

# DS-160 ONLINE NONIMMIGRANT VISA APPLICATION



**MELTZER HELLRUNG**  
IMMIGRATION SOLUTIONS

## DS-160, ONLINE NONIMMIGRANT VISA APPLICATION

The first step in applying for a U.S. nonimmigrant visa is to complete an Online Nonimmigrant Visa Application (DS-160). It takes approximately 90 minutes to do this. After you submit your application, you can move on to the next steps such as scheduling your interview.

**\*\*Save the application frequently.\*\*** The system will time out after a few minutes of inactivity, and all unsaved information will be lost.

### General Instructions



1. Access the DS-160 by clicking: [Consular Electronic Application Center](#) website.
2. Click on the button labeled “Start an Application.”
3. Write down the Application ID displayed on the top right-hand corner of the page.  
If you need to close the browser before submitting your application, you will need this Application ID to continue your application.
4. Follow the instructions on each page, and make sure to answer all questions.
5. Prior to submitting the application, the system will let you check your answers to make sure they are correct. Please re-read them carefully so you do not make mistakes.
6. Click on the “Sign Application” button to sign your application electronically.
7. Once the application has been submitted, you will see a confirmation page on your screen with a barcode. Please print and save this confirmation page for your records.

### Commonly Asked Questions



- 1 **Is there a sample DS-160 application I can preview prior to completing my own?**

Yes, you may wish to preview this [sample DS-160](#) before beginning.

- 2 **Which internet browser should I use?**

Use only Internet Explorer 11 or higher, Firefox, or Google Chrome 58 when completing your application. **Safari and Microsoft Edge are not supported.**

### 3 Is there a sample DS-160 application I can preview prior to completing my own?

- ☐ Passport
- ☐ Digital photo (a color photo with a white background taken within the last 6 months). See further details on [photo requirements](#).
- ☐ Travel itinerary, if you have already made specific travel plans. However, we recommend waiting to make travel arrangements until after you have been issued your visa.
  - If you have not booked your return flight, select that you have not made specific travel plans.
- ☐ Dates of your last five visits or trips to the United States, if you have previously traveled to the United States.
- ☐ List of countries you have traveled to in the past five years.
- ☐ Social Media Accounts — You must provide information about all social media accounts you have used within the last five years, including your social media account name and URL, and username. You are not required to provide the password.
- ☐ Résumé or Curriculum Vitae — You may be required to provide information about your current and previous education and work history. Please answer these questions thoroughly. Failing to disclose a prior position/employment or academic history could have a negative impact in your application.
- ☐ Copy of your Form I-797 approval notice (if already approved by USCIS), Form I-129, or Form I-129S (Blanket L-1).
- ☐ Other Information: You will be asked for information about your employer, including the employer's point of contact and address.

### 4 Can my answers be in my native language?

No, all answers must be in English and must use the English alphabet. This means letters like ñ, é, ü, or ç cannot be used. For example, instead of writing “São Paulo,” write “Sao Paulo.” There is only one exception to this rule, which is when you are asked to provide your full name in your native alphabet. For that specific question, you can use non-English characters.

### 5 Are all questions on the DS-160 mandatory?

Most questions are mandatory and must be answered in the spaces provided. You may leave spaces blank when the questions are marked “optional.” You may answer a question with “Does Not Apply,” when that question does not apply to you; however, all other questions must be answered. The system will not allow you to submit an application with any mandatory questions left unanswered. If you do not complete a mandatory question, the system will display an error message and require you to answer the question before continuing with the application. If you do not answer questions that apply to your circumstances and/or purpose of travel, the system will not accept your application.

**6 How can I save my application? Can I stop in the middle of the application and return to it later?**

You can save your application or return to a partially completed application. When you begin a new DS-160, you will be issued a unique Application ID number after selecting and answering a security question. Once you have your application ID number and have selected and answered a security question, you may exit the DS-160 application and return to it later. You must have your application ID to return to your application. To save your DS-160 to the Consular Electronic Application Center website, click the “Next” button at the bottom of each page you complete. Once an application has been started, you have 30 days to complete it and submit it. Otherwise, the application will be deleted, and all information therein will be lost.

**7 Can I reuse the DS-160 I submitted from a prior visa application?**

You can use information from a previously submitted DS-160 to populate some fields on a new form. If your previous visa application was submitted after November 1, 2010, you can select “Retrieve Application” on the homepage, enter your previous visa application ID, and then hit “Create a New Application.” Your personal information will then populate the form. Be careful to check that all previously submitted information is current and accurate.

**8 I understand that I can upload a photo with my application. How do I get a digital photo that will successfully upload to my application?**

Please refer to the [\*\*Photograph Requirements\*\*](#) for detailed guidance.

**9 Should I bring my entire DS-160 application or just the confirmation page with me to the interview?**

You are only required to bring the confirmation page with you. For your records, it’s advisable to save the entire application to your computer.

