

# Shepherds Theological Seminary

## INTERNATIONAL STUDENT PROGRAM POLICY

Adopted: August 30, 2013

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The purpose of the International Student Program for MACM and MDiv candidates is to prepare men and women for leadership responsibilities in churches and schools of their home countries. The Seminary's purpose for existence is expanded by the opportunities to equip international students for ministry, student and faculty life at the Seminary is enriched, and missionary vision is enlarged by the presence of international students. International students are already engaged in ministry and are sponsored by churches and agencies inside and outside the U.S.

### Procedures

#### 1. **Duration of the Degree Programs**

The length of the program is set at one year (1) for the MTS One-Year Cohort; two (2) years of full-time study for the MACM degree and at four (4) years for the MDIV degree. Students may seek an extension of this time typically to complete their internship, apprenticeship or thesis requirements in their home country.

#### 2. **Educational Credentials**

International candidates must present a properly certified educational background that is typically a baccalaureate degree or its academic equivalent. The STS admission committee recognizes that educational systems are organized differently in different areas of the world. International applicants are encouraged to present an explanation of how their educational credentials meet these requirements.

#### 3. **Language Skills**

International scholars are admitted only upon evidence that they are sufficiently proficient in the English language to deal adequately with course material in oral and written form. Proficiency must be demonstrated by presenting the results of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), which is now computer-based in most parts of the world and administered by the Educational Testing Service, P.O. Box 955, Princeton, New Jersey 08540-6151, USA. STS requires a score of 20 or higher for each category with an overall score of 85 or higher for admittance into the master's level program. Results are to be sent to the Shepherds Theological Seminary Registrar's Office. The International Student Committee may waive the TOEFL if the prospective student is able to demonstrate proficiency in the English language through prior academic or professional work.

#### 4. **Financial Support**

US Government regulations require each international student to demonstrate in advance sufficient financial resources for him/herself and dependents, if any, for the first year of the masters program, as well as credible evidence of a funding plan for the remaining years.

- a. Married students may need to come to Shepherds without their dependents if they are unable to demonstrate the financial resources required by government regulations. Shepherds requires that married students must submit an affidavit of support for their spouse and dependents whether they are with him/her in the U.S. or remain in their home country. Please note that spouses are not eligible for employment in the United States.
- b. International students who are currently engaged in ministry, and plan to return to that or

a similar ministry, may qualify for the missionary 50% tuition discount.

- c. Shepherds has limited opportunities to provide employment up to twenty (20) hours per week on the campus if positions are available.
- d. Admitted applicants will be expected to demonstrate the above described financial resources as part of applications for admission.

5. **Financial Planning**

Please review the chart showing the estimated annual cost of attending Shepherds Theological Seminary that includes: costs for a single and married student for tuition, fees, living expenses and books for an academic year. Additional expenses need to be anticipated for dependents. It is essential that students anticipate the full amount of their educational expenses and secure their source of funding. Please note: these figures DO NOT include travel to and from their home country.

- a. Estimated Annual Costs for graduate programs

Expense Item	Single Student	Married Student	Comments
Tuition (23 hrs) no missionary discount	\$7,705	\$7,705	Full payment at start of each semester
Tuition (23 hrs) missionary discount	\$3,853	\$3,853	Assumes 50% missionary discount
Fees – MACM/MDiv	\$940	\$940	Library, activity, graduation, distance learning
Books & Supplies	\$600	\$600	Jackson Library provides access to all required books
Computer costs annual average	\$1,000	\$1,000	Jackson Library provides access to computers
Medical Insurance	\$5,200	\$14,000	Required by Federal regulation
Housing	\$13,980	\$17,980	
Local Transportation	\$3,070	\$4,000	Does not include any travel costs to and from US
Personal Expenses	\$5,705	\$10,000	Includes phone, internet, food
Estimated Total no missionary discount	\$38,200	\$56,225	Total for students without the missionary discount
Estimated Total with missionary discount	\$34,348	\$52,373	Total for students with the 50% missionary discount

- b. International students are encouraged to open up a non-cost student personal checking account in Cary to facilitate financial transfers and records.

6. **Housing**  
Shepherds does not maintain housing for single or married students. Shepherds does provide support in securing satisfactory housing through the Director of Mentoring Office. A number of students combine to rent apartments and to assist in transportation.

