

Webchat Moderator: (2009-4-22 08:23) Please submit your questions. We will answer your questions on Apr 22, 3:30 - 5pm

Webchat Moderator: (08:23) Please submit your questions in English if possible. All questions will be answered in English.

Consular Officer Rachel Hawkins: (15:18) Good afternoon. It is my pleasure to be here with you this afternoon. Thank you all for your inquiries. I will do my best to answer as many questions as possible. However, please keep in mind that we are unable to answer questions regarding individual cases.

Song: (15:21) I want to ask whether I can apply F1 visa in Guangzhou. I am working in Singapore for recent 2 year. However, my HUKOU is in Shenzhen, and my passport is issued in Guangdong. Thanks.

Consular Officer Rachel Hawkins: (15:21) Hello Song. Yes, you are able to apply in Guangzhou. As a matter of fact, since your hukou is in Shenzhen, it is probably best that you do so, as Shenzhen is in our consular district.

Jen: (15:26) My ID card address is in Hu Bei province. Where should I apply for my US visa? Beijing, Shanghai or Guangzhou? Thank you.

Consular Officer Rachel Hawkins: (15:26) HuBei is under Beijing's Consular district.

PattonXiao: (15:28) 我要帮助珠海的朋友父母办理去美国的旅游签证，如何预约？你们的电话4 0 0 8 8 7 2 3 3 3总打不通。

Consular Officer Rachel Hawkins: (15:28) I am sorry to hear that you were unable to get through to the Visa Information Call Center. Because we do not make appointments at the Consulate, my advice to you is to keep trying the 4008872333 number. For more information on "How to Apply for a Student Visa", please feel free to go to the following link: http://guangzhou.usembassy-china.org.cn/how_to_apply.html

Thanh: (15:35) Hello. Is there a way to check visa status on your website?

Consular Officer Rachel Hawkins: (15:35) Hi Thanh. Thank you for your question. The majority of our applicants receive their status at the window. In cases where additional processing is required, we contact the applicant directly. Therefore, no database is available to check one's visa status.

Xiao Lei: (15:42) Hello consulates, I'd like to ask if I'm an applicant for an F1 Visa to study in US, what forms should I have to fill and what materials should I bring before going to the consulate

visa office?

Consular Officer Rachel Hawkins: (15:42) Ni hao Xiao Lei. Great question! In addition to the visa application, students should bring their I-20 Forms, school transcripts, and admission letters from U.S. institutions. Of course, students must also prove to the interviewing officer that they have sufficient funds to cover the cost of tuition, room and board, books, etc. This amount is totaled for you on your I-20 Form.

Barbara: (15:48) My parents are my financial supporters. Do I need to show their professional certificate?

Consular Officer Rachel Hawkins: (15:48) If your parents are your financial supporters, you should come prepared with their work certificates (outlining their positions and salaries). You should also provide any financial documents which prove that your parents have saved for your college education over the years (i.e. certificates of deposit and bank books).

Lfiang Lin: (15:49) My passport is issued in Guangzhou, but my F1 Visa is issued in Shanghai, can I renew my VISA in Guangzhou ?

Consular Officer Rachel Hawkins: (15:49) Yes! You may apply in Guangzhou.

Lisa: (15:56) Hi! I'm admitted by two satisfactory American Universities. I don't have idea which to choose yet, and I want to wait and see which can give me the best offer. Can I apply for visa taking the I-20 forms from both universities? I mean, can I be issued a visa even before I decide which school to attend? Another question: what is the "peak time" (the time most people choose to apply) of application for visa? If I want to be issued a visa before July, when should I make the appointment? Thanks very much!!!

Consular Officer Rachel Hawkins: (15:56) Hi Lisa. Congratulations on your acceptances. You are smart to see which school will give you the best offer. 1) You can bring both acceptance letters; however, you should have chosen one university prior to your interview. The reason for this is that the school's name will be printed on your visa. 2) If you hope to be issued a visa before July, you should make an appointment no later than mid-May. Best of luck!

Xiaodirene: (15:59) Hello. We are the J1 exchange students who go to US to participate Vermont law school's environmental summer course. After the interview, the consular officer told us that the visa applications of two of us require additional administrative processing. Why do we need additional administrative processing? And there are 3 students went to the same program, why only 2 students were required additional administrative processing? Thank you.

Consular Officer Rachel Hawkins: (15:59) Although some students apply in groups, each student's case is adjudicated individually. Therefore, it is possible that some in the group may have needed additional processing, while others did not.

Vi: (16:04) I would like to talk to the visa officers and get a F-1 Visa from your office in Guangzhou around May 29. May I call 4008872333 to book now?

Consular Officer Rachel Hawkins: (16:04) Yes, you may call the Visa Information Call Center at 4008872333 to book an appointment now.

Edison 2: (16:05) Dear officer I am a Guangzhou citizen who is currently studying at the National University of Singapore. I am on a summer exchange to UC Berkley. I have just received the I-20 certificate. But I am flying back to Guangzhou first. Therefore I would like to be interviewed in Guangzhou instead. Is it ok?

Consular Officer Rachel Hawkins: (16:05) Yes, since you are a Guangzhou resident, it is ok for you to apply in Guangzhou.

John Wang (私人): (16:06) Do you consider the major, occupation or profession of a F1 visa applicant when viewing his or her application?

Consular Officer Rachel Hawkins (私人): (16:06) We do not factor a student's major and/or occupation into the visa interview. What we are more concerned with is the student's ability to articulate *why* they chose that particular major.

