

# Shepherds Theological Seminary

## INTERNATIONAL STUDENT PROGRAM POLICY

Adopted: August 30, 2013

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The purpose of the International Student Program for MTS, 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 known 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**

Provide proof of English proficiency through one of the following tests. The Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) is administered by the Educational Testing Service, PO Box 955 Princeton, New Jersey 08540-6151, USA. The applicant must score 85 or higher overall, and 20 or higher in each sub-category. Duolingo English Test is an online exam and allows candidates to prove English language proficiency from their personal computer. Applicants must score 105 overall and at least 105 in each content area. The International Language Testing System (IELTS) is an English language test for study, migration, or work. Applicants must score a 6.5 or higher. Please have results sent directly to Shepherds Theological Seminary. The International Student Committee may waive the language proficiency test if the prospective student is able to demonstrate proficiency in the English language through prior academic or professional work.

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

U.S. 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 master's 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. It 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 semester MTS, MACM and MDiv degree programs

Expense Item	Single Student	Married Student	Comments
Tuition (23 hrs) no missionary discount	\$8,500	\$8,500	Full payment at start of each semester
Tuition (23 hrs) missionary discount	\$4,250	\$4,250	Assumes 50% missionary discount
Fees – MACM/MDiv	\$940	\$940	Library, activity, graduation, distance learning
Books & Supplies	\$700	\$700	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	\$17,960	
Local Transportation	\$3,070	\$4,000	Does not include any travel costs to and from U.S.
Personal Expenses	\$5,710	\$10,000	Includes phone, internet, food
Estimated Total no missionary discount	\$39,100	\$57,100	Total for students without the missionary discount
Estimated Total with missionary discount	\$34,850	\$52,850	Total for students with the 50% missionary discount

b. Estimated Annual Costs for the one-year MTS degree program

Expense Item	Single Student	Married Student	Comments
Tuition (42 hrs) no missionary discount	\$15,540	\$15,540	Full payment at start of each semester
Tuition (42 hrs) missionary discount	\$7,770	\$7,770	Assumes 50% missionary discount
Fees – MTS one-year	\$6,000	\$6,000	Library, activity, graduation, distance learning
Books & Supplies	\$1,000	\$1,000	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	\$17,960	
Local Transportation	\$3,070	\$4,000	Does not include any travel costs to and from U.S.
Personal Expenses	\$5,710	\$10,000	Includes phone, internet, food
Estimated Total no missionary discount	\$51,500	\$69,500	Total for students without the missionary discount
Estimated Total with missionary discount	\$43,730	\$61,730	Total for students with the 50% missionary discount

c. International students are encouraged to open up a non-cost student personal checking account in Cary, NC 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. See student housing on the Shepherds.edu website for details.

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 medical 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 they continue as students the following semester. Off-campus employment must be authorized through specific procedures outlined in the federal regulations. The student is required to obtain a U.S. 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 Finance 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 The Shepherd's 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 is 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 on-line Shepherds Theological Seminary application, including a personal, Christian testimony as well as support for the Seminary Doctrinal Statement.

- a. All applicants must submit a completed on-line Seminary application. Complete the entire application form.
  - Pay the \$55 (USD) non-refundable application fee.
  - Request transcript(s) from the college/university where you received your baccalaureate degree.
  - Provide a letter of recommendation from a pastor or missionary known to Shepherds Theological Seminary.
  - Provide a letter of support from your spouse.
  - Provide proof of English proficiency through one of the following tests. The Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) is administered by the Educational Testing Service, PO Box 955 Princeton, New Jersey 08540-6151, USA. The applicant must score 85 or higher overall, and 20 or higher in each sub-category. Duolingo English Test is an online exam and allows candidates to prove English language proficiency from their personal computer. Applicants must score a 105 overall and at least 105 in each content area. The International Language Testing System (IELTS) is an English language test for study, migration, or work. Applicants must score a 6.5 or higher. Please have results sent directly to Shepherds Theological Seminary.
  - Provide an affidavit of support from a legal U.S. citizen.
  - Provide a copy of a passport not to expire until 6 months after completion of the degree program.
- 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 in order to apply for an F-1 Student Visa through a U.S. consulate. 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, 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 complete the online New Student Orientation course. In addition to that course which covers topics for all new incoming students, a separate meeting will be scheduled with the registrar to go over course selection, campus safety, assimilation to STS, and information on the community.