CURRENT INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Now that you have been admitted as an F-1 or J-1 student at Calvin Theological Seminary, you have a responsibility to maintain your immigration status. All international students must remain “in status” by complying with the following regulations and policies:

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MAINTAINING STATUS

Reporting Requirements: Report to the International Student Office within 10 days of changing any of the following:
- Home address in the U.S. (Form AR-11 can be found online at [http://www.uscis.gov/ar-11](http://www.uscis.gov/ar-11))
- Academic program, degree level, and/or school

Maintain Full Course Load:
- [Know the full course requirement for your specific degree program](#)
- Register for a full course load every semester (except for the last semester of your program)
- Complete a [Reduced Course Load](#) form when requesting a reduced course load

Observe International Student Office Policies:
- Attend the school authorized to attend on your Form I-20 or DS-2019
- Maintain a valid passport at all times and provide the International Student Adviser with a copy of any new/and or renewed passports
- Obtain a travel validation signature from the International Student Adviser before traveling outside the U.S.
- Maintain a full-course of study

(updated June 5, 2017)
Follow extension procedures Extension of Status form if you must remain in the U.S. past your Form I-20 or Form DS-2019 completion date
- Limit authorized employment to 20 hours per week except during summer and other vacations
- Notify the International Student Adviser if you are permanently leaving Calvin Seminary (e.g. transferring to a new school, completing your program, withdrawing from a program, etc)

EMPLOYMENT OPTIONS

With the following exceptions, student in the U.S. on an F-1 visa or J-1 visa are not allowed to engage in business or accept official employment:

On-campus employment: Students with an F-1 or J-1 visa are permitted to work on-campus with up to 20 hours per week while school is in session.

Curricular Practical Training (CPT): A student on an F-1 visa may be eligible to engage in temporary employment for practical training in his or her field of study, both before and after completion of studies. To be eligible for CPT you must:
- Be enrolled in a degree program that requires an internship as part of the academic program
- Complete one full academic year of full-time study (unless otherwise required by your degree program)
- Must be approved by the Vocational Formation Director and authorized by the DSO
- Must complete the Curricular Practical Training form

Optional Practical Training (OPT): A student on an F-1 visa may obtain employment related to his or her field of study for a maximum of 12 months. The training is chosen by the student but not required for the attainment of the degree. To be eligible for OPT you must:
- Apply to the Department of Homeland Security-Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services for an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) by completing Form I-765 (Contact the International Student Office)
- Complete and submit the application within 90 days or less before your program end date and up to 60 days after your program end date
- Work only in a position that directly relates to your academic program
- Students may not start working until you receive the EAD card
- Pre-Completion OPT: To enroll in OPT prior to the completion of your studies, you are allowed to work only part time while maintaining a full course load
- Post-Completion OPT: To enroll in OPT after the completion your program, you are allowed to work full-time

(updated June 5, 2017)
**Academic Training (AT):** A student on a J-1 visa may be eligible to engage in an academic training in his or her field of study. To be eligible for AT you must:

- Must be in good academic standing
- Work in a position that directly relates to your field of study
- Must receive written approval in advance from the Vocational Formation Office and the RO/ARO
- Must complete the Academic Training form

**Preaching in F-1 or J-1 Status:** All preaching by Canadian and International students in CRC churches is, for legal purposes, treated as on-campus employment. Preaching in a non-CRC church is treated as off-campus employment and therefore not permitted unless that church has a contract with the Vocational Formation Office for mandatory preaching by CTS students.

**CHANGE OF DEGREE PROGRAM**

You must apply for a new Form I-20 if you continue at our school in a different academic program. For example, if you have been accepted into the PhD program after completing the M.Div program, you will need to complete a new Declaration of Finances and show proof of those finances.

**TRANSFERS TO/FROM ANOTHER U.S. SCHOOL**

If you transferred to Calvin Theological Seminary from another U.S. institution, you must bring to the International Student Office your current Form I-20 within 15 days of your program start date in order to have the transfer registered in SEVIS. This is absolutely critical to ensure that everything is in order with your immigration documentation.

If you transfer to another U.S. institution, you should consult with the International Student Adviser and complete the Transfer In/Out Form. A release date must be entered into SEVIS in order for your SEVIS record to be transferred to your new school so they can issue you a new I-20. When transferring as an F-1 student to another school, you must enroll within 5 months of “transfer out” date or end date on your current Form I-20, whichever is earlier.

**DEPENDENTS**

**F-2 Dependents**
• Employment: Student dependents (spouses and children) on an F-2 visa are not allowed to engage in business or accept employment of any kind.
• Study: Student dependents on an F-2 visa are permitted to enroll in less than a full course of study (i.e., part-time) at an SEVP – certified school in any course of study.

J-2 Dependents
• Employment: Student dependents (spouses and children) on a J-2 visa are permitted to apply for an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) from United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) in order to be employed in the U.S. You must complete form I-765 (Contact the International Student Office).
• Study: At this time, there is no restriction on study for J-2 dependents.

TRAVELING AS AN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT

When traveling within the U.S. or outside the U.S., always remember to carry with you your passport, visa, and I-20 or DS-2019

Travel outside the U.S.
If you plan to travel outside the U.S. while you are a student at Calvin Seminary, you will need your Form I-20 or DS-2019 endorsed from an International Student Adviser. Travel signatures are valid for 6 months. If your visa is expired or is about to expire, you will not be able to enter back into the U.S. without first renewing your visa.

Travel within the U.S.
If you plan to travel within the U.S while you are a student at Calvin Seminary, you do not need to have your I-20 or DS-2019 endorsed.

Travel with an Expired Visa
If your visa expired and you leave the country, you will most likely not be able to reenter on the same visa. You will need to renew your visa before returning. Please meet with an International Student Adviser before you leave to discuss your eligibility and the required documentation for renewing your visa.

IMPORTANT: It is always best to check with the International Student Adviser whenever you are uncertain about immigration laws or maintaining legal status.

(updated June 5, 2017)