OLLSCOIL NA GAILLIMHE
UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY

The below information is correct as of October 2023.
For the most up-to-date information, please visit:
https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/exchange.html

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1. **Request a DS-2019 / I-20.**
    Depending on the University you are attending, you may need to complete a separate application to receive your DS-2019/I20. Some universities will capture this information in the initial application form, and then automatically send you your DS-2019 / 1-20.
    Each institution is different so don't expect this to be issued automatically. If you're unsure, check communication from your host institution, their international office website will have this listed. Alternatively, contact suzanne.bradish@universityofgalway.ie

2. **Review your DS-2019 / I-20.**
    Review your immigration document (DS-2019 / 1-20) and confirm that your name is exactly as on your passport, that your date of birth is correct, and that your programme information is correct. Sign and date your document.
    If any information in your immigration document is incorrect, contact the host university to rectify this before proceeding further with your visa application.

3. **Complete a DS-160 application.**

    - **Online Nonimmigrant Visa Application,** Form DS-160 – Learn more about completing the DS-160.
      You must: 1) complete the online visa application and 2) print the application form confirmation page to bring to your interview.

    - **Photo** You will upload your photo while completing the online Form DS-160. Your photo must be in the format explained in the Photograph Requirements.

4. **Pay the I-901 Sevis Fee.**
    Using the SEVIS ID located on your immigration document (I-20 or DS-2019) pay the SEVIS fee online - Department of Homeland Security - Form I-901 (fmjfee.com) . Ensure to print your receipt. You will need to present your I-901 SEVIS Fee payment receipt at your visa interview, and during travel.

5. **Make an appointment for an in-person interview at the U.S. Embassy.**
    Most students will need to attend an in-person interview at the U.S. Embassy in Dublin as part of the VISA process. It's important to book your appointment as early as possible. Appointments can be booked online via the U.S. Embassy https://ais.usvisa-info.com/en-ie/niv

Please note: Appointment wait times can vary especially during summer months. Wait times can be checked online on the U.S. Department of State website - https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/exchange.html#howtoapply

6. **Prepare for your interview.**

   You will require the following for your interview:

   - **Passport** valid for travel to the United States - Your passport must be valid for at least six months beyond your period of stay in the United States (unless exempt by country-specific agreements).
   - **Non-immigrant Visa Application, Form DS-160 confirmation page.**
   - **Application fee payment receipt -** A receipt of the paid SEVIS 1-901 fee
   - **Photo** You will upload your photo while completing the online Form DS-160. If the photo upload fails, you must bring one printed photo in the format explained in the Photograph Requirements.
   - **Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor Status, Form DS-2019** Ensure that you sign and date this.
   - **Host University acceptance letter**
   - **Evidence of Financial Support**
   - **Evidence of ties to your home country**

7. **Attend your visa interview.**

A consular officer will interview you to determine whether you are qualified to receive an exchange visitor visa. You must establish that you meet the requirements under U.S. law to receive a visa.

Ink-free, digital fingerprint scans are taken as part of the application process. They are usually taken during your interview, but this varies based on location.

After your visa interview, the consular officer may determine that your application requires further administrative processing. The consular officer will inform you if this is required.

After the visa is approved, you may need to pay a visa issuance fee (if applicable to your nationality), and make arrangements for the return of the passport and visa to you.

Interview tips

- **Maintain a positive attitude, give clear answers, and remain calm.**
  Because of the volume of applications received, all consular officers are under considerable time pressure to conduct a quick and efficient interview. Keep your answers to the officer's questions short and to the point.

- **Ties to your home country**
  You must be able to show that you have reasons for returning to your home country that are stronger than those for remaining in the United States. "Ties" to your home country are the things that bind you to your home town, homeland, or current place of residence. Completing your degree, your family, or a job are all examples of this.

- **Know your Exchange programme**
  You need to articulate the reasons you will study in a particular program in the United States. You should also be able to explain how studying in the U.S. relates to your future professional career when you return home.

- **Employment**
  Your main purpose in coming to the United States should be to study, not for the chance to work before or after your exchange. While some students do work off- campus during their studies, such employment is incidental to your studies. You must be able to clearly articulate your plan to return home at the end of your exchange programme.

- **Additional Documentation**
  It should be immediately clear to the consular officer what written documents you are presenting and what they signify. Lengthy written explanations cannot be quickly read or evaluated. Remember that you will have 2-3 minutes of interview time, if you are lucky.

- **Speak for Yourself**
  Do not bring family members with you to the interview. The consular officer wants to interview you, not your family.