certify that you are enrolled and otherwise eligible for re-entry in the same status. Be sure to take your SEVIS I-20 with you when you leave your country for the first time. Then take it with you when you travel outside the U.S. again.

Visa

A visa stamp placed inside your passport by the U.S. consul abroad is needed to enter the U.S.. Your visa shows the latest date on which you can apply to enter this country (the expiration date) and indicates the kind of visa you have (usually F-1).

Should you need to renew your visa in order to re-enter the U.S. you will need to visit the U.S. consulate in your home country or another country where you are traveling. It is not possible to renew an F-1 while you are within the borders of the U.S.. (Note: As long as you maintain student status, have a valid passport, and have an I-94 stamped D/S, you may remain in the U.S. with an expired visa). Visit your international student advisor well before you leave the U.S. to make certain your travel documents are in order.

Form I-94

The I-94 card issued to you upon arrival shows that you have been lawfully admitted to the U.S. and is usually stapled onto the U.S. visa page of your passport. It contains an eleven-digit identification number, called your ADMISSION number, used by the DHS to keep track of your arrival and departure from the U.S.. The I-94 card is usually collected each time you depart from the U.S. and a new one is issued upon reentry, except in cases of trips of thirty days or less to Canada, Mexico or the Caribbean.

I-94 cards issued to F-1 holders usually do not indicate an expiration date. Rather, student I-94 cards simply indicate that the bearer may remain in the U.S. for the Duration of Status(D/S). This means that a student is authorized to remain in the U.S. while pursuing the program of study described on his or her current SEVIS I-20 form. If you have an I-94 card with a specific expiration date, you must either leave the U.S. before the expiration date or apply to the DHS for an extension of stay before the card expires. Procedures for extending your stay vary according to visa type. Consult the Office of International Affairs for specific instructions.

Proof of Financial Support

Proof of financial support for your studies can be

- (1) a letter from a bank indicating the current balance in your bank account or that of your sponsor, as well as the average balance in the account during the previous year,
- (2) a completed affidavit of support (DHS form I-134) from your sponsor, including a notarized copy of his/her most recent federal income tax return or
- (3) a letter from a sponsoring agency outlining details of their financial award to you. If you are receiving any funding from Pratt, you should carry a letter outlining this support. Also, if you have an on-campus job, you should carry a letter from your employer stating the period of employment, your weekly hours (20 hours or fewer during the academic year) and your rate of pay.

Receipt or proof of payment of the mandatory \$100 SEVIS Fee

As of September 1, 2004, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) collects the mandated SEVIS fee of \$100 USD. Applicants who require an F1 visa to enter the United States **must** complete form I-901 and pay the SEVIS fee **before** going to the U.S. Embassy or consulate for their visa interviews. Applicants who are citizens of Canada, Bermuda, Bahamas and residents of certain other islands wishing to apply for F1 status at a Port of Entry into the United States must pay the SEVIS fee **before** appearing at the Port of Entry. For further details regarding the form I-901 and how to pay the fee go to: www.fmjfee.com. *We suggest that you complete form I-901 and pay the SEVIS fee of \$100 online at least 3 days before your interview or approaching the port of entry. On November 1, 2004, nonimmigrant students and exchange visitors in more than 130 countries are able to pay the I-901 SEVIS fee locally using the Western Union Quick Pay™ service with their own currency. For details on how to use this option go to http://www.ice.gov/graphics/sevis/i901/wu_instr.htm.*

F VISA APPLICATION PROCESS

The F Visa Application Process and Preparing for the Visa Interview

1. Student will apply for visa.

- a. Student visits U.S. consulate or embassy with the following documents:
 - (1) SEVIS I-20 (for F-1 students)
- b. Student completes visa application.
- c. Every American embassy/consulate works from the same set of regulations and laws but will have different procedures for its location. Some will require a person-to-person interview; some will collect the documents and give the student an appointment for sometime in the near future; some will give an appointment and ask the student to come back with all the documentation; some will even conduct the process by mail. If the visa is approved, the student will be given an F-1 or J-1 visa stamp in the passport. The visa is a stamp in the passport that indicates where the visa was issued, the date the visa was issued, the date the visa will expire, the number of entries allowed (i.e. single, multiple), the type of visa, and the visa number. A newer type of American visa is a machine-readable paper stamp glued to a page in the passport.
- d. When the student collects the passport with the visa, he/she will also be given a sealed envelope which contains all pages of the SEVIS I-20 .

