

For F-1 International Students: Getting Your Student Visa

Making Your F-1 International Student Visa Interview Appointment

1. Pay the SEVIS I-901 fee. Please go to <https://fmjfee.com/i901fee/index.html> for instructions about how to pay this fee.
2. Schedule your visa appointment with a U.S. embassy or consulate. Go to <https://www.usembassy.gov/> and search by country to find a U.S. embassy or consulate in the city nearest to you. It is possible to go to a U.S. embassy or consulate in a country different from the country that you live in. Click on the name of a particular embassy or consulate to connect to its website. Click on “Visas” at the top left of the page, or at the bottom left of the page. Then, click on “Nonimmigrant Visas.” If the website lists types of nonimmigrant visas, choose “Study & Exchange.” Read the page to find the instructions for applying for a nonimmigrant visa. Not all embassy websites have the same instructions and links. If you have to choose a visa type, then choose “Student Visa.” You must apply for an F-1 visa.
3. Review the website of the U.S. embassy or consulate that you chose to see specific requirements and processing times. Please also read <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/student-visa.html#documentation>
You may also find more information here: <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/>
4. Email the ESL Administrator after you make your visa appointment.

Preparing for Your F-1 Visa Interview

Your F-1 visa interview may last for less than five minutes, so it is important for you to be prepared. Please

1. Write a Statement of Purpose (see below) so that you are prepared to share your goals and the reason that you chose SFBU.
2. Be familiar with SFBU and our IEP (see below). Look at our website (www.sfbu.edu) carefully in order to learn as much as you can.
3. Print and sign your Form I-20. Print your IEP Letter of Acceptance and your letter from Admissions stating that you are eligible for a degree program, if you have one. Bring these documents and your Statement of Purpose, passport, financial support document(s), and Guarantor Letter, if you have one, with you to your visa appointment. Also bring your nonimmigrant visa application Form DS-160 confirmation page and your visa application fee payment receipt, if you paid before your interview.

4. Explain clearly to the visa officer that you plan to go to the U.S. only to study, and you plan to return to your country after you finish all of your studies. It is helpful if you show reasons to return to your country, such as family, work, or a house there.
5. If you have received a letter from Admissions stating that you are eligible for a degree program after you finish the IEP, show the visa officer this letter. Explain that you plan to study in the degree program after you finish the IEP successfully.
6. Be confident when you speak with the visa officer.

Your Statement of Purpose should answer these questions:

1. Why did you choose San Francisco Bay University?
2. Why can't you study English in your country?
3. What do you want to learn from the IEP?
4. If you hope to study in a degree program after you finish the IEP, which degree program do you plan to study in? Why?
5. What are your career goals? How will the IEP help you reach these goals?

About SFBU:

SFBU is located in Fremont, California, a suburb of San Jose, and not far from San Francisco. Fremont is part of Silicon Valley, the home of many major technology, software, and internet companies. SFBU is a private nonprofit university that was founded in 1984 and is regionally accredited by WASC. The Intensive English Program has programmatic accreditation through CEA.

The San Francisco Bay Area is very diverse, rich in culture, and famous for many attractions. Fremont and the surrounding area has many opportunities for hiking and biking. Please learn more on our About Us, Academics (especially English as a Second Language), and Student Life webpages.