
SCREENING AN ATTORNEY

- Does the attorney primarily practice in the area of immigration law?
- How many years has the attorney been practicing immigration law?
- What kind of experience does the attorney have with the specific type of case you have?
- What is the attorney's honest appraisal of the likelihood of success with your case? Be wary of anyone who "guarantees" you success.
- Is there any initial consultation fee? Some attorneys do not charge for the initial office visit, but may spend only a few minutes with you. Others may charge a fee and may give you a more in-depth interview.
- How much are the fees for his/her services? Some attorneys have an hourly charge; others have a fixed fee, depending on the type of case.
- Will you be working directly with that attorney? Some will turn your case over to an associate or a legal assistant after the initial interview.
- Is the attorney a member of the American Immigration Lawyers Association? If not, it is very unlikely that s/he is actively practicing immigration law.
- Can the attorney give you the name of a foreign student advisor who can comment on the quality of his/her work?
- Does everything you know about this attorney tell you that this person is knowledgeable and competent to handle your specific type of case?

- Does everything you know about this attorney tell you that this person is ethical and honest in relations with clients?
- Are you comfortable with the attorney's style and personality?
- Are the fees comparable to other attorneys' fees? If not, why not? The lowest fee does not necessarily indicate the best deal. The highest fee does not necessarily indicate the best service.
- If you still have questions about the attorney's background and qualifications, contact your state Bar Association for specific details about a particular attorney.

BEFORE REFERRING TO AN IMMIGRATION ATTORNEY

Before referring your foreign visitors to an attorney, be sure that you understand your institution's policies. For example, many institutions have strict policies that prohibit the use of outside attorneys for any immigration matter related to employment at that institution. Experienced immigration attorneys will ask foreign students and scholars to check with their foreign student advisor or international office before agreeing to provide services that involve representation of the institution. They will also ask foreign students and scholars if they have spoken to their foreign student advisor or international office before proceeding with basic student and scholar (F and J) issues.

These questions are only a starting point. The best way to locate any professional is by soliciting recommendations from other professionals. Ask attorneys and foreign student advisors who have direct and ongoing personal experience with immigration attorneys for their recommendations. And when you find an especially knowledgeable, ethical and helpful attorney let your colleagues know.

Immigration Attorneys

<u>Name</u>	<u>Tel #</u>	<u>Office</u>	<u>Web-site</u>
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The Office of International Education and Exchange does not endorse a particular attorney and none of the attorneys listed above are affiliated in any way with Cal State Fullerton. We suggest that you call several attorneys, and base your decision upon the expertise of the particular attorney who has experience with handling cases similar to your situation, the fees, and your degree of comfort and confidence in the attorney. On the reverse side of this handout, we have provided some tips on how to screen an attorney. Remember that **you** are the one hiring the attorney, so you must feel comfortable working with him/her. For more information on each attorney, please visit their web-site (if available) - this is an excellent way to check out their personal information (biography, experience, clients served, etc.)

To the best of our knowledge, the majority of the attorneys listed here are members of the American Immigration Association ("AILA"), a professional organization that establishes standards of practice and ethics. For more information please visit their web site: <http://www.aila.org/>