

1. ENGLISH

Anticipate that the interview will be conducted in English and not in your native language. One suggestion is to practice English conversation with a native speaker before the interview, but do NOT prepare speeches!

2. SPEAK FOR YOURSELF

Do not bring parents or family members with you to the interview. The consular officer wants to interview you, not your family. A negative impression is created if you are not prepared to speak on your own behalf.

3. KNOW THE PROGRAM AND HOW IT FITS YOUR CAREER PLANS

If you are not able to articulate the reasons you will be working at Montclair State University, you may not succeed in convincing the consular officer of the reasons for your stay in the U.S. You should also be able to explain the work you will be doing in the U.S. and how it relates to your current or future career and immigration plans.

4. BE BRIEF

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 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.

5. ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

It should be immediately clear 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 2-3 minutes of interview time, if you are lucky.

6. EMPLOYMENT

Your main purpose in coming to the United States should be for employment at Montclair State University (and any other institution for which you have a valid, approved I-140).

7. DEPENDENTS REMAINING AT HOME

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 them, your visa application will almost certainly be denied. If your family does decide to join you at a later time, it is helpful to have them apply at the same post where you applied for your visa.

8. MAINTAIN A POSITIVE ATTITUDE

Do not engage the consular officer in an argument. If you are denied a 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.

9. OTHER SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Some employees or prospective employees may experience delays in obtaining a visa because of "administrative processing." This commonly occurs if your name is similar to another individual and the consulate needs to check with other government agencies about your status or background. It may also happen when your area of work is thought to be in a field of sensitive or critical technology, or if you are working with sensitive research materials. Some consular officers may even require additional letters from your employer explaining the specific type of research in which you will be involved and what kind of access to sensitive technology you will have. If you are unsure whether this applies to your situation, [check with your specific U.S. embassy or consulate](#). For more information about administrative processing, you can:

- [View this short video presentation](#) provided by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) International Scholars Office
- Visit the [U.S. State Departments Administrative Processing Information](#) webpage

You may be asked to explain past visits and stays in the United States and/or any prior visa statuses held by you or your family members.

If you stayed beyond your authorized stay in the United States in the past, be prepared to explain what happened and if available, provide supporting documentation regarding the circumstances.

Documentation should accompany any arrests or convictions within the U.S. or abroad, including any arrests or convictions for driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Always check with an experienced immigration attorney if you have any current or past legal issues.

NOTE REGARDING POTENTIAL VISA ISSUANCE DELAYS:

All applicants for a U.S. visa are subject to security checks before a visa can be issued. Visa delays for some applicants can range from weeks to several months. A visa will not be issued until the application clears all security checks.

Credits: Gerald A. Wunsch, Esq., 1997, former member of the NAFSA Consular Issues Working Group, and a former U.S. Consular Officer in Mexico, Suriname, and the Netherlands; Martha Wailes, Indiana University; the U.S. Department of State; and NAFSA: Association of International Educators.