

An Overview of Immigration Law for International Applicants and Their Financial Supporters

International applicants to Bethany College (BCOM) face the unique challenges of not only meeting the admissions criteria for our college, but also securing and maintaining their visa status with the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services department, or USCIS (formerly known as the INS). The Admissions personnel at BCOM are not immigration specialists; however, to the best of our ability we do try to advise our international applicants of immigration law and how it might affect their studies at BCOM. It may be in your best interest to contact an immigration lawyer if you feel you need the advice of a specialist.

Finding out about USCIS Regulations

Ultimately it is the responsibility of the individual applicant and his/her financial supporters to be aware of immigration law as it applies to students. The following contact information for the USCIS is included here for your personal reference. We would strongly encourage you to spend time on the USCIS web site as it is very informative and gives regular updates as information changes.

Web site for the USCIS: www.uscis.gov

Calling the USCIS

You can call the USCIS toll-free for automated information and live assistance concerning immigration services and benefits within the U.S., Puerto Rico, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands at the following numbers:

- 1-800-375-5283
- Their TTY number is: 1-800-767-1833

If you are outside the U.S., Puerto Rico, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands please contact the closest U.S. Embassy or Consulate.

Many times students are afraid to call the USCIS for fear that they will be denied a visa or be deported if they say the wrong thing to the officer. This is NOT the case. You do not have to give any personal information to the officers on the help line and once you get through to them they are good resources. We suggest calling 3 different officers, though to ask a question, since you will often get more than one answer. By calling 3 you will get a better idea of the correct answer to your question. Please don't hesitate to call them.

BCOM International Student Policies

The Bethany International Investment

The international applicant accepted into our program and granted an I-20 form from our school must agree that their primary purpose in entering the U.S. is to study at BCOM. International applicants wishing to be heavily involved in a ministry in the U.S., to work many hours in order to send money home to family members, or to maintain a

relationship with a boyfriend or girlfriend for instance, should re-consider whether BCOM is really the right school for them.

Bethany staff invests heavily in the training of our students for the purpose of equipping them for overseas work. We are willing to make this investment of time and energy into those students who are willing to likewise give themselves fully to a time of training. We ask that all enrolling students respect this mutual relationship for the purpose of cross-cultural work around the world.

Therefore, the most important priority for BCOM International students is to maintain their good standing at our school, by following all regulations required by college policy. International applicants must be willing to abide by the following BCOM policies if granted enrollment in our training program.

Securing a Student Visa

All of our students are required to have an **F-1 visa** when they enroll in our school. According to U.S. immigration requirements he/she **must** secure that F-1 visa in their country of citizenship.

BCOM students are not permitted to change their visa status during their enrollment in our college. The only exception to this policy is for international students who marry an American during the course of their studies, and wish to apply for permanent residency. If permanent residency is granted during the time of their enrollment, they may be permitted to change their immigration status and retain their enrollment.

Maintaining Enrollment Status

International students must maintain all requirements of their particular program in order to remain in the U.S. under a student visa. It is the responsibility of the college officials to report to the USCIS whenever an international student drops out of school, transfers schools, drops below a full load of courses, goes on probation or receives any disciplinary action from the college. Such reports could result in a loss of immigration privileges.

Working for Pay

On-Campus Employment

Under USCIS law, international students may only work in jobs on the college campus during their enrollment, once they have secured a U.S. social security number without work restrictions noted. However, BCOM does not hire students to work for pay, so international students should plan to have enough money to cover their costs as a student without working.