## Completing Specific DS-160 Questions (Displayed for Most Applicants)



### Personal Information 1

- ⇒ **SURNAMES:** Enter all surnames (last names) as they are listed in your passport. If your passport does not include a surname, enter “LNU.”
- ⇒ **GIVEN NAMES:** Enter your first and middle name(s) as they are listed in your passport. If your passport does not include a given name, enter “FNU.”
- ⇒ **OTHER NAMES:** Other names used, including your maiden name, religious name, professional name, or any other names, which you are known by or have been known by in the past. If you click “Yes,” a space to enter these other names will appear on the page.
- ⇒ **TELECODE:** Telecodes are four-digit code numbers that represent characters in some non-Roman alphabet names.
- ⇒ **MARITAL STATUS:** Indicate whether you are legally married.
- ⇒ **COUNTRY OF BIRTH:** Indicate your country of birth. If the name of the country where you were born no longer exists or has changed, please provide the country name that is currently being used for the place where you were born. For example, someone born in 1990 in the part of the USSR that is now within Russian borders would list “Russia” and not “USSR.”
- ⇒ **DATE OF BIRTH:** Indicate your date of birth as listed in your passport.

### Personal Information 2

- ⇒ **OTHER NATIONALITY:** Enter all nationalities you currently hold and all nationalities you have previously held (including United States, if applicable), regardless of whether you have formally and/or legally relinquished the nationality. If the country where you previously held nationality no longer exists, provide the name of the country that is currently used for that location.
- ⇒ **PERMANENT RESIDENT:** Enter all countries where you have held permanent residence. Permanent resident means any individual who has been legally granted by a country/region permission to live and work without time limitation in that country/region.
- ⇒ **NATIONAL IDENTIFICATION NUMBER:** Your National ID Number is a unique number that your government provides. If your country provides such a number, please enter it in this field.
- ⇒ **U.S. SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER/U.S. TAXPAYER ID NUMBER:** The U.S. Government provides unique numbers to those who seek employment (Social Security Number) or pay taxes (Taxpayer ID). If you do not have a U.S. Social Security Number or U.S. Taxpayer ID Number, then check “Does Not Apply.” Please note that an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITN) issued to some derivative visa holders such as H-4 and O-3, is not a Social Security Number.

## Travel Information



- ⇒ **PURPOSE OF TRAVEL:** Please select the relevant visa type and answer the follow-up questions. *If you are unsure as to which is the proper category to select or receipt number to provide, please contact your attorney.*
- ⇒ **INTENDED DATE OF ARRIVAL:** Enter your estimated date of arrival. Please note that the visa will not be issued on the date of your interview. It will often take up to a week from the date of your interview to receive the visa. We recommend waiting to make travel arrangements until after you have been issued your visa. If you have not made specific travel plans (i.e., you have not booked your return flight), please select “no” for this question.
- ⇒ **INTENDED LENGTH OF STAY:** Your intended stay must be consistent with the underlying or requested approval. For H, O and L visa applicants, it would normally be the end date stated on the I-797 Approval Notice (or the requested end date on the Blanket L petition).
- ⇒ **ADDRESS WHERE YOU WILL STAY IN THE U.S.:** If you have not secured a place to stay in the U.S. yet, please provide the company’s address.
- ⇒ **PERSONS TRAVELING WITH YOU:** You should answer “Yes” to this question if you are traveling with family, as part of an organized tour, or as part of a performing group or athletic team. You do not need to and should not list separate individuals who are traveling with you for the purposes of business travel or employment with the same employer or organization.

## Previous U.S. Travel Information



- ⇒ **PREVIOUS TRAVEL TO THE U.S.:** If you have traveled to the United States in the past but are unsure of the exact dates, first try to check your recent travel history with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security [here](#). If your trips do not appear on the website (trips prior to 2013 may not appear), provide a good faith estimate of your trips. Please start with your most recent trip and work your way backwards. The system will only allow you to list five trips.
- ⇒ **PREVIOUS VISA APPLICATIONS:** You must answer “yes” if you have ever been issued a U.S. visa, even if you lost it or no longer have access to it. Please check your current and expired passports.
- ⇒ **PREVIOUS VISA DENIALS:** If you have ever had a visa denied, you must list it. Disclosing this information does not necessarily mean that you will not be able to obtain a visa. However, if you fail to disclose a prior denial, the U.S. Consulate may charge you with immigration fraud, deny your application and permanently bar you from the country.
- ⇒ **PREVIOUS REFUSALS OF U.S. ENTRY OR WITHDRAWALS OF ADMISSION:** If you have ever been turned away at a U.S. port of entry at an airport, sea or land port of entry, you must disclose it here.
- ⇒ **IMMIGRANT PETITION:** If an individual has ever filed an I-130 on your behalf, a company has ever filed an I-140 on your behalf, or you have ever filed an I-526 or I-140 on your own behalf, even if not approved, you must answer “yes” to this question. Then, provide an explanation. For example, “On [date], my employer/[relative]/I filed an I-130/I-140/I-526 petition on my behalf. The petition was approved on [date] OR The petition is currently pending.”

