

## VISA Qs

### **1. How many universities did you apply to?**

This is a very basic question, but linked to this is the second question that is shot at you.

### **2. How many admits/ rejects?**

As explained in the above question, both of these are interlinked. Now if you applied to 4, were accepted in 1 and got 3 rejects..you dont have to be Mr. TRUTH. So put it as applied to 4, got 1, awaiting 2, 1 reject or applied to 4, got 1, awaiting 3. But then you have to state as in Question 3. that this was supposed to be your first choice anyhow, so even if you would have had the admit letters from any of the other 3, you would certainly have gone for this one. But if you are one of those type who offered to 1 and got just 1, dont go about saying that!!! Say you applied to 4 ,got 1, awaiting 3..put up the other univ's names;-) coz they think that someone who has applied to just one univ isnt really serious about his admissions and so isnt interested in educational purpose..which means a direct reject. If you applied to 11, got from just one..better say that you applied to just 4 or 5, and one reject, one admit and rest awaited. Many a times its better not to carry the reject letters, though some people advise so, but the thing is some univs reject on totally baseless matters..eg. I was accepted by Univ of Maryland, College Park..but I was rejected by Univ of Texas, Dallas. I passed my BE in EC wiht 72%, now UTD sent me a rejection letter stating that I dint meet their academic requirements". Well they admitted people with 60% marks. So now If i carried that letter with me, though my acads were great, the letter would have created a negative impression in the mind of the interviewing officer. So you are the best judge as to if the rejection letter will do you good/bad. Its never gonna do good, beleive me :-P.

### **3. What was your first choice?**

The answer to this question also is dependant on the earlier one.

### **4. What is your GRE/TOEFL score?**

As per your details. But always try to speak out the better score first. Like if you have a good TOEFL score ,say 630, and a GRE of 1750, speak out your TOEFL first and then GRE. Usually people think, they can go and lead them by answering long and sweet, like if asked for scores, the long answer might be : "Sir, I took my Computer based TOEFL and scored 270 at it, while I took the GRE and scored 800 in Quantitative, 710 in Analytical and 430 in Verbal". Well this can heat up the officer. He/She might feel you are taking him for ride ..even if you are not. So keep it short. So let the answer be : " TOEFL 270, GRE : 1940". Thats it!!..as much as he asked for. Makes his job easier and so he doesnt get pissed off at any of your leading behaviours.

### **5. What are your grades like?**

Spell it out as it has been at your university. Say "Sir, We have a percentage system, and i scored xx% overall" IF your final year marks excel the other sems marks, spell that one out, coz usually in some universities, they look at the final year marks to grade the student in the Certificate. When later asked as to why u said XX% whereas the total marks of all your marksheets add up to XX-5/10% then clarify yourself...(They wont always go checking all your marksheets, but then you werent lying)

**6. Which was your undergraduate college?**

As per your details.

**7. What was your bachelor's degree in?**

As per your details.

**8. What is the purpose of your trip?**

MS in CS/Telecommunications/EE...whatever or PhD in MEch/

**9. Which university are you planning to go to?**

The University of your choice and the univ you want the VISA for.

**10. Who is planning to sponsor you?**

As mentioned in your I-20. If you have a scholarship, say that. Else in case the I-20 says "Family funds" say that, and you may add that sir, my father and my mother are supporting me for my higher education.

**11. Why do you plan to do MS ?**

Say that you felt that higher qualifications give a better place, a better standard in today's competitive world. You felt that you have a good know-how of your field, but a bit more technical knowledge in "the field you are going for MS in" will serve you greatly, when you come back here and join the industry of your choice

**12. Why do you wish to study in the US and not in India?**

The courses in the field I am interested in are not being offered (or very few institutions offer such courses). In addition to that the research going on is something I would like to be associated with. (Speak about the facilities as well). Talk about a few researches being conducted in that field. Technical words work out when other things dont.

**13. Why did u select this Uni versity?**

This question can be best answered when you do a bit of homework about you university. Browse the Webpage of the University, visit the pages of the professors, go through thier projects. Now remember some of the key words, like the project a professor X is working on. Mention something about the project if the officer is listening and is giving you time to explain. When you do such things, they think that you are pretty serious about your studies and are really into it. Well, some people believe in mentioning about hte rank of the university, or the student to faculty ratio..well these all things dont affect how you are interested in it. You can say all these stuff such as rank and all, but you have to state what interested you and it should be something about research or academics. You can also show letters of correspondence with your University professors. If you dont have those, build some..Click here to know how to build a Correspondence mail

MY answer to this question:

"Sir, the first and foremost factor for selecting this university was the course being offered. Telecom at UMCP is a cross-disciplinary course. Besides technical knowledge, this course also enhances the managerial skills which is the demand of the present-day telecom industry. So while the professors from Computer and Electrical department will be teaching me Signal Processing, Encoding, Communication techniques, Networking ..at the same time the experts from School of Public Affairs will be imparting me knowledge of Present day competition in Telecom industry, staff management and resource management."

