

# Webchat

April Transcript

Question submitted by Sailesh: What are the criteria for a class 12 passed Science student for that he is sure to get Visa?

U.S. Embassy Nepal: There is never a guarantee that anyone will qualify for a visa. There are certainly better ways than others to prepare for your interview, but there is no 100% way to qualify. Whether you are a class 12 passed Science student, math student, or sociology student, the requirements are the same. If you want to pursue further study in the United States, you must qualify for a F-1 or student visa. In order to qualify, you must have been accepted to a university in the U.S. and have a valid I-20 and show you have an intent to study, including an ability to study in the U.S., sufficient funds or sources of funds to draw on for every year of education in the U.S., and an intent to return to a residence outside of the U.S.

Question submitted by Hari Krishna Lammichhane: I heard that the environment where the interview is taken is not good and is crowded.

U.S. Embassy Nepal: During the student visa season, we have a high demand for visa appointments, sometimes as high as 400 appointments per day. In order to avoid disappointment, please plan in advance as much as possible and make an appointment as soon as you have all of your documents in order. You may apply up to 120 days in advance of your start date at a school in the U.S.

Question submitted by Binod Bajracharya: I've passed my 10+2 in 1997, and could not complete my bachelor of business studies due to some family commitment. I've worked with a second biggest shipping company in the world as an Accounts Assistant for 5 years. For a growth in hierarchy, I need to get an international degree. So I want to pursue Finance as a major in USA. I would like to know if I can apply for a student visa as an adult.

U.S. Embassy Nepal: Binod, You can apply for a student visa at any age. However you should be prepared to discuss why you did not pursue a degree earlier and since you've been out of school for ten years, why it's so important to go back now.

Question submitted by Pradeep: Hi, I finished my undergraduate education in the US, and I am currently doing the Ph.D. program in the US. My previous F1 visa does not expire until August 2009. Hence, I did not renew it last year (before joining the current program) even though I received a new I-20 from the current graduate school. This summer I am visiting Nepal (mid May) for 3 weeks and I intend to renew my visa. Due to my research commitment, I cannot extend my visit. Is 3 weeks sufficient time to renew the visa? Are the procedures same for the renewal as it is for receiving F1 visa for the first time?

U.S. Embassy Nepal: We don't consider it a renewal really. The procedures are the same as for any other F-1 application. Please schedule your interview far in advance as appointments go quickly in the summer. Thanks!

Question submitted by Bechu: I got full scholarship in a U.S. University with a graduate assistantship. Do I need to show financial document or not?

U.S. Embassy Nepal: An I-20 shows the amount of scholarship or assistantship provided to a student. Consular officers look only at the total cost of studying in the U.S. when they review an I-20, not just tuition. Bank balances and other credible documentary evidence of financial sources are not needed if the assistantship or scholarship covers all expenses indicated on the I-20 including living, insurance, or "other" and if the assistantship is guaranteed for all years of study. When an assistantship or scholarship covers all expenses for every year of study, the I-20 serves as your documentary evidence of income. If the assistantship or scholarship is only for one year or one semester, or does not cover all expenses indicated on the I-20, other income sources will have to be demonstrated.

Question submitted by Laxman Devkota: I am a prospective graduate student of a US University. I have got my I-20 to apply as well. I have got full tuition scholarship and teaching assistantship as well. But now I want to apply for visa with my spouse. Let me know what should I do next?

U.S. Embassy Nepal: Laxman, Congratulations on what sounds like a great situation! We wish that more students would get assistantships and scholarships like you! Your spouse will need to register with SEVIS and receive a separate I-20 as a dependent. Your spouse must also be added on your I-20. Having a dependent added to an I-20 WILL INCREASE LIVING EXPENSES, so be mindful of that and be prepared to answer questions on how you'll be able to afford the extra costs of having your spouse live with you in the states. REMEMBER your spouse CANNOT work on an F2 visa. Good luck to you!

Question submitted by Nirav: What role does appearance play such as hair, dress, jewelries etc.?

