Start thinking about... I-20 Requests & Visa

If you’re planning to attend an academic program at a college, university, or any accredited academic institution in the U.S., you will need an F-1 study visa. Part of this applications includes an interview to determine if you qualify to receive the visa. Here’s how to prepare:

1. **Know the usual questions**
   The interview questions often focus on four main issues: ties to your home country, academic qualifications; your chosen college or university in the U.S.; and how you will finance your education.  

2. **Practice your English**
   The interview will be conducted in English and it’s important to practice your conversational English – preferably with a native speaker – beforehand. There may be a question about why and how English will be beneficial for you in your home country if the purpose of your trip to the U.S. is to study English.

3. **Know the program and how it fits your career path**
   The purpose of the visa is to issue you legal residence in the US throughout your studies. The focus is on your study program, so as stated above, you should be able to explain to the consular officer that you are planning to study, rather than to immigrate. Additionally, you should articulate how studying in the U.S. will help with your future career options in your home country.

4. **Employment should not be your main goal to go to the U.S.**
   If you want that visa approved, remember this: finding work isn’t why you’re heading to the U.S., studying is. This should be made clear in your interview answers. While you may be allowed to work part-time while studying, you should state that this isn’t your primary goal before, during or after your studies.

5. **Prepare all documents and receipts**
   - Personal Information: Passport (current and previous), MRV Fee Receipt, Visa Interview Appointment Letter, DS 160 Confirmation Slip (with the Bar Code clearly visible), SEVIS Fee Receipt, Passport Size Photograph (as per regulations mentioned).
   - Education Documents: Acceptance letter to U.S. university, high school and pre-university qualifications or equivalent, GRE/GMAT/SAT scorecard, IETS/TOEFL scorecard, Bachelor’s Degree/Certificate
   - Financial Documents: Loan approval letter (if applicable), bank account statement (recommended last 3 years), fixed deposit certificate (recommended last 3 years), tax returns from the past 3 years, & property documents.

6. **Arrive on time**
   Wait times for interview appointments vary by location, season and visa category, so you should schedule your interview appointment early on. On the day before the interview, get a good night’s rest, leave with plenty of time to promptly arrive at your embassy or consulate. Dress smartly and not too casual. The key is for you to arrive at the interview calm so the whole process will be a breeze.

**First time in the U.S.? Request your Initial I-20**

As a new F-1 student, you will need your SEVIS ID number when you go to your visa appointment. Your SEVIS ID number is generated when your International Student Advisor issues your Initial I-20 Form. Fill the **Online I-20 Request Form** online by typing the link below and documents that are needed to request I-20 are listed online:

[http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/iss/newstudents/i20](http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/iss/newstudents/i20)

You will need to arrange express mail if you need your I-20 shipped outside the U.S. This is done through eshipglobal. Directions are provided as you fill out the I-20 request form.

**Did you receive your I-20? Great! Here’s your next steps…**

- Pay your I-901 fee of $350 - The I-901 fee is a SEVIS processing fee for students seeking non-immigrants seeking F-1 visa status.
- Schedule visa appointment

**Transferring from another School? Request your Transfer Pending I-20**

If you are planning to leave or stay in the U.S. after Winter Quarter/Semester

- Don’t forget to request for your new Transfer Pending I-20
- When you are done with your classes at your current institution, have your current international student advisor transfer/release your SEVIS record to the University of Washington, Tacoma.
- We can issue your Transfer Pending I-20 once you have completed all of your classes at your current institution.
- The link above is the same link you will use to request your Transfer Pending I-20