IF time permitted, I would have added:

"Sir, UMCP is located within Baltimore-Washington DC area, one of the greatest concentrations of research facilities and intellectual talent in the nation. "Library of Congress", "the National Archives" and "the Smithsonian Institute" are some of the biggest research institutes and libraries which the students will enjoy having frequent interactions with. What else could a Student ask for??"

14. Your passbooks show that a large amount of money has recently been deposited. How would you explain that? (NOBODY keeps huge sums of money in their savings account, so relax! If you have borrowed the money here is what you could do Its quite likely that in the past you may have received huge sums of money like selling of some property, retirement of parents etc so u could say something like) In year X we had received Rs. T and instead of depositing the amount in a bank at a low interest rate, we invested it in other sources which gave us high interest rates or we gave it to our needy friends. Now we have taken this money back to finance my education. (Of course its really dicey to answer this question, but if you are confident you shouldnt have a problem. If you have some proof of receiving a huge sum of money some years back, make sure you carry it)

You can also say that you had private FDs , i.e you invested in private firms coz they provide higher interest rates (say out figures like 16% per annum0 as compared to the mere 9% of banks. [Click here for Private FDs Receipt](#). You can show this receipt and say that now you encashed that amount, coz you needed it for your educational purposes.

#### **15. What does your father do?What if my dad has taken the VR?**

Well this does have a specific reply, but then you can put it as "Sir, My father is working with a German collaborated company for the past 25 years as a Manager in XYZ department. The long reply helps over here. If your father has taken a voluntary retirement, dont mention that he has retired. Well there are two approaches to this. One, say that your father worked with this company for the last 30 years and now has his own consultancy dealing with(insert some financial or technical terms). Two, Say that your father worked as Asst Mgr./Mgr./GM with some company for the past 25 years, took a VR and now has a consultancy of his own. Never show him to be idle, coz that means your income has drastically reduced and works as a negative point. Stating about the VR often helps coz then you can assure him that most of the money you have shown is yours coz usually people get huge amounts on taking a VR. So that does help on the financial grounds.

#### **16. Does any of your relative stay in the US?**

The answers to this vary from person to person. The two basic replies being: Either "YES" or "NO". But I believe that you be truthful at this instance. I have seen many people who have been true and werent affected by that.

In fact at an USEFI seminar, addressed by the Consulate Officer.. it was said by the officer himself that, " We know that most of the student will end up staying there after completing their studies, but atleast we can do our part of skimming them. We can atleast play the part of sieving across the deserving people and not every pedestrian."

This means that they evaluate you on the basis of your merits and not by what the person staying abroad is going to do for you. And the financial part is because they want to be assured that you can atleast go through your studies fully.

It just happens that many a times, they check your file..based on details provided in your passport, and if they do apprehend you lying, that might spell trouble. So, I think telling the truth is the best thing.

If your uncle or cousin or distant aunt stays there, you dont have to say "YES" coz that doesnt matter. All that matters is your immediate relatives ..i.e own brother, sister , father or mother.

### **17. Your brother/sister is studying there too. How will your parents support both of you?**

Now, you have your chance of taking the officer for a ride here. Even if your brother/sister doesnot have an aid/scholarship, you can say he got a TA/RA there and so he neednot be supported by the family any more for his educational expenses.

### **18. Why is your GRE score low ? (or any section score low)**

This is the most preferred answer. I answered the first few questions incorrectly and I couldnt improve my score later even after performing well later. (Low = <1800 Otherwise you can say that you think your score is average and on the basis of that the university has given you the admission). You can also mention that "This score is considered to be ideal for the Engineers(if you are one)..or according to what you are. You can always build up a story , saying that the GRE Score interpretor sheet says that. Such as Engineers dont need to have an extra ordinary VERBAL Score, If the toher sections complement it, you can show that the other sections are stressed upon by universities while selection for admission(Say this only when you think the situation is getting tense).

If you have a low VERBAL score, but a good TOEFL score, you can always say that "Please look at my TOEFL score Sir, I have done well at that". Besides GRE is just one of the many aspects that the universities look at for admission(Say this line only when you think you are drowning).

