



## Proving “Nonimmigrant Intent” for U.S. Visa Application Purposes

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### **Purpose**

The International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO) has prepared this handout for individuals who will be applying for F-1 student or J-1 exchange visitor visas in order to begin or to continue a program of study, teaching, or research at Boston University. It will describe one of the most important application requirements you must satisfy – convincing the U.S. Consular officer that you have “nonimmigrant intent.” Following the suggestions in this handout will strengthen your visa application. We recommend that you carefully prepare your visa application and thoroughly document your qualifications.

### **U.S. Visa Policy**

U.S. regulations require the Consular officer who considers your visa application to assume that you want to immigrate to or remain permanently in the U.S. In order to qualify for an F-1 or J-1 visa, you must prove that your visit to the U.S. will be temporary in nature and that you will return to your country after completion of your activities here. Consular officers call this “nonimmigrant intent.” You can prove your “nonimmigrant intent” by giving the Consular officer documents that indicate that you have strong ties to your country. The stronger your financial, employment or family ties to your country, the more likely it is that the Consular officer will believe that you intend to return home.

### **Assessing Your Situation**

Below are some questions to help you decide if you should make a special effort to prove your “nonimmigrant intent”. The more questions to which you respond with the answer “yes”, the more important it will likely be for you to make a special effort to prove your intent to return home after your activities in the U.S.

- Is it difficult to obtain an F-1 or a J-1 visa in your country?
- Are a significant percentage of F-1 or J-1 visa applications denied by the U.S. Embassy or Consulate in your country?
- Are one or more members of your immediate family living in the U.S.?
- Are you married and applying for F-2 or J-2 visas for your spouse and children?
- Are one or more members of your immediate family U.S. citizens or permanent residents?
- Is the financial sponsor for your activities at Boston University a friend or relative who lives in the U.S.?
- Will this be your first trip to the U.S.?
- Have you recently finished one activity in the U.S. and now want to begin a new activity?
- Have you ever been denied a U.S. visa?

If, based upon your answers to these questions, you believe you should make a special effort to prove that you intend to return home, the next sections of this handout offer some suggestions about documents you might take with you when applying for a visa.

### **Financial Ties**

If you own property or have financial investments in your country, documenting them may help prove you have strong financial ties. To prove this, you may not use any assets which will be needed to pay for your F-1 or J-1 activities. You will need to prove the availability of that financial support separately in order to meet the minimum requirements for the visa.

**Documents to Submit:** -Official papers proving property ownership  
-Copies of investment statements or certificates  
-A letter or financial statement from your bank or accountant

### **Employment Ties**

If you will be employed full-time upon your return, this indicates strong employment ties to your country. Your employment ties are viewed as stronger based on the prestige, importance and salary of your job.

**Documents to Submit:** -A letter that guarantees a job upon your return and states how important your U.S. activities will be for the type of work the employer wants.  
-A letter from your current employer stating that you will resume your work with them after your time in the U.S.  
-A letter from a prospective employer stating that a position will be offered to you upon your return.

### **Family Ties**

If all members of your immediate family live in your country, the U.S. Consular officer may understand that you have strong family ties to that country. If you are the oldest child or only child in your family, the Consular officer may believe that you are more likely to return home because of that fact. If one or both of your parents are not in good health, this is another reason you might be expected to return home.

**Documents to Submit:** -Copies of official documents proving family relationships and their residences  
-Letters from physicians explaining important medical conditions of your parents

### **Your Visa and Immigration History**

If you have visited other countries and returned to your country after those visits, you have demonstrated a pattern of behavior which may lead the U.S. Consular officer to believe that you will return home after your time in the U.S. The more trips you have made, the better your situation.

**Documents to Submit:** -Current and/or previous passport(s) containing entry and exit stamps from your country and other countries  
-Other official documents indicating departure and return to your home country

### **Additional Information**

The ISSO has other handouts available on the visa issuance and U.S. entry process. If you will be applying for an F-1 visa, please refer to the handout entitled *Obtaining an F-1 Student Visa and Entering the United States*. If you will be applying for a J-1 visa, please refer to the handout entitled *Obtaining a J-1 Exchange Visitor Visa and Entering the United States*.

The ISSO is pleased to provide you with information, advice, and assistance on any visa or immigration matter, which relates to your activities at Boston University. You may contact us by telephone, facsimile, postal mail, or e-mail. If you are in the Boston area, we invite you to make an appointment with one of our International Student and Scholar Advisors. For more information, please visit our website at [www.bu.edu/isso](http://www.bu.edu/isso) For more information on U.S. Embassies and Consulates, and on the visa application process, you may visit the U.S. Department of State website at <http://travel.state.gov/>.