U.S. Embassy Nepal: An applicant's appearance does not play any role in a consular officer's decision process when adjudicating any type of visa application. Wearing jewelry when you normally do not will not help your interview. Consular officers are required by U.S. Immigration Law to only evaluate student visa applicants based on their intent to study in the United States including their ability to study in the U.S., their ability to afford their education at their chosen university, their intent to return to Nepal or another residence abroad in the future. Clothing, jewelry, or hair are not factors in the visa process.

Question submitted by Bechu: What is the sequence of the documents in file during visa interview? Does it make a difference while keeping the documents randomly?

U.S. Embassy Nepal: There is no sequence of documents that is prescribed. However it is helpful to the officer if you keep your required documents up front - your transcripts, etc.

Question submitted by Guest 2: You are talking about funding a student by his home. As far as I know most of the students make money by working there. If the trend is that the students work and pay for their tuition fee and all, then why are you after a bank transaction. Moreover you must be well aware of fake transactions. How do you ensure that the documents furnished are 100% genuine?

U.S. Embassy Nepal: We can't ensure that the documents are 100% genuine. However, we are very good at spotting fake documents as we have years of experience handling student visa applications. Fake documents will NOT help you get a visa to the U.S. If you submit fake educational documents, we will know, you will not get a visa to the U.S. and you may be permanently ineligible for any future visas to the U.S. As for fake financial documents, we can spot them as well; however, that is why we depend more on the interview to assess whether an applicant can afford their education to the U.S. And please remember -- it is illegal to work in the U.S. full-time to support your education. You may be able to get permission to work part-time on campus or part-time off campus, but this work will NOT be enough to pay for your tuition and other living expenses. Consider researching scholarship opportunities via USEF before choosing a school in the U.S.

Question submitted by Bechu: I have already submitted my Ds-156, DS-157, DS-158 to the Nabil bank. Do I have to bring another forms of DS-156, 157 158 again during interview?

U.S. Embassy Nepal: No, you have already submitted all the required forms.

Question submitted by Saroj: Can I apply from the other foreign countries as well? I am going to Israel for a year, I have given TOEFL and GRE. So, can I apply for US from Israel? If yes, what are the procedures and requirements? Thank you!

U.S. Embassy Nepal: Saroj, you can apply from anywhere in the world for your visa - the qualifications and requirements do not change. However, you should check the US Embassy webpage for that country as the procedures for actually applying for a visa and scheduling an interview changes country to country. It will, however, be difficult for a consular officer in Israel to assess your financial sources.

Question submitted by Hari Krishna Lamichhane: I heard that visa depends on the mood of a consular. Is this true?

U.S. Embassy Nepal: Each applicant's qualifications are evaluated in line with U.S. immigration law. Consular officers interview applicants to determine their individual qualifications. The personal feelings and mood of a consular officer play absolutely no part in determining whether an applicant is qualified for a visa.

Question submitted by Sailendra Karki: I got my I-20 from South Eastern Louisiana University in January and the scholarship at that time was only mentioned \$7,500. After one month I got a scholarship letter with increment in scholarship. Do I need another I-20 to prove my increment in scholarship or the letter would be enough???

U.S. Embassy Nepal: We usually like to see all your scholarships listed on your I-20. There are situations where the scholarship was provided very late and there is not enough time to update an I-20 AND make it to first day of class on time. In those cases we accept secondary evidence such as a letter from the school - original letters on letterhead!

Question submitted by Anupama: Is GMAT mandatory to get visa for MBA?

U.S. Embassy Nepal: Anupama, Thanks for the question - we hear it quite often. Visa requirements are different from university requirements. While a university may need a GMAT, in order to qualify for a student visa you will need to demonstrate your intent to study, your ability to pay for the entire period of your study, AND your intent to return to Nepal.

Question submitted by Sarita: It is said that a decision is made whether one gets visa or not before the interview and visa interview is just the formality, is this true?

U.S. Embassy Nepal: This is absolutely NOT TRUE! Don't believe anyone who says this. Every officer comes to a decision AFTER the interview.

Question submitted by Sarita: I have completed my Master's Degree (MBS) from Nepal but as it is not equivalent to international Master's Degree I want to apply for MBA in USA. But I have one year gap period. Will this gap period create obstacles for my visa?