### **19. What are you plans after Graduation?**

Be really well prepared for this question. This answer is not fool proof, but its you who can make it seem so. The basic things are:

Your field is what you will pursue

Your field is on a roll in INDIA

Your field has great opportunities

You get those opportunities even now

You get better opportunities once you do your MS

Show foreign companies coming to INDIA investing in your field

State some technical words expressing the advancements in your field

Make it seem, this field wont go ahead without guys like you ;)

Here is what I prepared as an answer to his question:

"Sir, I plan to go to University of Maryland, College Park, to do my MS in TELECOMMUNICATIONS. Telecom industry is booming today in INDIA. Various US companies like HUGHES, Orange, AT&T, Hutchison.. are investing huge amounts of research funds and are looking forward to launch advanced Telecommunication methods in INDIA. Besides them, various Indian Telecom Giants like RELIANCE TELECOM, Bharti Telecom, VSNL are also investing in behemoth amounts into this arena. Sir, as it is I believe that better technical knowledge will help me to achieve greater heights in this field, having deepened my technical knowledge after completing my higher studies, I wish to get into this seemingly vast arena of Indian Telecom Industry"

I was also selected by RELIANCE TELECOM, so I took the letter along with me, and would have surely shown them that if I would have seen that they weren't impressed by my answer and would have added "Sir, as it is I was selected by an INDIAN Telecom Giant, but sir, deeper technical knowledge would surely enable me get better results in the competitive field, and I have seen that there is a dearth of persons with greater technical know-how in this field, and whosoever has it will be benefitted highly. So I wish to complete my MS and strengthen my technical know-how and grasp the opportunity"

### **20. Why are you changing your stream?**

This generally occurs coz people having done their BE in Civil go on to pursue MS in CS. I am giving this reply specifically for transfer to CS stream, coz I don't think anyone from CS would be going to Mech ;). This is easy to get through. You can say either of the points:

Sir, during my third semester, when I was introduced to programming languages, I had a great exposure to computers. I gradually developed a liking for it and wished to deepen my knowledge in it.

I mastered a number of languages on my own, and am also into Web Designing and software debugging (*push in technical words*).

I always had it in my mind, that once I strengthen myself in my field, I will go on to enhance my skills in the field of Computers.

There were a vast number of options available, viz. CS, CN, CE but I chose CS as I had esteem interest in Software and its working

Always try to show that you have an interest for that subject. Never project that you are taking this up coz the market is strong. This is coz you are changing your stream..they might end up thinking that you just used your BE to get to this stage and that you didn't do that on interest..they'll think you are fickle minded. Show that you do everything with your interest, you even did your BE in Civil or any other field coz you had interest in it, and now CS is your interest too.

### **21. What is your father's annual income?**

This question often decides your ability to pay for your expenses. They think that money can be put into banks, but annual income is a proof which they heavily rely upon to decide the student's parents capability to spend for his educational expenses.

Whatever the officer asks. 1) What is your father's annual income? 2). What is your family's annual income?..The moment the words 'Annual Income' creeps in, state your complete family annual income, i.e if your mother is also

an earning member, if you have agricultural income, if you have rental income plus the interests and dividends...State all of them together. Don't commit the blunder of stating just your father's income..many a times it hampers your chances..if it seems low to them. Obviously a sum of mother's income , your father's income, agricultural(if u have), rental will be more than a single one. And if they ask for the IT returns , hand over both of your parent's return statements, plus the agricultural papers plus the rental receipt(duplicate) at a time. And if he/she just argues(usually they don't) that you were asked about your father's income..then say" Sir, MY family is sponsoring me. Alongwith my father my mother is also an earning member and an income tax payee. Family funds is what the I-20 states, and so my family including my father and mother(opt brother, if u have one earning) are sponsoring me and here are their statements and proofs of other modes of income.

## **22.You look like Potential immigrants OR I don't think you will come back to India**

This is a real tricky question. Many get blue when they hear this and lose their senses as how to tackle this question. Stay calm and think what all you can say like : "I am from a very well-to do family and money is not at all essential for me. I stand to inherit a lot from my parents (say this if u have lots of property) so staying and working in the US is not a criteria at all. The only thing i lack is this Masters (or whatever degree) which will make me a better software professional. As far as opportunity is concerned, because of the recession most of the US Companies are turning to the Indian companies for their software solutions. Most of the Indian companies have tie-ups with the US Companies (give some examples). So I am certain that with my degree I will get an equivalent opportunity and pay packet in India .

## **The Most important Factor**

Let me tell you something. The most important factor is "CONFIDENCE". Nothing can depose that. Whatever the answer be, if you are confident and show that you aren't nervous a bit, that will really help you get through. Complete Documents, Convincing Skills, Confidence and Present mindedness is what you have to invest. These are the keys to getting through the interview successfully. Many do get through coz of sheer luck, when some of the casual officers just seem to be in a hurry to get through with the troop of VISA aspirants facing their counter. But then I believe that your parents do all the job of putting together all the financial documents and stuff. The only thing you need to do is to put a confident self of yours over there. It's not that All the questions i have put here are the only ones, they might come up with any other alien stuff. But then present mindedness and spontaneity is what helps under those situations. You have to be prepared with an answer the moment he shoots a question at you. Don't make a face as if you just committed a sin. Hand over the documents and look at him. Remember , all your documents are as genuine as your Birth-Certificate;).