## Address and Phone Information



- ⇒ **HOME ADDRESS:** Generally speaking, for temporary visa applicants, the U.S. government expects that you will provide your permanent home address outside the U.S. since you are not permitted to have your permanent residence within the U.S. unless you hold U.S. permanent resident or U.S. citizenship status.
- ⇒ **MAILING VS. HOME ADDRESS:** The form asks if your Mailing Address is the same as your Home Address. This is the address to which the U.S. Consulate will return your passport after visa processing (which is another sign that the “home address” question requests a home address outside the U.S.). If you click “No” for this question, you will have an opportunity to enter your Mailing Address.
- ⇒ **PHONE AND EMAIL ADDRESS:** Please provide all phone numbers and email addresses you have used in the last five years.
- ⇒ **SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS:** You must provide information about all social media accounts you have used within the last five years, including your social media account.

## Passport Information



⇒ **PASSPORT NUMBER:** You should enter the information on the passport you will be using when traveling to the United States. Your travel document should be a valid, unexpired passport or other valid, unexpired documentation that is sufficient to establish your identity and nationality. Your passport should be valid for at least 6 months after the date of your interview. If your passport will expire in less than one year, you should renew it as soon as possible. Please note that having an expiring passport at the time of entry into the U.S. can lead to a shortened period of authorized stay on your I-94 record.

**\*\*Remember to check your I-94 record after EVERY entry.\*\***

⇒ **PASSPORT BOOK NUMBER:** The Passport Book Number is commonly called the inventory control number. You may or may not have a Passport Book Number on your passport. The location of the Passport Book Number on your passport may vary depending on the country that issued your passport. Please contact your passport issuing authority if you are unable to determine whether or not your passport contains a Passport Book Number.

⇒ **LOST OR STOLEN PASSPORT:** If you indicate that you have had a passport lost or stolen, you will be asked to provide the passport number and the country/authority that issued the passport. There is an option to indicate that the passport number is unknown. If your passport is ever stolen, you will want to ensure that you file a police report and permanently retain a copy of the police report.

## U.S. Point of Contact



This can be any individual in the United States who knows you and can verify, if necessary, your identity. If you are applying for a work visa, it would be someone who works for the U.S. sponsoring organization. Provide a direct dial number for your point of contact in the United States.

## Family Information: Relatives



⇒ **IMMEDIATE RELATIVES, NOT INCLUDING PARENTS, IN THE U.S.:** Enter the names of all immediate family members you have in the U.S., if any. "Immediate Relative" means fiancé, spouse (husband/wife), child (son/daughter), or sibling (brother/sister).

⇒ **OTHER RELATIVES:** Enter the names of all other family members in this field. This means any other family member that does not fall in the above category of immediate relative (e.g., aunts/uncles, cousins, grandparents, etc.).

## Present Work/Education/Training Information



⇒ **CURRENT EMPLOYMENT/EDUCATION:** Provide the information requested about your current employment/education. Previous Work/Education/Training Information.



## Previous Work/Education/Training Information



⇒ **PREVIOUS WORK:** Provide your employment information for the last five years that you were employed, if applicable. If the last five years that you were employed were from 2000 to 2005, and you have not been employed since, provide those years of employment. If you have been employed in different roles within the same organization, please list each role as a different employment.

⇒ **EDUCATION:** Please answer “yes” if you have ever attended, for any length of time, a high school/secondary school (or its equivalent in your country), college, university, graduate school, a doctoral program, or a vocational school.

⇒ **COURSE OF STUDY:** For high school/secondary school (or equivalent), please indicated “Academic” or “Vocational.” For all other educational levels, please indicate your major or concentration.

## Additional Work/Education/Training Information



Provide the list of languages you speak.

## Countries Visited



Provide the list of countries you have traveled to within the last five years. Please be as thorough as possible. Check your current and expired passport (if applicable).

## Security and Background



Please answer these questions truthfully. If any question may be a “yes” or you are unsure about whether a “yes” is warranted, contact your attorney.

With regard to the question “have you ever been arrested or convicted for any offense or crime, even though subject of a pardon, amnesty, or similar action?”, please note that the U.S. government requires disclosures of ALL arrests or convictions, no matter when or where you were arrested or convicted. In some countries, the law may be that the records are sealed, and you are not required to disclose the information to third parties. If you apply for a U.S. visa, U.S. government rules require that you disclose the information despite the arrest or conviction records relating to your being a minor (child) at the time, being sealed or your being pardoned.



## MELTZER HELLRUNG

IMMIGRATION SOLUTIONS

Meltzer Hellrung challenges conventions to deliver better outcomes.

Founded with the belief that immigration can be a strategic advantage, we understand the complexities of immigration and respond with innovative solutions to meet business and talent needs. Our unique solution - skilled immigration professionals delivering responsive service to clients through Voyager®, our proprietary immigration management platform, delivers the best immigration experience to companies, employees and their families.