U.S. Embassy Nepal: The one year gap will not be an obstacle so long as you can logically and clearly explain it and so long as you can explain why you want another Masters Degree in the same field.

Question submitted by Munu: I am applying for graduate studies for Fall 09. I would like to know, if taking an education loan would increase my chance of getting visa?

U.S. Embassy Nepal: Munu, This is a good question. One of the main things we look at in an interview is whether the student has the required funds to successfully study in the United States without having to resort to working illegally in the U.S. During the interview, the applicant is required to demonstrate having adequate sources of income to cover the cost of studies for the entire study period. One can show any source of income, including an educational loan. However, because each student's personal and economic situation is unique, it is not possible to evaluate prior to an interview how much is required.

Question submitted by Niranjana Adhikari: is IELTS considered same as TOEFL?

U.S. Embassy Nepal: That is up to the school to decide. It makes no difference to a Consular Officer whether you took the TOEFL or the IELTS

Question submitted by md: Does parents' being in US legally affect the visa obtaining process for the children? How much do extra curricular activities affect the resume during interview?

U.S. Embassy Nepal: Please keep in mind that one of the qualifications for a student visa is an intent to return to Nepal or another residence outside of the US. If your entire family lives in the US, you will need to demonstrate that you intend to leave the US after the completion of your education. Extra curricular activities do not at all have an effect.

Question submitted by Noria: What are the procedures to be accepted to a university in US to obtain an I-20?

U.S. Embassy Nepal: We cannot answer that question directly as requirements vary from school to school. We suggest you consult with the US Educational Foundation in Gyaneswhor for more information (link on the left of this page.)

Question submitted by NISHAN: How many sponsors can we have to pay our fees for US education?

U.S. Embassy Nepal: There is no limit to the number of sponsors a student may present to cover their educational expenses. But it may be helpful to understand that the more distant a relative or friend the sponsor may be, the more difficult it may be to justify that the sponsor will be genuinely committed to cover part of your educational expenses.

Question submitted by Mohan Basnet: Do I need to translate my Nepali Documents into English?

U.S. Embassy Nepal: Thanks for this question as it is one we hear often. It is not required to translate all Nepali documents into English. However, if you decide to have any Nepali documents translated, please submit the original Nepali documents along with the translations.

Question submitted by Anup: Is there any particular numbers of applicants getting visa per day or it depends on the deserving student?

U.S. Embassy Nepal: There are no quotas for student visas. It ONLY depends on the number of qualified applicants. Each applicant's interview is their own and no other interview bears on yours. Thanks!

Question submitted by Anand: If my I-20 doesn't not show my middle name and it is in my passport. Do I need to get my I-20 changed?

U.S. Embassy Nepal: Yes, the consular section cannot issue a visa if you qualify if there are mistakes on your I-20. Please contact your school and make the change before you apply.

Question submitted by MABIN SAINJUJ: What are the main reasons for any student to get rejected?

U.S. Embassy Nepal: If the applicant cannot demonstrate that they have the genuine intent to study in the U.S., the ability to study, the ability to afford the full course of education in the U.S. and the intent to return to Nepal -- all requirements under U.S. immigration law -- he or she will not qualify for a student visa to the U.S.

Question submitted by Massum: Can Indian students apply for visa from Nepal?

U.S. Embassy Nepal: You may apply but it will be difficult for a consular officer in Kathmandu to assess your social, economic and cultural ties to India. It is also difficult for a consular officer to assess your finances, if those resources are based in India.

Question submitted by Narjang Karki: Does age play role for student visa??

U.S. Embassy Nepal: Age does not play a role. But please keep in mind that if you finished your +2 ten years ago and now you want to go to a university in the US, you will need to talk about what you've been doing over the last 10 years and why you want to go back to school now.

Question submitted by Guest 5: Is a recommendation by ex-teacher/ university official helpful in getting visa?

U.S. Embassy Nepal: Not necessarily. To qualify for a student visa you must demonstrate that you are intending to study in the United States at the university you chose, can afford your entire education including living expenses in the U.S., and intend to return to a residence abroad after completion of your studies. Any other documents can be helpful, but does not necessarily add to your case.

Question submitted by NISHAN: Besides bank balance and sources of income, is it necessary to show our property valuation?