7. **Health Insurance**  
Federal and state laws require that international students maintain adequate health insurance without a cap, to include medical evacuation up to \$50,000 and repatriation up to \$25,000 while attending Shepherds Theological Seminary. While many other countries bear the expense of health care for their residents, individuals in the United States are responsible for these expenses. A single day of hospitalization can cost thousands of dollars. A good insurance policy gives you access to excellent medial facilities and provides protection against the enormous costs of health care. Shepherds recommends seeking coverage from the Seminarian Plan of Guidestone Insurance. However, students may be able to find a more affordable plan elsewhere. For example, some countries' embassies offer affordable coverage to their citizens while in the United States.

8. **Work and Employment**  
U.S. Immigration policies allow international students to work part-time (up to 20 hours per week) on-campus while they are enrolled as a full-time student during the semester. Students are also allowed to work full-time (40 hours per week) during summer vacation and between semesters provided he/she continues as a student the following semester. Off-campus employment must be authorized through specific procedures outlined in the federal regulations. The student is required to obtain a US Social Security Number in order to work, and Shepherds must issue a work verification or authorization letter in order to obtain the social security number. Contact the Bursar's Office for more details on employment information for international students, including information on filing income taxes on wages earned.

On-campus employment includes:

- Employment for STS as a teaching assistant, research assistant, clerical worker, library worker, etc.
- Work performed on-campus for Colonial Baptist Church that provides direct services to students.
- Employment at an off-campus location which is educationally affiliated with STS in some established curriculum or project at the post-graduate level, and be an integral part of the educational program, such as a church or a ministry that provides internship opportunities.

9. **Procedure for Application**

Each international student must complete the full Shepherds Theological Seminary application form, including your Christian testimony and support for the Seminary Doctrinal Statement.

- a. All applicants must submit a completed Seminary application. Applications are available from the Registrar's Office.
- Complete entire application form.
  - Submit \$50 (USD) non-refundable application fee.
  - Request transcript(s) from the college/university where you received your baccalaureate degree.
  - Provide a letter of recommendation from pastor or missionary known to Shepherds Theological Seminary.

- Provide a letter of support from your spouse.
  - Have the TOEFL results (with a score of 20 or higher for each category with an overall score of 85 or higher) sent to Shepherds Theological Seminary.
  - An affidavit of support from a legal US citizen
  - Provide a copy of a passport not to expire until 6 months after completion of the degree program
  - A copy of a current visa. Visas must not expire while a student at STS
- b. In order for you to receive the Form I-20 document required in support of your application for a student F-1 Visa, you will need to submit appropriate financial guarantees. Part of the requirement to qualify for a student visa is proof of ability to finance one's education. A detailed account is required explaining how the applicant intends to meet their seminary and living expenses during his/her studies. This includes providing STS with documented bank records.
- c. Upon your admission to Shepherds Theological Seminary, your acceptance to the invitation, and appropriate provision of all documentation, you will be provided by the Registrar with a Form I-20, which you will need to apply for an F-1 Student Visa. If you are already in the United States, you will need to apply for a Visa Certificate to use in support of an application for change of nonimmigrant status or to follow the procedure for the F-1 Student transfer. If accompanied by spouse and children, a Form I-20 will be provided for each individual and you must apply for F-2 Visas (dependents of F-1 Visa holders), if funding to meet their additional expenses is documented.

10. **F-1 Student Classification**

F-1 Visa status is a narrowly defined, non-immigrant, full-time, student category. The actual visa is a label placed on a page of a student's passport by a Department of State (DOS) officer. The visa allows entry into the United States for Duration of Status by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the U.S government department responsible for administering regulations related to the stay of non-U.S. citizens. Under the terms of a Student Visa, one is required to pursue a full-time course of study during the academic year, September through May maintaining satisfactory academic progress. For immigration purposes, Shepherds Theological Seminary defines satisfactory academic progress as maintaining a 2.0 grade point average and maintaining full-time status each academic semester in order to complete the program in the timeframe.

11. **Registration for Classes**

International students are required to register for classes each semester through the Registrar's office to verify that they are in compliance with maintaining satisfactory academic progress. Any change in course schedule must also be done through the Registrar's office.

12. **Payment of Accounts**

All tuition, fees, and charges are due and payable at registration. International students are expected to make payment in full when classes start for each semester as well as for any classes taken during the winter and summer modules. Refunds for courses dropped are automatically credited to the student financial account according to the refund schedule found in the current Catalog. These funds typically will be used to offset tuition payment for the following semester or module.

13. **New Student Orientation**

All new students are required to attend New Student Orientation. In addition to the topics covered for all new students, there will be an additional time spent with incoming International Students to cover campus safety, assimilation to STS and information on the community.