Newly Admitted International Students

As an international student, you must have a valid non-immigrant visa status to enroll in credit courses at Calvin Theological Seminary. Most international students admitted to Calvin Seminary will need to obtain an F-1 or J-1 visa.

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Step 1: Apply to Calvin Theological Seminary

Once you have been admitted to Calvin Theological Seminary and received an official Letter of Admission, follow these steps in order to receive an I-20 (F-1 visa) or DS-2019 (J-1 visa) to enter the US to study at Calvin Seminary.

Step 2: Complete Your Declaration of Finances and Submit to Calvin Seminary

The Certificate of Eligibility (I-20 for F visa and DS-2019 for J visa) is a government document that allows you to obtain a student visa (F-1 or J-1) from a U.S. Consulate or Embassy and enter the U.S. as an F-1 or J-1 student. It is created by Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) approved school and sent to you prior to your start date.

To be eligible to receive a Certificate of Eligibility, you must submit a complete Declaration of Finances to Calvin Seminary at least three months prior to your program start date.

A complete Declaration of Finances will include the following:
  - Declaration of Finances Form
  - Financial Documents (i.e. original bank statements)
  - Sponsor letters plus bank statement, letters from supporting churches indicating the amount of support, or letters from classis (if applicable)
• Scholarship letter from Calvin Seminary (if applicable)
• Copy of passport (student and all dependents, if applicable)

Upon receipt of the Declaration of Finances, the International Student Office will send you a Certificate of Eligibility (please allow two weeks for processing).

Note: U.S. Regulations require all international students to demonstrate that they have sufficient funds for their program of study. For the purpose of issuing a Certificate of Eligibility (I-20) for F-1 visa holders, students must verify full funding for the first year of study and “sufficient” funds for the following years. For J-1 visa holders, students must verify full funding for their entire program.

Step 3: Pay SEVIS Fee

Upon receiving your Certificate of Eligibility, pay the Department of Homeland Security SEVIS fee at https://www.fmjfee.com/i901fee/index.html

SEVIS Fees:
F-1 visa= $350
J-1 visa= $220

You must have a receipt of your SEVIS fee payment with you at your visa interview. You will need to go to the Department of Homeland Security website and complete the I-901 form. Calvin Seminary’s school code is DET214F00289000 and the SEVIS number is located in the top right corner of the I-20 or DS-2019.

Step 4: Schedule a Visa Interview

Schedule a visa interview with the U.S. Consulate or Embassy.
You will need to present these documents:
• Certificate of Eligibility (I-20 or DS-2019) from Calvin Seminary
• Declaration of Finances
• Supporting Financial Documents (if applicable)
• Valid Passport
• Receipt of SEVIS Fee payment
• Calvin Theological Seminary acceptance letter

Exception: Canadian citizens do not need to go to the U.S. Embassy or Consulate to obtain a visa. Instead, they need to present their Certificate of Eligibility (I-20 or DS 2019), Passport and SEVIS Fee payment receipt at the Port of Entry.
Step 5: Enter the U.S. With Your F-1 visa or J-1 visa

Be prepared to present the following documents at the Port of Entry:

- Certificate of Eligibility (I-20 or DS-2019)
- Valid student visa (and dependent visa, if applicable) (Canadian citizens are exempt)
- Valid passport (and dependent passport, if applicable)
- Declaration of Finances

Upon being admitted to the U.S., Customs and Border Protection (CBP) will create an electronic I-94 admission record that will be available immediately online at https://www.cbp.gov/travel/international-visitors/i-94 You will need to print out a copy of the I-94 for you and each of your dependents (if applicable).

Step 6: Check in with the International Student Office

Check in with the Calvin Seminary International Student Office within 7 days of your arrival. You must bring the following documents for yourself (and each dependents):

- Certificate of Eligibility (I-20 or DS-2019)
- Passport
- Visa
- I-94 (available online at https://www.cbp.gov/travel/international-visitors/i-94)
- U.S. Address