

Frequently Asked Questions about the DS-160

1. Can my answers be in my native language?

No. All application answers, except proper names and addresses, must be in English, using English characters only. Applications that are submitted in any language other than English may be denied, and you may be required to submit a new application.

2. Are all fields on the DS-160 mandatory?

Most fields on the DS-160 are mandatory. You may leave fields marked "Optional" blank. Some fields may also give you the option to select "Does Not Apply." If that field does not apply to you, you may mark the box next to "Does Not Apply." All other fields must be completed: the application will not allow you to submit a form with any mandatory fields left blank. In this instance, an error message displays and you are required to complete the field before continuing with the application. If you do not answer questions that apply, your form may be rejected.

3. What should I enter in these fields?

PERSONAL INFORMATION:

Full name in native alphabet: Type your name in your native script.

PASSPORT INFORMATION:

Passport number: Enter the passport number as it appears in your passport.

TRAVEL INFORMATION:

Purpose of trip:

If you will be traveling for tourism & business select B1/B2

If you will be traveling for business only, select B1

If you will be traveling for tourism only, select B2

If you will be studying in the United States, select F1

If your family members will be traveling with you and are also applying for a visa, they will select F2

If you will be participating in an exchange program, select J1

If your family members will be traveling with you and are also applying for a visa, they will select J2

If you are traveling for any other purpose: Click "Other" on the list and a second drop down box will appear. In the second box:

If you are a diplomat or foreign government official and will be assigned to a mission in the United States, select A1

If your family members will be traveling with you and are also applying for a visa, they will select A1

And will be traveling for official business of a temporary nature, select A2

If your family members will be traveling with you and are also applying for a visa, they will select A2

And will be assigned to a permanent mission of an international organization in the United States, select G1

If your family members will be traveling with you and are also applying for a visa, they will select G1

And will traveling to the United States temporarily to attend meetings of a designated international organization in the United States, select G2

If your family members will be traveling with you and are also applying for a visa, they will select G2

Intended date of arrival in U.S.: Enter the date when you are planning to visit/go the US if the visa is approved.

Intended length of stay in the U.S.: Select the length in accordance with your plans.

Address where you will stay: If you have an address where you will stay, enter it here.

PREVIOUS U.S. TRAVEL INFORMATION:

Have you ever been in the U.S.? If your answer is YES, then provide information on your last 5 U.S. visits, including date of arrival in the U.S. and your length of stay, entering the information as accurately as you can.

Have you ever been issued a U.S. Visa?: If your answer is YES, enter the visa number you used to travel. The visa number is the number is typed in red on the right side of the visa. For lost or stolen visas, if you do not know the visa number, check the "Do not know" button for the visa number.

U.S. POINT OF CONTACT INFORMATION:

Contact person: Enter the name of your contact in the U.S. If you do not have a contact in the U.S., check the box "Do Not Know" and in "Organization Contact" enter the name of a place that you will visit either for business or pleasure.

Address and phone number of point of contact: Enter the address of your contact in the U.S. If you checked "Do Not Know" to this question, enter the address of the place that you entered in the "Organization contact" question; for the phone number, enter all "9's" if you do not know the phone number.

FAMILY INFORMATION:

Relatives: Enter your father's and mother's names, even if they are deceased. Enter the names of all family members who are residing in the U.S. (regardless of legal status) or who are American citizens or legal permanent residents, even if they do not live in the U.S.

PRESENT WORK/EDUCATION/TRAINING INFORMATION:

Monthly salary in local currency: Enter your salary before deductions. If you do not receive a fixed salary, you must enter an estimate of your average earnings for a month. If you are a business owner, you should enter an average amount of net income you receive from the business after expenses. If you receive a pension, enter the amount of the pension.

ADDITIONAL WORK/EDUCATION/TRAINING INFORMATION:

Have you traveled to any countries within the last five years?: Include any travel outside of your home country, including travel to the U.S.

SECURITY AND BACKGROUND: CRIMINAL INFORMATION

Have you ever been arrested or convicted of any offense or crime? Include all arrests or detentions, including those at the border and by Customs and Border Patrol.

SECURITY AND BACKGROUND: IMMIGRATION LAW VIOLATION INFORMATION

Have you ever been unlawfully present, overstayed the amount of time granted by an immigration official or otherwise violated the terms of a visa?: Include any time that you were in the United States illegally or without permission.

LOCATION INFORMATION:

Did anyone assist you in filling out this application?: If your answer is YES, that person must complete the preparer information section, even if the person assisting you is a family member.

4. What happens if I need to step away in the middle of data entry?

The DS-160 will "time out" approximately 20 minutes after the application has been idle. The "time out" is designed to protect your privacy. If the application times out, all the data that has been entered will be lost. In order to guard against possible "time out" issues, you should save the application at regular intervals while you are completing the application. To save the application, click the "Save" button at the bottom center of the application. Clicking save will temporarily save your application. In order to permanently save your application, select the "Save Application to File" button. Then, click the "Save" button on the File Download window. Identify a place on your computer to save the application file, browse to that location, and click the "Save" button on the Save As window. The system will download your application to the specified location. Once the download is complete you can click "Close" to return to the application. You can then use the "Import Application Data" option on the "Getting Started" page to upload the data that you have already entered.

