

## DS-160: Visa application form

DS 160 is completed and submitted before the interview is scheduled. It must be submitted 48+ business hours before the interview (suggestion is a week before the interview). This is the first thing the visa officer will look at. If there are discrepancies, the visa will be refused. **Honesty is key!** Students must complete the form themselves – do not use an agent. You **cannot** change any answers after you submit the form. You can submit an updated form once if you made a mistake (possibly). You can only print the form before you submit it.

### Important Information

- **Schedule interview:** must submit application ID number. Your appointment confirmation details must match the DS-160 confirmation sheet. If these do not match, you will not be let into the embassy or consulate. Your passport number must match the passport number on the visa confirmation.
- Only use Chrome, Edge, or Firefox. **Save progress often!**
- Budget several hours to complete. The form is not difficult, but it does ask for a lot of information and detail.
- **Interview location:** One of the first questions asks where are you going to apply for the visa? You don't have to be held to this – you CAN change embassy or consulate locations.
- **Application ID number** is what you use to schedule the interview. Make sure you remember this. If you submit an updated DS-160, make sure the embassy knows the updated application ID number. They may or may not accept the new form.
- 1-3 minutes per interview – it goes quickly. Visa officers focus on key questions from the DS-160.
- **Social media:** provide ALL social media accounts (URL for Facebook). DOS is using AI to find applicant social media accounts. There is a dropdown to show which social media platforms DOS cares about (WhatsApp is currently not on the list).
  - Cannot forget one of your accounts. If you do, think about submitting a new form.
  - DOS is looking for anything that seems to be supporting foreign terrorism, hostile attitude toward the U.S. culture, citizens, etc. Be aware of posts you are tagged in.
  - Review Social media accounts: Would you be ok with showing this to your grandmother or in a newspaper?
  - Can the department see private accounts? Can they see deleted posts? We don't know.
  - If you don't have any social media, it's a big red flag, so you'll need to explain a LOT if you really don't have social media.
- **Previous refusals:** You have to be honest on the visa application form. If you've ever been denied a visa or travel authorization, you have to explain. Stay positive and provide context. **Don't try to guess the reason for the refusal.** Put positive recent details (ex: why this degree is so important to your future).
- **Family in the U.S.:** Is this applicant going to leave the U.S. after they graduate? **MUST** list family in the U.S. already. Be honest! List as many details as you can. Don't click "do not know" unless there is absolutely no way to find out. List their immigration status. Don't hide – be transparent.
  - Immediate relatives: not uncles/aunts, but does include fiancé, sisters, brothers, child, spouse.

- If no immediate relatives, you are asked about “other” relatives. If there is anyone who is remotely related to you, put them down. You can explain in the visa interview that you don’t really know them if that is the case.
- **Permanent Residency:** Has anyone ever filed an immigrant petition on your behalf? Answer honestly.
- **Have you ever been arrested or convicted for any offense?** This means EVER, even if the record was expunged. This means world-wide records. You do not have to include a routine traffic ticket.
- There are no document uploads.
- **Contact in the U.S.:** You can put your DSO and then an academic advisor or someone else in the U.S. whom you know.
- **U.S. Address:** if you don’t know where you are going to live, use the main university address: 7502 Fondren, Houston, TX 77074.
- **Email address:** This is very important to make sure this is an accurate address and you will have access to into the future. Make sure that it’s not a country specific email address.

## Common Questions

- If there has been a past visa denial: What has changed since your last visa interview?
- Why do you want to study at Houston Christian University?
- Why do you want to study your specific program?
- How are you going to pay for your studies in the U.S.?
- Why do you need to go study in the U.S.? Why can’t you take this program in your home country?
- If the degree name is different from the CIP code name on the I-20, make sure to explain that there are limited CIP codes to choose from, and the university registrar has assigned CIP codes. Visit the [HCU CIP code website](#).
- abroad and returned? Shows that you do have non-immigrant intent. It does help!
- Talk about what you are going to do with this degree outside of the U.S.

## Travel to the U.S.

- CBP **can** search your phone. Make sure of your WhatsApp messages.
- Don’t need to wipe your device or bring a burner phone.

## Renew a Visa

- If your visa expired less than 12 months ago, you may possible be able to renew it by drop box.
- Plan ahead, and your visa is expired, and you need to leave for an emergency, you may have delays in returning to school.
- Try to renew your visa over the summer or long breaks.
- You **can** apply for a new visa before your current one expires, especially if you have a good amount of time outside the U.S. to apply and wait for the visa interview.