U.S. Embassy Nepal: You may choose to include any documents to demonstrate that you have the financial resources to support your education. If you are going to use property as a source of income, including genuine, original Nepali documentation to show that you or your family truly owns that property can be useful.

Question submitted by Nahakul Nepal: I had been to the U.S. last Fall. I finished one semester there. But in this February I had to come Nepal due to my personal reason. Now I want to join the school again, I am still UMD student, so I don't need to apply again, it is possible that I will be awarded with assistantship again. So, my question is should I apply for new visa or not, my

departure date of the US is Feb 7, 2009. If I need to apply for visa again what documents should I need?

U.S. Embassy Nepal: If you still have a valid visa, a valid I-20 and have been accepted back to the same program, you do not need to come back in for an interview. However, if you do need another visa, you need to make sure that you have all the necessary documents again -- valid I-20 -- and meet all of the same criteria for any other student visa applicant.

Question submitted by Sarose Khanal: If I happen to get good job from good organization after my graduation, can I stay for few years taking that opportunity as internship or something that enhances my skills to related field?

U.S. Embassy Nepal: There is an opportunity for some jobs to be considered under the Optional Practical Training (OPT) portion of a student visa, but that program MUST be coordinated with your school. In order to work independently of your student visa program or OPT, you must change your visa status to an appropriate non-immigrant worker visa category, such as an H1B. That must be done through a petitioning employer. You may NOT simply decide to work on your own as it will be in violation of your status in the U.S.

Question submitted by guest 7: I returned to Nepal after one year certificate course at CFNI, Dallas, in 2005, and would like to enroll there for advanced one year course, so do I need I-20 again? Thanks; Dhan

U.S. Embassy Nepal: That is a good question. Because you would be starting a new program, you will need a new I-20.

Question submitted by Poonam: What I am concerned about is, in the visa interview whether the US embassy considers the bank statements of 'A' class banks only or we can submit bank statement from financing institutions also. I have bank transactions only in financing institutions. So can you please suggest?

U.S. Embassy Nepal: You may bring a statement from any bank or financial institution. If you decide to bring a financial statement, it is helpful to show several months (six months or more) of transactions and not just a couple of days. Again note that your financial documents are there to support your effort to demonstrate your overall ability to pay for your full course of studies in the U.S.

Question submitted by Guest: I have got assistantship for graduate study in USA and it is sufficient for my expenditures. Do I still have to show bank balances or not?

U.S. Embassy Nepal: A similar question was asked earlier, but here it is again. An I-20 shows the amount of scholarship or assistantship provided to a student. Consular officers look only at the total cost of studying in the U.S. when they review an I-20, not just tuition. Bank balances and other credible documentary evidence of financial sources are not needed if the

assistantship or scholarship covers all expenses indicated on the I-20 including living, insurance, or “other” and if the assistantship is guaranteed for all years of study. When an assistantship or scholarship covers all expenses for every year of study, the I-20 serves as your documentary evidence of income. If the assistantship or scholarship is only for one year or one semester, or does not cover all expenses indicated on the I-20, other income sources will have to be demonstrated.

Question submitted by Guest 5: Suppose I don't have a bank balance, even though I want to study in US. What documents should I produce?

U.S. Embassy Nepal: It is not required that you present a bank balance, only that you can demonstrate that you have enough financial resources to cover your full course of studies. If you don't have the resources to cover the cost of your studies, you may wish to look for scholarships. Thousands of students are given scholarships every year and you could be one of them. We recommend that you check with USEF to explore the possibility of applying for scholarships.

Question submitted by Shirisha: I have made my cousin my sponsor, who is a US citizen. What are the necessary documents, they need to provide for me while applying for Visa? Are they different from the normal documents needed to be prepared from the Nepali sponsors?

U.S. Embassy Nepal: Anyone sponsoring a student's education in the U.S. will have to show the same documentary evidence of income whether they are a Nepali citizen or U.S. citizen. A sponsor needs to provide credible documentary evidence of income to cover every year of a student's education in the U.S. – this could possibly be in the form of a bank statement, tax returns, or other documents that show their investments. However, having a U.S. citizen sponsor does not guarantee a student a F-1 visa. Even if the sponsor can afford a student's education, the student still needs to meet the other qualifications of a F-1 visa.

