

PAN ATLANTIC EXCHANGES WHAT TO EXPECT AT YOUR VISA INTERVIEW

The visa interview is an important step in your J-1 journey—but with the right preparation, you can approach it successfully with confidence.

PROFESSIONALISM & ORGANIZATION

The more you prepare for your visa interview, the better.

- Arrive at the U.S. Embassy/consulate **on-time** for your visa appointment(s)
- Make sure to **dress appropriately** — such as how you would dress for a formal job interview
- Organize required application documents and any additional supporting evidence you would like to present to the consular officer
- Concise responses are most ideal
- Answer questions honestly and remember there is no need to overshare or give long winded explanations—Try your best to act calm, patient, polite, and confident

UNDERSTAND THE PROGRAM

The J-1 Program was established to promote cultural exchange and strengthen relations between the U.S. and other countries.

- During the interview, the consular officer may inquire about your program and why you chose to pursue it
 - Be prepared to explain the details of your program and describe how this particular experience interests you
- Familiarize yourself with your training plan (Form DS-7002)
 - Be prepared to explain how this training program will advance your career development and how your program relates to your educational or professional background
- This program is intended for training and career development
- The J-1 classification is **not** a ‘work visa’—Avoid referring to this opportunity as ‘work’ or a ‘job’ and instead use vocabulary like **‘training,’ ‘program,’ ‘learning & experience,’** etc.

UNDERSTAND THE VISA

- The J-1 Visa is temporary, meaning that J-1 Visa holders cannot immigrate to the U.S. while in the country under J-1 status
 - Participants are obligated to depart the country upon program conclusion
- The J-1 Visa is issued for Exchange Visitor programs, with the assumption that participants will return to their home countries after program completion
 - Because U.S. Law presumes your intention to immigrate to the U.S., it is your responsibility to prove intent of returning home post-program to the consular officer

DEMONSTRATING RETURN-HOME INTENT

Listed below are examples of documents that may help you prove strength of home ties. This documentation can be helpful to have on hand, but it is not necessary if you do not have any.

- Proof of home ownership
- Copies of investment statements or certificates
- Mortgage statement
- Lease agreement extending beyond your U.S. program end date
- Letter from employer, based outside the U.S., indicating that the company/employer is committed to hiring you upon your return
 - This does not place any legal obligation on the company to re-hire you, but it shows you have strong ties with a current or previous employer
- Statement from doctor/care facility confirming you have elderly relatives residing in your home country whom you are close with
- Professional license(s) that are valid only in your home country
- Social ties (for example, church/charitable memberships, organizations you belong to)
- Marriage certificate/license (provided your spouse resides in your home country)
- Children who are not traveling to the US with you (proof of relationship(s))
- Bank loans, student loans, auto loans, auto title
- Education program(s) outside of the U.S. (coursework/transcripts indicating current/active or future enrollment)

EMBASSY GUIDANCE: SOCIAL MEDIA

On June 18, 2025, the U.S. Department of State implemented social media vetting guidance for all J visa applicants:

- All applicants are now instructed to **adjust their privacy settings** on all social media profiles to “public”
- Consular officers will review applicants’ social platforms for any signs of hostility toward the U.S., support for terrorism, or antisemitic views
- If any concerning content is found, screenshots will be added to your case file
- If no problematic content is found, the officer will note that the review was successfully completed

NEXT STEPS

The consular officer will confirm if your visa has been granted or not on the day of your visa interview. If approved, the officer will collect your passport and DS-2019 form for the purpose of issuing your visa.

Depending on the embassy where you apply, you will either a) be instructed to pick up your documents on a later scheduled date, or b) the embassy will mail your documents back to you along with your J-1 Visa.