



U.S. Embassy – Riyadh Consular Section Visa Advice for Students

Scheduling Your Visa Interview:

The Consular Section advises students who wish to begin study in the United States in September 2009 to initiate the visa application process approximately eight months in advance. This means that during the month of January, students should go to the appointment website located at <http://ksa.us-visaservices.com/forms/default.aspx>. Students should 1) purchase a pin, 2) complete and print out form DS-156. Other required forms (DS-157 and DS-158) can be downloaded from <http://riyadh.usembassy.gov>, and 3) select an appointment date.

Students should request an I-20 from their school and pay the SEVP fee at <http://www.fmjfee.com>. If a student has not received an I-20 and has no SEVP receipt, he/she should still initiate these appointment procedures. If a student does not have their SEVP number at the time of filling out the online application form, they should enter in "N" followed by nine zeros (for example N000000000).*

The Day of the Interview:

On the interview date, the student must come to the U.S. Embassy-Riyadh between 8:00 and 10:00 AM with the required documentation, which is clearly stated on the visa page of the U.S. Embassy website (http://riyadh.usembassy.gov/non-immigrant_visas/student-and-exchange-visas-fl-jl-m1.html). This documentation includes the visa fee receipt that can be purchased from any Samba Bank for SR 498 (US \$131). Cash is not accepted for the application fee. All applications for **all types** of visas must be completed online through <http://evisaforms.state.gov>. Typed or handwritten applications will not be accepted. Please refer to the visa page of the U.S. Embassy website for specific details on required documentation.

After the Interview:

If the Consular Officer retains the passport, then the student will have to purchase a FedEx envelope in which their passport will be sent back to them once the visa has been issued. There is a FedEx agent in the Consular Section waiting area.

If the Consular Officer does not retain the passport, the student will be given a sheet of paper indicating the items that still need to be submitted.

*If a student came to his/her appointment without the I-20 and SEVP receipt, they can send those documents to the embassy by FedEx. When the I-20 arrives from the school, the student should go online, pay the SEVP fee, and print the receipt. These items should be placed, together with the student's passport and a self-addressed FedEx envelope, inside a FedEx envelope addressed to the U.S. Embassy-Riyadh. The Embassy will check the final documentation and begin processing the visa. Provided there are no other issues needing to be resolved, the Consular Section will place a student visa into the passport and FedEx it back to the student. Sometimes processing can take more than two months so it is important to provide all documentation as quickly as possible.

A visa cannot be issued more than 120 days before the start date listed on the I-20. When a student is approved for the visa, it will not be placed in his/her passport until 120 days, or less, before the start date listed on the I-20. A student cannot enter the United States on a student visa more than 30 days before the start date listed on the I-20. The Consular Section strongly recommends that students who need to renew their visas make appointments as far in advance as possible.

If you have further questions about visas, please e-mail: riyadhniv@state.gov

Renewal of Student Visas

The Consular Section strongly recommends that students who wish to renew their visas make appointments as far in advance as possible, in order to avoid long waits or delays in returning to the U.S. Students should consider applying for a new (extended) visa as soon as they receive a new I-20 with validity longer than their current visa. Students with processing pending on their visa renewal can continue to travel on the previous student visa if it remains valid.

Required Documentation for Student Visa Interviews:

- A passport valid for at least six months
- Photocopy of the bio-data page of valid passport
- All previous passports
- Receipt from any SAMBA bank for each applicant
Please note that this fee is non-refundable
- Fully completed and signed application DS-156 (EVAF) form for each applicant
- Fully completed application DS-157 form for all male applicants over 16 years of age
- A fully completed and signed DS-158 form for primary applicant
- Original I-20 form for F visa applicants and DS-2019 form for J visa applicants
- Photocopy of I-20 or DS-2019 form
- Proof of payment of SEVP fee
- One photograph – see requirements below
- Proof of financial ability (either bank statements or proof of a scholarship)
- Transcripts from all educational institutions starting with secondary school

****PLEASE NOTE****

It not necessary for all of the information on a student visa to match the information on a student's I-20 or DS-2019 for every entry to the United States. To enter the United States, a student must have a valid visa and a valid I-20 or DS-2019 which corresponds to a valid registration with the SEVP program.

Photograph Requirements:

- Photo size must be 5 x 5 cm (2" x 2")
- Photo must be original, taken within the past 6 months, and show current appearance
- Photo background must be plain white
- Photo must be in sharp focus, and correctly exposed (not too dark or too light)
- Photo must be taken from a straight frontal view, showing full face including both ears
- Facial dimensions must be between 2.5 cm and 3.5 cm from the top of the head to the bottom of the chin
- Photo should show normal street attire:
 - Uniforms should not be worn except for religious attire that is worn daily
 - Hats or coverings obscuring the hair or hairline are not allowed. Headgear worn for religious purposes is acceptable provided that the face is uncovered and the hairline and jaw line are visible
 - Dark or non-prescription glasses with tinted lenses are not acceptable. Prescription glasses, hearing devices, wigs or similar articles, should be shown if normally worn
- **Photos cannot be digitally altered. They must not be edited by computer to even out skin tone or remove blemishes. Digital editing is common at photo shops throughout Saudi Arabia. Please instruct your photographer not to change any aspect of the photo before printing**