Question submitted by Anil: What are the facts that the embassy really look for?

U.S. Embassy Nepal: Consular officers at the U.S. Embassy adjudicate student visa applications according to the U.S. Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) and the Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM). Their decisions are based in law and they have great pressure on them to uphold this law in everything they do. What consular officers are looking for are students that qualify for F-1 visas based upon their ability to meet the strict qualifications laid out in the INA and the FAM. The section of law they use most is in something called 9 FAM 41.61. According to this section of the law, an F-1 visa applicant must be intending to study in the United States at the university they chose, can afford their entire education including living expenses in the U.S., and intend to return to a residence abroad after completion of their studies. It is important to note, that the law also says that “If an applicant fails to meet one or more of the above criteria, he or she must be refused a visa...”

Question submitted by Sushrut Joshi Timilsina: What are the major problems for an individual to get his/her visa rejected? How can an individual easily get a student visa?

U.S. Embassy Nepal: This is a question that people ask us every day, and we answer the same way each time: There is no “easy” way to get a visa, you simply must qualify under existing US law. To qualify for a student visa, you must demonstrate your intent to study, your ability to pay for the entirety of your education, and your intent to return back to Nepal. Not everyone qualifies for a student visa – that’s just reality. The biggest problem that we see here with student visas is ability to afford it. Think about it, how many of your friends’ families can afford to pay Rs. 14 Lakh EVERY YEAR FOR 4 or 5 YEARS? 60 or 70 Lakh! Not many families can afford that, even in America. This is why we stress that it’s important to look for scholarships and cheaper universities. Good luck to you!

Question submitted by Kishore: Why most of the students gets rejected even they have been accepted from college and university? I think rights of the students have been misused in this case. And the half of fee is also not refundable in case of rejection. So I think they are doing business.

U.S. Embassy Nepal: Kishore, thanks for a great question. Simply being admitted to a university does not qualify someone for a student visa for two reasons: First, the officer must still establish that the prospective student has the financial means to pay for his/her education. Second, there are many universities that accept 100% of all applicants – leading to the possibility that some people who are accepted are NOT genuine students, and it is up to the Consular Officer to determine whether the applicant is a person who is intending to study in the US. As for non-refundable fees, each university has its own policies and we have no control over that. But please keep in mind that the fees you are paying are for work that is being done on your visa application and this work gets done regardless of whether or not you get accepted into the university OR whether or not you qualify for a visa.

Question submitted by MABIN SAINJU: What is the maximum time that an interviewer takes to decide on whether to give visa or not?

U.S. Embassy Nepal: The interview lasts as long as it is necessary for the Consular Officer to make a decision. Some cases take less than a minute, and some cases can last several weeks - with several interviews. There are no guidelines for how long an interview should last.

Question submitted Upendra Mani Adhikari: I am a student in physics, currently studying M.Sc physics at Tribhuvan University Kirtipur. I heard United States of America is going to close giving Scholarship program due to the present recession. Is it true?

U.S. Embassy Nepal: Great question! Most scholarships are given out by universities not the U.S. government. Some universities may be affected by the recession more than others - but each individual school will decide on how to distribute scholarships.

Question submitted by Anup: My brother is studying undergraduate in US. Now, I want to apply for graduate. Does it affect me for getting visa?

U.S. Embassy Nepal: Anup, you have to qualify for a student visa on your own merits. The only way this can affect you is if your parents cannot afford to pay for both your brother AND for you. If your brother is receiving a scholarship you should bring evidence of this as it may help your case.

Question submitted by Sarita: I'm applying for my master's degree in MBA what are the possible questions on my interview?

U.S. Embassy Nepal: Again, a consular officer will be determining whether you demonstrate the genuine intent to study in the U.S., have the ability to study in the U.S., and whether you can afford your full course of education. During the interview, the consular officer will ask a wide variety of questions about what your plans are, why you chose the school, and other questions to determine your genuine intent to study. Ability can be demonstrated by previous coursework in Nepal. And your financial ability to afford your education will depend upon who is sponsoring you and from which sources that income is coming from. You need to demonstrate all 3 things in order to qualify for a student visa to the U.S.

