



INSTRUCTIONS FOR STUDENT VISA APPLICANTS

To fill out your visa application forms and book a visa interview appointment online, go to the U.S. Embassy website at <http://yaounde.usembassy.gov> and follow all instructions carefully. You must present your I-20 or DS-2019 at the time of your appointment.

NOTE: Student visas can only be issued within 120 days of the reporting date on the I-20 or DS-2019; do not book a visa appointment more than 120 days before your reporting date.

Students may not enter the United States more than 30 days before their reporting dates. If you arrive at a U.S. port of entry more than 30 days before your reporting date, you will be asked to return to Cameroon.

Student visa applicants should bring to their visa interview all documentation that may be pertinent to demonstrating eligibility for the F-1 student visa. Documentation should be original; the Consular Officer may take copies of your documentation for verification. Four types of documentation will be necessary:

1. A VALID I-20 AND A SEVIS FEE RECEIPT

Check your I-20 to make sure that **(a)** your name, date and place of birth, and country of citizenship are correct and the same as they appear on your passport; **(b)** all spaces are filled in, including reporting dates and financial data; **(c)** the Designated School Official has signed it. If there are any errors or omissions on the I-20, it is not valid and cannot be used for the issuance of a visa. Contact your school and have them issue a new I-20 before your visa interview. If the reporting date in #5 on the I-20 will have passed before your visa is issued or before you travel to the United States, the I-20 is invalid; obtain a new I-20 with a later reporting date before your visa interview.

To pay the SEVIS fee, go to www.fmjfee.com, follow instructions, and complete the form I-901. You may pay this \$200 fee (not to be confused with the \$131 visa application fee) by credit card or by check/bank draft. **THE SEVIS FEE MUST BE PAID PRIOR TO THE INTERVIEW.** Please bring a copy of your receipt for the SEVIS fee payment to your interview. Your appointment will be cancelled if you do not have the receipt with you, and you will be asked to return with proof of payment.

2. ACADEMIC DOCUMENTS

You must provide evidence that you are a bonafide student; that your sole purpose for traveling to the United States is to study, and that you are not likely to drop out of school for academic or personal reasons. You may be asked about your commitment to education, your reasons for studying in the United States, your reasons for selecting the institution you are going to, your intended field of study, and your career plans. If you have been out of school for an extended period of time, be prepared to demonstrate your continuing ties to education.

You should bring your academic records, such as transcripts; *baccalauréat*, GCE or other test result certificates; tertiary degree/diploma and other certificates, test score reports (TOEFL, SAT, GRE, GMAT, etc.) and any other academic documentation pertinent to your case. The Embassy may verify the authenticity of documents.

Please see reverse →

3. FINANCIAL DOCUMENTS

You must present evidence that you have adequate funds: that you and your parents (or other sponsor) are willing and able to generate sufficient funds for your entire course of study, and that you would not leave school for financial reasons or take a job illegally in the United States.

You should present a letter from your parents (or other sponsor), specifically explaining **HOW** they are going to finance your education. They must document all **SOURCES and AMOUNTS of INCOME**, showing how much they earn each year. It is necessary to document that they are **EARNING** enough income to cover family living and business expenses as well as the cost of your education.

Documentation of income is different for each family, but could include such items as salary slips, contracts, company annual audited accounts and financial statements, tax clearance certificates, etc.

Your parents' or sponsor's bank accounts should show that they have liquid assets sufficient to cover the first year of your education. Bank statements should cover the past six months and be no more than one month old. If bank statements are not in your parents' (or other sponsor's) names, demonstrate the link between the name on the statement and your parents/sponsor. **Remember, a bank statement alone is not sufficient evidence of your financial support; you must also show evidence of your sponsor's ongoing sources and amounts of income.**

Documentation of other assets, such as land, buildings, vehicles, equipment, etc., should be presented only if pertinent to your family's ability to finance your education.

Students who are married and/or financially independent of their parents should present evidence of their current employment and their own financial status.

4. PROOF OF TIES TO CAMEROON—WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

U.S. Immigration law requires evidence that you have a home [not a house, but a home] abroad (i.e., in Cameroon or another country other than the U.S.) to which you will return following your temporary stay in the United States; evidence of social, economic, and family ties in your home country prior travel abroad; plus evidence of viable career plans that will bring you home. Be prepared to discuss your ties to home and the factors that will make you return home voluntarily after your studies in the United States. U.S. immigration law requires the Consular Officer to assume that you intend to immigrate to the U.S., until you prove otherwise. As a student, your family ties and your career plans are your strongest evidence of your intention to return home. You should know by now the reasons why you would not be tempted to stay in the United States after your studies and all the reasons why you want to come home.

HELPFUL HINTS

- **HONESTY IS THE ONLY POLICY.** The slightest untruth will disqualify you.
- Prepare for your visa interview well in advance, obtaining all documents and organizing them effectively. Remove documents from envelopes and place them in a flat file folder, grouped according to their purpose so that you can access them quickly during your interview.
- Speak clearly, look the interviewer in the eye, and answer all questions specifically.
- Do not answer questions with documents—answer them yourself. The officer may or may not ask for documents to clarify.
- Be prepared to make your own case, and to verify everything you say. Parents are not permitted to accompany student visa applicants; you must be able to speak for yourself.
- Dress well.
- If your visa application is denied, you should not reapply immediately, but should strengthen your case. If you go back for a second visa interview, be prepared to present **new** evidence that overcomes the reasons for your first denial.