



Applying for a US Visitor's Visa

Who needs a U.S. Visa to enter the U.S.?

International students who plan on traveling to the U.S. to attend a conference or for personal travel require a U.S. Visitor's Visa (Visa category "B") if they are a citizen of a country that is currently not part of the U.S. Visa Waiver Program (VWP). To determine what kind of visa to apply for, please see <http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/english/visit/visitor.html>.

Citizens from participating countries in the **Visa Waiver Program (VWP)** do not need a U.S. Visitor's Visa for visits of 90 days or less; however, those citizens must meet all VWP eligibility requirements which include obtaining approved authorization through the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) and presenting a valid passport of the appropriate type. VWP participants who make their initial entry into the U.S. by land from Canada are not required to apply for travel authorization via ESTA before travelling. A list of VWP participant countries and full details on eligibility requirements may be found at <http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/english/visit/visa-waiver-program.html>

Note: If you have visited the U.S. under the VWP, then made a trip to Canada for a period of time, and now wish to be readmitted to the U.S., you may only do so under the VWP for the **balance** of your original authorization period (ESTA authorization is typically valid for two years, and each stay in the U.S. must be 90 days or less). If you wish to seek re-entry to the U.S. for a period of time **beyond** your original authorization period, you may reapply through ESTA for another approved authorization, or else obtain a U.S. Visitor's Visa.

How do I apply for a U.S. Visa?

Step 1. Complete the online DS-160 visa application form at <https://ceac.state.gov/genniv/>

- i. As part of the electronic submission of your application, you will be asked to provide an electronic copy of your photo. The photo must meet requirements for photo submission and can be found at http://travel.state.gov/visa/visaphotoreq/visaphotoreq_5334.html
- ii. After completing the DS-160, you will electronically submit the application and will be provided with a confirmation page that includes a bar code. You must bring this confirmation page with you to the interview (see Step 2).
- iii. Pay the Nonimmigrant Visa (MRV) application fee of **\$160 USD** online using a credit card or at Scotiabank (by telephone or in person using cash). This fee is due at the time the DS-160 application is submitted and is nonrefundable and nontransferable regardless of whether a visa is issued. Full details on fee payment options may be found at http://www.usvisa-info.com/en-CA/selfservice/us_fee_payment_options

Citizens of certain countries may have to pay an additional "reciprocity fee" if a visa is approved (see 'Fees' section of this handout for more information).

Step 2. Schedule a visa interview with the U.S. Consulate in Vancouver. You have two options for scheduling your appointment:

- Online at <http://canada.usvisa-info.com/>
- By phone at (604) 800-2794 from the greater Vancouver area.

You will require proof that your visa application processing fee has been paid as well as your DS-160 confirmation (barcode) number in order to schedule your appointment.

Note: Certain individuals may be eligible for the Interview Waiver Program (IWP). The IWP exempts qualified applicants from attending an in-person visa interview. If this applies to you, you will be informed when you request the visa interview and will be given instructions on how to send your documents to the U.S. Consulate for visa processing.

Step 3. Attend your interview at the scheduled time. Take the following supporting documents with you:

- a) **Valid passport** – should be valid for at least 6 months past your intended stay in the US
- b) Valid Canadian **study permit**
- c) Official current **SFU confirmation of enrolment letter** which may be downloaded through the Student Information System.
 - i. *Exception:* Graduate students may request a letter from their department should they wish to include proof of financial support
- d) If you are currently employed, provide a **letter from your employer** specifying job title, salary and the date you started working
- e) Evidence that you have **registered for courses** and **paid tuition** for an upcoming semester, if you are applying for a US visa close to the start of the Fall, Spring or Summer sessions (not required, but recommended)
- f) Other **evidence of strong economic and social ties to Canada** (examples include bank letters or statements, rental agreements/property title, proof of car ownership, etc.)
- g) Details of your **proposed trip** (intended destinations, dates of travel, etc.)

You may also refer to the U.S. Consulate's document checklists at <http://canada.usembassy.gov/visas/visas/categories-and-requirements.html>.

Fees

There are two types of fees associated with the US Nonimmigrant visa application process:

Nonimmigrant Visa (MRV) Application Processing Fee

This is a *nonrefundable* application processing fee that must be paid by **all** individuals who apply for a US visa. Current nonimmigrant visa fees can be found at <http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/english/fees/fees-visa-services.html#temporary>. MRV fees must be paid when the applicant submits the DS-160 visa application form.

Visa Issuance Fee (Reciprocity Fee)

Applicants from certain countries may be required to pay an additional reciprocity fee for visa issuance. This fee is paid by applicants who have been approved for a US Visa following the visa interview. For more information about reciprocity fees, and visa issuance and validity, please visit <http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/english/fees/reciprocity-by-country.html>.

How long will it take to get my U.S. visa processed?

Typical U.S. visa processing times, including typical wait times for interview appointments, can be found at http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/wait/wait_4638.html. Your passport will be held for pickup at the DHL office selected by you during the appointment booking process. For more information, please visit <http://canada.usembassy.gov/visas/visas/processing-times.html>.

What are my chances of getting a U.S. Visa?

US Immigration officials will base their decision on an individual case basis since each student's situation varies widely. The student with the best chance of getting a US Visa would be the one who demonstrates the strongest social and economic ties to Canada at the time of his/her application. For this reason, we recommend that students should not apply for a US Visa during the first year of studies in Canada or if they are very close to graduating.

If you are refused, you will be given a reason based on the section of U.S. law that applies to your case. See http://travel.state.gov/visa/frvi/denials/denials_1361.html for information on U.S. visa denials, including a list of the most common reasons.

Are there any prohibited items that I need to be aware of for my appointment at the U.S. Consulate in Vancouver?

Yes, note that there are certain items that are prohibited inside the U.S. Consulate. A list of these prohibited items and security procedures for all visitors to the U.S. Consulate may be found at: <http://canada.usembassy.gov/consulates/security.html>.

*This is not a legal document and information may change without notice. For legal information, refer to the US Consulate General Vancouver website for updated information: <http://vancouver.usconsulate.gov>
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