F1 Visa Interview Questions and Answers PDF (2026–27)

37 common questions with sample answers for Indian students applying for a US student visa

An F-1 visa interview is usually short, often only a few minutes. The consular officer wants to confirm three things: that you are a genuine student, that you can pay for your studies, and that you plan to return to India after your course. This guide covers 37 questions that Indian students are commonly asked, along with sample answers that are short, natural and easy to adapt.

The sample answers follow one example profile: a student going for an MS in Computer Science, funded by family savings and an education loan. Replace the details with your own facts, and make sure every number you say matches your I-20, bank statements and loan documents.

How to use this guide

- Answer the question that was asked, in one to three sentences. Do not recite a speech.
- Speak in your own words. Memorised answers sound rehearsed and can raise doubt.
- Keep your numbers consistent: I-20 cost, loan amount, income and savings should all match your documents.
- If you don't understand a question, politely ask the officer to repeat it.
- Be honest. A truthful, simple answer is always better than an impressive but incorrect one.

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1. Purpose of Study and Travel

Counsellor tip: Keep this part short and direct. The officer is checking that you have a clear, genuine study purpose.

1 Why do you want to study in the US?

I want to do a master's in Computer Science, and US universities are strong in applied research and industry-linked projects. The lab and project work at my university will give me practical skills that I can't get in the same depth in my current role.

2 What will you be studying, and where?

I'll be doing an MS in Computer Science at [University name] in [City, State]. The program is two years long and starts in January 2027.

3 Have you applied to other universities? Did you get any admits?

Yes, I applied to six universities and received admits from three. I chose [University name] because its curriculum matched my interest in machine learning and it offered the best fit for my budget.

4 Have you been to the US before, or do you have relatives there?

No, this will be my first visit. I have a distant cousin in another state, but I'm not depending on him. My funding is fully arranged.

2. University Choice

Counsellor tip: Name specific things: a course module, a professor, a lab or a placement outcome. Generic answers sound rehearsed.

5 Why did you choose this university?

Three reasons. The curriculum has strong electives in machine learning and data systems, the faculty publish in areas I'm interested in, and the graduate placement report shows good outcomes in software and data roles. It also fit my budget.

6 Why not study in India or another country?

Indian programs in my field are good, but I wanted the research exposure and the hands-on project structure that this program offers. The US also has the widest range of specialisations in my area, so I could pick a course that matches my goals.

7 How did you find out about this university?

I researched programs based on curriculum and rankings for my subject, and I attended a university virtual info session. I also spoke to two seniors who are studying there now.

8 Which professors or labs interest you?

I'm interested in Prof. [Name]'s work on [topic]. I've read two of the lab's recent papers, and I'd like to take her graduate course on this in my second semester.

9 Do you know anyone studying at this university?

Yes, a senior from my college is in the same department. He shared his experience of the courses and campus, but my decision was based on the program itself.

3. Course and Program

Counsellor tip: Know your course structure. Officers often ask about semester subjects and duration to test whether you researched the program.

10 Why did you choose this course?

My work and projects in software have shown me how much I enjoy building data-driven systems. This course will let me go deeper into the theory and give me structured practice with real datasets.

11 Which subjects will you study in your first semester?

I'll take Algorithms, Machine Learning, Database Systems and one elective in Cloud Computing. The core courses in the first year build the base, and I'll choose advanced electives later.

12 How long is the program, and when does it start?

It's a two-year program with four semesters. My I-20 shows the start date as January 2027, and orientation is a week before classes begin.

13 Why this specialisation and not something broader?

Machine learning is where my projects and internship experience have been focused, so it's a natural next step. A specialised track lets me build depth instead of repeating what I already know.

14 Is this course available in India? Why study it abroad?

Similar programs exist in India, but this one includes a capstone with an industry partner and access to research labs, which is what I want. The exposure to global teams and tools will also help my career back home.

4. Academic Background

Counsellor tip: Be honest about scores, backlogs and gaps. Officers see many files; a calm, clear explanation works better than defensiveness.

15 Tell me about your undergraduate degree.

I completed my B.Tech in Electronics Engineering from [College name] in 2025 with a CGPA of 8.1 out of 10. My final-year project was a demand forecasting tool for small retailers.

16 Your bachelor's was in a different field. Why the switch?

Yes, I did Electronics Engineering, but my electives and two internships were in software. I realised I enjoy data and programming more, so I completed online courses and built projects before applying to this program.

17 Do you have any backlogs or gaps in your studies?

I had one backlog in the second year in Engineering Mathematics, and I cleared it in the next attempt. I have no gap between my degree and my job. I can share my transcripts if needed.

18 What were your test scores?

I scored 322 in the GRE and 7.5 overall in IELTS. My university requires 6.5 in IELTS, so I met the requirement comfortably.

19 Have you done any projects, internships or research?

Yes. I interned at a fintech startup in Bengaluru for six months, where I worked on a fraud-detection model. I also co-authored a conference paper from my final-year project.