2. On the flight to the United States, the student will be given an I-94 (which includes 3 sections: the instructions, the arrival record card, and the departure record card) to complete.

3. At the port-of-entry, student will present to the immigration officer the following:

- a. valid passport with valid visa
- b. sealed envelope with SEVIS I-20
- c. completed I-94 (all 3 sections)
- d. any other requested information such as financial documents or admission letter.

4. The immigration officer will:

- a. return the valid passport with valid visa with an INS entry stamp
- b. return the departure record card with an entry stamp to the student (usually stapled in the passport)
- c. return the I-20 with the DHS stamp in the upper right hand corner.
- d. return any other requested information to the student.

Note: For all students entering the U.S.A. for the first time in F1 status, please make sure to have your documents stamped properly or you will not be eligible for certain benefits of the F1 student visa. Therefore, check your documents thoroughly before leaving the counter. If you notice any mistakes, return to the same immigration officer. If s/he refuses to assist you, ask for a supervisor. Do not leave the area until your documents are in order.

Special Note Regarding Canadians and Citizens of the British Territory of Bermuda

Canadians and citizens of Bermuda do not need visas to enter the U.S.A. You should take the SEVIS I-20 with proof of citizenship or passport, financial documentation, and proof of payment of the SEVIS fee, to the port of entry. The DHS officer will date stamp the SEVIS I-20 (on the upper right hand corner). The DHS officer will have you complete the I-94 card and return the departure record card to you as evidence of your legal entry to the U.S.A. as an F1 or J1 student. If you are entering the U.S. from a third country outside the Western Hemisphere you do not have to obtain a visa stamp. Certain landed immigrants are required to have the F-1 visa to enter the U.S.A. from Canada. You should consult the U.S. Consulate/Embassy for current requirements.

Preparing for the interview

All students receiving the SEVIS I-20 will request the F-1 visa for self and F-2 for spouse and children if appropriate.

When you apply for a visa at an American embassy or consulate, a consular official will interview you. The interview usually lasts only two or three minutes. It is good to understand that the main purpose of the visa interview is for you to “prove” to the consular officials that you will return to your home country after finishing your academic program. Of course, it is impossible to actually prove or know that a person will or will not do something in the future. Thus, the consular official must believe that you will return to your home country, or the visa will not be issued.

You can reassure the consular officials by talking about the things that tie you to your home: family, property, employment.

Here are some specific suggestions to help you prepare for your visa interview:

