

Here are the excerpts from the Visa counseling session held today in Chennai. The text inside the " " is what the visa officer said.

**1) Is Drop Box compulsory?**

Yes. All applicants approaching Chennai US Consulate should apply through the drop box method.

This new method is taken as an experimental one trying to cope up with the increase in the influx of applications.

In 1996 40000 Indian students applied for visa and nowadays it has increased to 215,000 approximately.

The US consulate website will be update soon and it will contain all the required information.

**2) Should I pay the whole first year fees in order to aver**

No. It is not a criterion to apply in this scheme. But it will be good to do so. For the first year you can pay the fees or show the ability to pay the fees in the form of liquid assets. Paying the fees is better than showing the ability to pay the same.

We can even pay only the first semester fees and show the ability to pay the next semester fees and also the subsequent years.

For the subsequent year expenses, we can show your properties

**3) Can I show provisional certificate in the place of my original degree certificate?**

Yes. Though it is not necessary to show these documents, they encourage us to show either provisional or original degree certificate. You can also take mark sheets along with this. It will help them to gauge our education capabilities.

**4) I have been offered a partial scholarship. What financial documents should I show?**

Amount mentioned in the I-20 form for 1 year MINUS the scholarship amount should be shown in the form of financial documents.

**5) The university has offered aid only for this year. What about the financial documents?**

You can show funding for the subsequent year in the form of property or liquid assets. You can also show in written form if the university has intention to give aid for the next year also.

**6) Can I show an educational loan as my source of funding?**

Yes. You can do so. But if doesn't cover the entire 1 year amount mentioned in the I-20 form then you have to show proof of funding for the remaining amount.

**7) Some banks give loan only after getting visa? What should I do in this case?**

You have to produce in writing from the bank that it is willing to give you a loan for so & so amount if you get visa.

**8) I have got H-1B visa now. Now I want to change it to F-1 Visa. Can I do this?**

Yes. You can do it.

**9) Will I get rejected because my score in GRE or TOEFL is low?**

No chance. Nobody will reject you just on the basis of low score. Variety of

things make up the final decision.

**10) Can I reach US later than the date mentioned in the I-20 form?** Let us say I reach there after a week mentioned in the I-20 form.

It may lead a difficult situation. The INS officer can question you the reason for late arrival. If you had already asked the university for the extension of the deadline and had received the approval in the form of an official letter, you can show this to the INS officer.

**11) When will I receive the visa after I applied for it through this drop box? scheme?**

It can vary - May take just 3 days or upto 2-3 weeks. Don't worry if it takes long.

**12) How soon I can apply for the visa?**

No more than 90 days before the date mentioned in the I-20 form.

**13) Can I show the proof of working?**

You are welcome to do so. It can fill the gap between graduation and today.

**14) What to do if the aid is not mentioned in the I-20? Can I show e-mail? mentioning the aid?**

E-mails cannot be accepted. Official letters mentioning the aid are accepted.

**15) Regarding Port of Entry?**

You cannot land in California with an admission in a university in New York.

You should land near the university. Basically it should be logical enough.

**16) Can I apply from a country in which I'm not a resident?**

Mostly you cannot. The officers can ask you to go to your resident nation and apply for a visa.

**17) What is this 214-B?**

It is the US law related to denial of visa. To avoid denial due to this, one must show that he'll return to India and not settle in the Uncle Sam's land.

**18) Can I show Fixed deposit or Life insurance?**

Fixed deposit is ok. But life insurance -NO.

**19) If rejected for a visa, can I try again with a different I-20 form?**

It is not wise to do so. But if you have the right explanation then you can go on. While trying for the second time, you have to send them through ordinary mail. Second time applications are not accepted by drop box or at counters in the US consulate.

**20) My brother, sister, uncle is in US. He is going to sponsor me?**

No problem. You will not be rejected due to this. But showing parents as the sponsors are the best way.

Showing a person earning in dollars as the sponsor is good in monetary aspects.

**21) I applied through the drop box scheme. I have received my documents along with a letter asking me to appear for an interview. Is this abnormal?**

No. It is common. Around 40% of the applicants may be called for an interview. This is done just to clear any doubts, the officer may have on your visa application.

**22) Is it compulsory to apply thro Drop Box?**

A: Yes it's compulsory from May 2001.

**23) Is it compulsory to pay the first year fees?**

A: No its not. It's optional. ("What better way is there to convince the visa officer that you will pay the fees other than paying the fees itself").

**24) What if the unit doesn't accept the fees from India?**

A: You can get a Demand Draft ("It's not the same as paying your fees, but it's the next best alternative"). You should get a letter from the unit saying that they don't accept the fees in advance.

**25) Does paying the fees guarantee a visa?**

A: It doesn't.

**26) Why the sudden change in visa policy? Will it be tough to get a visa this year?**

A: This has nothing to do with change in policy. It seems that they couldn't handle the enormous amount of visa applications at the Chennai consulate and so they decided to screen the applicants before they called them for the personal interview. Last year counter visas were issued to people who didn't need a personal interview. This year they intend to screen those people who don't need a personal interview first by seeing the application. Then the rest are called for a personal interview. They expect that 40% of all the applicants would be called for an interview.

**27) Why are they asking us to pay the fees in advance?**

A: "2 months back we picked out random applications and checked whether they were genuine by calling the banks, we found out that 20% of the documents were forged" This made them think of the scheme about asking students to pay the fees in advance.

**28) Is it ok to get a bank loan?**

A: yes, it's ok to get a bank loan.

**29) What if I have brothers or sisters in the US, will it affect my chances of getting a visa?**

A: No, as long as you are not the last member of your family in India and all others have immigrated to US. Brothers or sisters working on H1B visa is fine.

**30) Is it ok if my relative sponsors my education?**

A: " If you have a brother working at Microsoft making 100000\$ a

year, its pretty good". I think they feel that the person who sponsors you should have enough money to sponsor you. Of course using u r relative as a sponsor should be only u r second choice.

**31) Are fixed deposits ok?**

A: Yes.

**32) What is the ideal list of documents that I can submit?**

A: Passport, App fees (2 DD'S), I-20, GRE&TOEFL scores, Letter from the unit saying that u have been admitted, proof of 1 year funds, bank statements for not more than 6 months, a CA statement with details of all u properties etc...

**33) What if I have a partial scholarship, should I pay the balance? fees?**

A: Yes. (This is optional)

**34) Can I go to another place other than the port of entry?**

A: Yes, as long as you have a valid reason. If u have to go to NY and u go to Miami u might be denied entry.

**35) on what basis is the visa given?**

A: The 2 main things that they look for now is 1. whether u have the capacity to complete your degree (Gre scores are evaluate whether u r capable) 2. whether you have enough money? (fin statements)

**36) What is a good score?**

A: "We look at percentiles and not the scores"

**37) Does a bad verbal score affect my chances for a visa?**

A: A bad verbal scores combined with other factors might contribute to rejection.