5. Finances and Sponsorship

Counsellor tip: This is where most refusals happen. Know your I-20 cost, who pays, and where the money comes from. Answer with numbers, and make sure they match your documents.

20 Who is sponsoring your education?

My parents are my sponsors. My father is a government school teacher and my mother runs a small tailoring business. We are also using an education loan for part of the cost.

21 What does your sponsor do, and what is the annual income?

My father is a teacher with a salary of about INR 9 lakh a year. My mother earns about INR 3 lakh a year from her business. Our combined income is around INR 12 lakh, and our ITRs show this.

22 What is the total cost of your first year?

My I-20 shows about USD 52,000 for the first year, which includes tuition, housing, food, insurance and other expenses. The full program cost is roughly double that.

23 How will you pay for it?

About 40 percent comes from family savings and fixed deposits, and the remaining 60 percent from an education loan that has been sanctioned. I have the sanction letter and bank statements with me.

24 Are you taking an education loan? Who is the lender?

Yes, I've taken a loan of INR 30 lakh from [Bank name]. It's sanctioned with my parents as co-applicants, and the repayment starts after a moratorium period following my course.

25 Do you have a scholarship or assistantship?

I received a merit scholarship of USD 6,000 per year from the university. It's mentioned in my admission letter and reduces my tuition.

26 Will you work in the US to fund your studies?

No, my funding covers the full first year, and I'm not depending on a job. If I take an on-campus role later, I'll do it within the F-1 rules, but it's not part of my financial plan.

27 How will you pay for the remaining years?

The loan is sanctioned for the entire program and will be released in installments each semester. My family also has additional savings and a property that can be used if needed.

6. Career Plans

Counsellor tip: Show a realistic plan connected to your course and to India. Avoid mentioning specific US employers as your main goal.

28 What do you plan to do after graduating?

I plan to return to India and work as a machine learning engineer. Several Indian companies in fintech and e-commerce are building large data teams, and my degree fits that need.

29 What kind of role are you targeting, and in which industry?

I'm aiming for a data or ML engineering role in fintech or healthcare technology. I worked in fintech during my internship and I want to build on that experience.

30 Do you plan to work in the US after your degree?

My main plan is to return to India. If I get an opportunity for practical training within my visa rules, I may gain a little experience, but I don't plan to stay permanently.

31 What salary do you expect after this degree?

In India, ML engineers with a master's from a good university often start around INR 15 to 25 lakh a year. That would help me repay my loan comfortably within a few years.

32 Which companies would you like to work for in India?

I'd look at companies like Razorpay, Flipkart, Infosys and Tata Consultancy Services, and also data-focused startups. I've already followed a few of their hiring trends.

7. Intent to Return to India

Counsellor tip: Officers must be satisfied that you do not intend to immigrate. Stay calm and give real reasons instead of scripted lines.

33 Will you return to India after your studies?

Yes. My family is in India, and my career plan is built around the Indian market. I want to use what I learn to work on problems here.

34 What ties do you have to India?

My parents and younger sister live in Pune, and my family owns our home there. I also have a job offer letter for a role I can rejoin after graduation, and my education loan is repayable in India.

35 Do you have family property or a business in India?

Yes, we own our house in Pune and some agricultural land in our village. My mother's tailoring business is also based here, and I'll help her expand it in my free time.

36 What if you get a job offer in the US after graduation?

I would consider short-term work if it fits my visa terms, mainly for experience. But my long-term plan is in India, where my family is and where my career goals are.

37 Do you intend to settle in the US?

No. I'm going to the US to study and gain skills, and then I plan to come back. My family, my loan repayment and my career plans are all connected to India.

8. Do's and Don'ts, Documents Checklist

Do	Don't
• Arrive early and dress neatly in simple, comfortable clothes. • Speak clearly, make eye contact and stay calm. • Carry originals of every document, in a neat order. • Know your course, university and funding details by heart. • Give the same story your DS-160 and I-20 tell.	• Don't memorise long scripts or repeat answers word for word. • Don't argue or interrupt the officer. • Don't hand over documents unless asked. • Don't give false or inflated information about income or savings. • Don't say you plan to settle in the US or hint at it.

Documents to carry

Identity and visa	Passport, DS-160 confirmation page, visa appointment letter, visa fee receipt, SEVIS fee receipt (I-901)
University	Original I-20 (signed), admission letter, scholarship or assistantship letter, if any
Academic	Mark sheets, degree certificate, transcripts, GRE or IELTS/TOEFL/PTE/Duolingo score reports
Financial	Education loan sanction letter, bank statements, fixed deposit proofs, sponsor's ITRs and income proof
Ties to India	Property papers, employment or business proof for parents, job offer or work experience letters, if any

Disclaimer. The sample answers in this guide are examples to help you understand the format, length and tone of a good response. They are not scripts. Your answers must reflect your own profile, documents and plans, so personalise every response and never copy them word for word. Visa rules, appointment procedures and document requirements can change, and every decision rests with the consular officer. Please check the latest guidance on travel.state.gov and your university's international office before your interview. This guide is for general information and is not legal or immigration advice.