- Anticipate that the interview will be conducted in English and not in your native language
1. You need to know and show what you will do with your degree from a U.S. institution (or, if you want to attend an English language program, with your improved English) when you return home. You need to have good (plausible) future plans in your own country.
 2. It is often very helpful to have a job offer—in writing—from an employer in your home country promising you a good job or a higher position in the company when you return from the U.S.
 3. You should know what the job situation is in your field in your home country. With a little research you can find out what the job prospects are. The U.S. consular officials will know about these things, too. It’s usually better for you if you can show that you will have good job prospects in your home country after finishing your program in the U.S.
 4. You should practice for the interview with friends. The practice interviews should be no more than three minutes long and very unfriendly. While the consular officer will probably be cordial in the real interview, it is best to be prepared for the worst. You should be ready to answer questions such as “Where did you hear about this school?” etc. If you don’t know very much about your chosen school, the consular official will often refuse to give you a visa. Consular officials may think that you are not really planning to go to school but are simply trying to enter the U.S. to work.
 5. You should write a “statement of purpose” explaining why you want to go to this particular school and what you hope to do with the knowledge later on in your home country.
 6. If your financial status is an issue, you may want to pay tuition to the school in advance and present the receipt to the consular official. The official will almost certainly respect this gesture. Bank loans are NOT good evidence of financial support for students. Consular officials think that people with loans are more likely to seek employment in the U.S. so they can pay back the loan.
 7. You should be honest with consular officials at all times. For example, applicants in some countries might not want to show their true financial status because they may be trying to “shield” income from taxes. Thus, their financial statements may not show this “black money”, and so may not show enough money for education in the U.S. However, consular officials actually don’t care at all if your family is hiding income from your own government. They will, however, appreciate your honesty and be much more likely to grant the visa if they know your true financial status. Conversely, if the consular officials believe that you are lying or have lied in a previous interview—about anything—they will probably not issue the visa.
 8. Do not bring family members with you to the interview. The officer wants to interview you, not your family. A negative impression is created if you are not prepared to speak on your own behalf.
 9. Maintain a positive attitude. Do not engage the consular officer in an argument. If you are denied a student visa, ask the officer for a list of documents he or she would suggest you bring in order to overcome the refusal and try to get the reason you were denied in writing.
 10. Do not concede, under any circumstance, that you intend to work in the U.S. after completing your studies. While many students do work off-campus during their studies, this work is incidental to their main purpose of completing their education.
 11. If your spouse is also applying for an accompanying F-2 visa, be aware that F-2 dependents cannot, under any circumstance, be employed in the U.S. or attend school. If asked, be prepared to address what your spouse intends to do with his or her time while in the U.S.
 12. 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 tricky area if you are the primary source of income for your family. If the consular officer gains the impression that your family will need you to remit money from the United States in order to support themselves, your student visa application will almost certainly be denied.

Points to Remember When Applying for a Nonimmigrant Visa

Ties to home country.

Under U.S. law, all applicants for non-immigrant visas are viewed as intending immigrants until they can convince the consular officer that they are not. You must therefore be able to show that you have reasons for returning to your home country that are stronger than those for remaining in the United States. "Ties" to your home country are the things that bind you to your hometown, homeland, or current place of residence: job, family, financial prospects that you own or will inherit, investments, etc. If you are a prospective undergraduate, the interviewing officer may ask about your specific intentions or promise of future employment, family or other relationships, educational objectives, grades, long-range plans, and career prospects in your home country. Each person's situation is different, of course, and there is no magic explanation or single document, certificate, or letter, which can guarantee visa issuance.

Be concise.

Because of the volume of applications received, all consular 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. Consequently, what you say first and the initial impression you create are critical to your success. Keep your answers to the officer's questions short and to the point.

Supplemental documentation

It should be clear at a glance to the consular officer what written documents you are presenting and what they signify. Lengthy written explanations cannot be quickly read or evaluated. Remember that you will have two-three minutes of interview time, if you're lucky.

Not all countries are equal

Applicants from countries suffering economic problems or from countries where many students have remained in the United States 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 at home after their study in the United States.

Be aware of special procedures for citizens of some countries

If you are from a country designated by the U.S. government as a state sponsor of terrorism, you will need to submit form DS-157 in addition to the form DS-156.

Section 306 of the Enhanced Border Security and Visa Reform Act of 2002 (EBSVRA) pertains to the issuance of visas to aliens from state sponsors of terrorism. Six countries are now designated as Section 306. They are North Korea, Cuba, Syria, Sudan, Iran and Libya. For more information, go to http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/info/info_1300.html

According to this website: "All applicants from state sponsors of terrorism age 16 and over, irrespective of gender, must without exception complete form DS-157, in addition to form DS-156, and must appear for an interview with a consular officer."

What if the F-1 visa application is denied?

Most visa denials are based on students not being able to convince the consular officer that they have sufficiently compelling ties to their home country to force them to return after completing their studies. **These are called 214 (b) denials.**

In order to reapply you must be able to present new additional evidence to overcome the objection. Your application must be made in writing. If the visa is granted, you will be contacted to come in person. If you are denied on the grounds that you do not possess the required English proficiency or for any other academic reason; submit the name of the officer, the reason for denial, (214(b)), the date of the denial as well as the name of the visa post where you applied, to the Office of International Affairs at Pratt. We will try to assist you in any way.