

I went to get my visa to go for a holiday in the US for about two weeks and paid my fee, had all my documents and they did not even open my file and take a look at the documents? When I went up to the window they just asked me questions, which I answered honestly, and then said I have nothing that ties me to the country. How can that be so when they did not even look at my documents?

Sabrina in San Fernando

Many people are confused when during their visa interview at the U.S. Embassy the Consular Officer does not look at the many documents they brought, or gives them only a brief glance.

The first thing you need to know is that our Consular Officers are NOT required to look at your additional documents. In fact, the only documents you are required by U.S. law to bring to an interview for a tourist visa are your passport, an application form (DS-156), your photo, the receipt from TT Post, and, for most men, the supplemental form (DS-157). Some other visa types, like student visas and work visas, have additional document requirements. Our officers are trained to evaluate an application using only the required documents, and then conduct an interview.

Most things that the Officer needs to know about you can be discovered through the interview. Instead of shuffling through the stacks of paper that most applicants bring, the Officer would rather just have a conversation with you about your travel plans and personal situation. For instance, most people know where they work and how much they earn. So if the Officer asks you about your job and your salary, why would you need to show them a job letter? Unless Officers think you are not being truthful, they have no need to look at extra documents. You should not be offended, insulted, or concerned if the officer does not ask to see your documents; in fact, this usually means that the officer believed what you had to say.

All that said, remember that the burden of proof is on you to prove your qualifications for a visa. So if the Officer does want to see additional proof, you will want to come prepared with any document that you think will demonstrate your ties to T&T, like job letters, bank statements,

deeds, etc. Maybe the Officer will ask for these documents, or maybe he won't, but you should be prepared one way or another.