Franklin: (16:08) Hi, I'm a high school student and I'm applying for F-1 visa for my college study in the U.S. Well, there's a problem now. I haven't got my I-20 form yet. So what should I do now? Can I make an appointment without holding an I-20 form? Appreciated.

Consular Officer Rachel Hawkins: (16:08) Hello Franklin. All students must have their I-20 forms in hand at the time of the interview. You may want to contact the school to inform them that you have not yet received it.

Xu Peng: (16:18) Hello officer, my visa will expire on 21AUG2009. But my course will not finish on that day. May be I can't come back before the expiration date. What should I do? Can I apply my visa in the USA?

Consular Officer Rachel Hawkins: (16:18) Dear Xu Peng, I am glad that you asked this question. The date shown on your visa is the visa VALIDITY date, meaning that you must enter the U.S. prior to that date. For example, you will be unable to enter the U.S. after August 21, 2009. Since you are already in the U.S. - no worries :-)

彭桂香: (16:22) 郝领事，您好，我老公谭志远（护照号 G12875941）3月30日在广州总领事馆办理 J1 签证，我们三人 J2 携签，当时说等三个星期，现在时间过了，请问您现在我们怎样查找结果呢？谢谢

Consular Officer Rachel Hawkins: (16:22) Please send a fax to 020-3884-4424 with your inquiry, and someone should contact you soon thereafter.

Vi: (16:26) Hello Rachel, I'm an applicant for F1 visa. My question is regarding the school transcripts. First, is it required that the school transcripts be sealed? Second, I'm a senior student who is in the eighth semester and will get my BS degree this summer. Will the school transcripts with only six semesters be sufficient?

Consular Officer Rachel Hawkins: (16:26) 1) It is not required that your transcripts be sealed. 2) It is perfectly alright for you to submit a transcript with only six semesters listed. We understand that you are still completing your coursework for the current semester. Congratulations on your graduation, and best of luck on your final exams!

Franklin: (16:27) Hi, I'm a high school student and I'm applying for F-1 visa for my college study in the U.S. Well, there's a problem now. I haven't got my I-20 form yet. And my college says the I-20 form will be mailed to me in about late May or early June. So can I make an appointment without holding an I-20 form? And is June available for making appointments? Thanks a million.

Consular Officer Rachel Hawkins: (16:27) Dear Franklin, you can make an appointment now, however you must have your I-20 in hand at the time of your interview.

Joe: (16:30) My daughter is studying in a USA University now. She got her F-1 visa in Hong Kong last year, when she was studying in Macao. She will back to China in May. She needs a new visa. We live in Fuzhou, Fujian province, normally we should apply the visa in Guangzhou, but since she will have a training course in June in Beijing, can she apply a visa in Beijing consulate?

Consular Officer Rachel Hawkins: (16:30) If your daughter will be in Guangzhou at any point before she returns, it will be best for her to renew her visa in Guangzhou. If she applies in Beijing, she should have proof that she is participating in a training course there and be able to explain in detail why she is applying in Beijing instead of Guangzhou.

Consular Officer Rachel Hawkins (提问): (16:38) Hello Everyone, if you are living and working in Guangdong, Guangxi, Fujian, or Hainan provinces (and especially if your hukou and/or passport was issued in any of these provinces), you should apply for your visa at U.S. Consulate Guangzhou.

Joe: (16:40) My daughter is studying in a US University now. She got her F-1 visa in Hong Kong last year. Can she use the ZhongXin bank visa service to apply for a non-immigrant visa in your consulate, or should she go to the Guangzhou USA Consulate directly?

Consular Officer Rachel Hawkins: (16:40) Students should come in to the Consulate for their interviews.

John: (16:49) Hi, My mother is an officer of the Army, will her profession affect my application of F1?

Consular Officer Rachel Hawkins: (16:49) No, it will not. All student applicants are assessed in three areas: 1) is he or she a credible student, 2) does he or she have a basic grasp of the English language - you do not have to speak perfect English, and 3) his or her ability to pay for their education in the States. Therefore, your mother's occupation should not affect your student visa application.

Gary: (16:53) Dear Consular, I've been confused for days about the financial certificate. I plan to study in high school for 2 years but do I need to show the certificate for 2 years' school fee or for 1 year is enough for getting my visa

Consular Officer Rachel Hawkins: (16:53) All student applicants must prove that they *have* (currently possess) the funds to pay for the first year only, and demonstrate that they *are able to pay for* the amount needed for subsequent years.

John 2: (16:57) How much do my parents have to show to you that they are able to support my study in US, meaning bank document or bank saving for at least one year or four years?

Consular Officer Rachel Hawkins: (16:57) All student applicants must show that funds are sufficient to cover the amount listed on the I-20 form. For example, if a student chooses a school that costs \$40,000 USD, that family must prove that they can afford \$40,000. If a student chooses a school that costs \$16,756, then that family must prove that they can afford \$16,756.

Consular Officer Rachel Hawkins: (16:58) Great question John 2!

Consular Officer Rachel Hawkins: (16:58) I only have time to answer one more question. Thank you all for your submissions, and best of luck to each of you.

zfejian: (17:01) Hi! I have been admitted to a PhD program in New York with a scholarship (a stipend of 24,000 a year and tuition waiver), do I have to prepare other financial documents for my visa? Thank you.

Consular Officer Rachel Hawkins: (17:01) If you have a full scholarship, proof of your stipend should be sufficient. However, if it is a partial scholarship, you must show how you will make up the difference.

Consular Officer Rachel Hawkins: (17:02) Thanks everyone, I look forward to doing this again soon.