5. Why does the confirmation page have an "X" in the box where the photo should be?

There is an X because the photo upload failed. You will need to submit one printed photograph meeting requirements, along with the online DS-160 confirmation page. The following are minimum requirements for a printed photograph:

- 1.** The photographs must not be older than six months.
- 2.** The photographs must measure 5 cm x 5 cm.
- 3.** The photographs of the applicant's head must be between 2.5 cm and 3.5 cm when measured vertically.
- 4.** The photographs must be in color and have a white background.

5. The applicant must face the camera directly, with both ears visible.

6. What are the digital and composition requirements for the application photos?

In order to safeguard the traveling public and utilize the latest biometric identification techniques, all applicants for American non-immigrant visas must present full-face photographs, taken against a white or off-white background, showing the entire, uncovered head. Applicants who wear a head covering or hat for religious reasons may continue to do so, but only if that head covering does not obscure any portion of the face.

1. The photograph of each visa applicant must be an unmounted full face photo, taken within the past six months, 2 by 2 inches square, either in color or black and white against a white background.

2. Sunglasses or other paraphernalia, which would detract from the face, are not acceptable. A photograph of a person wearing a head covering is permitted, provided that enough of the face is uncovered to establish identity. A photograph of a person wearing a traditional facemask or veil that conceals portions of the face and does not permit adequate identification is not acceptable.

3. Since a separate visa is issued to each qualified applicant, an individual photo is required in all cases. Group photos are not acceptable.

4. It is particularly important that the photo be recent and clearly in focus. It is vital that the background be white or off-white. Photos taken in front of busy, multi-colored, patterned, or dark backgrounds will not be accepted.

5. A "full face" photo is one in which the applicant is facing the camera directly. The applicant should not be looking down or to either side. The face should cover about 50 percent of the area of the photo. It is preferable that the ears be exposed. The key requirement is that the photograph clearly identifies the applicant.

6. The photograph should measure 2 inches square (roughly 50 mm square) with the head centered in the frame. The head (measured from the top of the hair to the bottom of the chin) should measure between 1 inch to 1 3/8 inches (25 mm to 35 mm) with the eye level between 1 1/8 inch to 1 3/8 inches (28 mm and 35 mm) from the bottom of the photo.

7. Photos of members of the military, airline employees or other personnel wearing hats are not acceptable.

Digitally-altered photographs will not be accepted. This includes alterations of color or pattern in the background of the picture. Photographs that are out-of-focus, air-brushed or otherwise substandard will not be accepted. Digital photographs must be of sufficiently high resolution that the pixels are not visible.

For more information, including digital requirements, click here for [photo requirements](#).

6. Why did the edits I made from the review page "edit" link not save?

In order for data changes made from the review page links to save, you must use the buttons at the bottom of each page to navigate, instead of the browser's back/forward buttons or the buttons along the left of the screen.

7. Should I save my application before I submit it?

YES! You should, if you can, save your application locally (to either your hard drive or a CD) before you submit your application. Saving your application locally is beneficial in two ways. First, if your application is rejected by the Consulate or Embassy for being incomplete, i.e., your application contains nonresponsive answers or you failed to answer a critical question, you will be able access your saved application data, correct the nonresponsive or incomplete answers and submit the corrected application without having to complete an entirely new application. Second, if you are a frequent visa applicant, you can update your saved application the next time you wish to apply for a visa and submit the updated application. This will save you time by not having to reenter information that has not changed since the last time you applied.

8. How do I save my application?

To save the application, click the "Save" button at the bottom center of the application. Clicking save will temporarily save your application. In order to permanently save your application, select the "Save Application to File" button. Then, click the "Save" button on the File Download window. Identify a place on your computer to save the application file, browse to that location, and click the "Save" button on the Save As window. The system will download your application to the specified location. Once the download is complete, you can click "Close" to return to the application. You can then use the "Import Application Data" option on the "Getting Started" page to upload the data that you have already entered.

9. Do I bring my entire application with me to the interview, or do I just bring the confirmation page?

You should not bring your entire application. Your confirmation page is all that is needed to retrieve your application data. You must bring the confirmation page with you during all phases of the application process. Without the confirmation page, it may not be possible to access your application and process your visa case. Click to see a [sample of the confirmation page](#).

10. I am traveling with my family or as part of a group. Can I create a family or group application?

Yes. On the "Thank You" page you will see an option to create a family or group application. When you select this option, certain information from your application, such as destination, will automatically be imported to and displayed on a new application. Please note that if you use this option you will need to create an individual application for each of your family members traveling with you or for each individual within the group.

11. If I use the option on the "Thank You" page to create a family or group application, can I modify the data automatically populated by the system?

Yes. If one of the dependents has a different surname or nationality, for example, the applicant can alter that data on the application before submitting.