Question submitted by Bhuwan: Hello Sir/Madam, I am a student currently residing in the US in F1 visa status. My visa will expire in August of 2009. But I will not be completing my schooling till that date as I have to study some pre-requisite during first semester. This has compelled me to stay in US till December- the time I will be graduated. My question, therefore, is- do I have to visit Nepal and extend my visa in order to stay here till December? I anticipate your response. Thank you.

U.S. Embassy Nepal: Bhuwan, the period of validity written on a visa refers to the period of time you have to ENTER the United States. A F-1 student visa remains valid, once you have entered, as long as you are in status at your university. You do not need to extend your visa at this point.

Question submitted by Niranjana Adhikari: how long does it take to get an appointment with consular staff after I submit application to Nabil Bank?

U.S. Embassy Nepal: You should apply for a student visa as early as possible, but not more than 120 days before your I-20 reporting date. Wait times vary depending on the time of year. Often it is possible to schedule an appointment within days. May-August and November-January are peak times for student visa applications. During these months, wait times may be longer, perhaps 2-3 weeks, so please plan accordingly. Even if you get an early appointment, there remains the possibility that your case will take further processing. This could delay you another few weeks.

U.S. Embassy Nepal: If your appointment date is after the reporting date noted on your I-20, you should notify the staff at Nabil Bank and they will provide you with an earlier appointment if possible.

Question submitted by Mohan Basnet: I have got scholarship notifications from other universities through e-mail, but I have not got the scholarship letter through e-mail. Can I bring the printed version of the scholarship notification from my E-mail inbox??

U.S. Embassy Nepal: Mohan, we have already answered this one, but here it is again: We usually like to see all your scholarships listed on your I-20. There are situations where the scholarship was provided very late and there is not enough time to update an I-20 AND make it to first day of class on time. In those cases we accept secondary evidence such as letter from the schools - original letters on letterhead!

Question submitted by Kabindra Sedhain: Sir, my father has got account in two banks so please tell me whether I have to submit the transactions of both banks or not?

U.S. Embassy Nepal: You are welcome to submit as many forms of credible documentary evidence of your financial support, income, or funds to draw on as you see necessary.

U.S. Embassy Nepal: What you have to show is that you have sufficient funds to draw on to cover all of your tuition, living, and other expenses the entire time you are in the U.S.

Question submitted by Mohan Basnet: What are the probabilities of getting a VISA if I have an I-20 without any scholarships?? But I can afford my expenses while at US ...

U.S. Embassy Nepal: In order to qualify for a student visa, applicants are not required to have a scholarship. You have to demonstrate that you have residence abroad to which you intend to return, you have sufficient funds and financial sources to draw on to pay for your entire education, and that you intend to study in the U.S.

Question submitted by NISHAN: I've applied last time for spring session and now I'm applying for this fall session so, will the same documents work? During an interview how do you decide that the student can pay for the fees or not.

U.S. Embassy Nepal: No, you need to have a valid I-20 from the school that shows the correct start date and you can only apply 120 days or less prior to the start date shown on the I-20. In addition, you will still need to demonstrate your genuine intent to study, ability to study, ability to afford the full course of your education and intent to return to Nepal following the end of your studies.

U.S. Embassy Nepal: Your second question is a very good question and a rather complicated one. Part of the job of consular officers is to understand both the economic realities here in Nepal and the economic demands on a student in the U.S. We have several resources that we

consult to understand and evaluate the strength of the sources of income presented by student applicants, including our experience of working and living here in Nepal.

Question submitted by Niranjana Adhikari: What is the probability for getting visa as a transfer student for last year under graduate?

U.S. Embassy Nepal: It is a good question, but there are really no probabilities involved in visa adjudications. Being a transfer student is largely irrelevant. Like all other F-1 applicants, a transfer student has to show that they intend to study in the U.S., they can afford their entire education there, and that they are intending to return to a residence abroad upon completion of their studies.

U.S. Embassy Nepal: Thank you for participating. This webchat is now closed. The transcript will be available in this chat room and on the U.S. Embassy website. Please look for our next webchat in late May!