Before you have read this guide, we welcome you to contact the Manager for International Services, Mike Withers mwithers@sbts.edu (502) 897-4208, fax (502) 897-4031. Mailing address: SBTS, International Services, 2825 Lexington Road, Louisville, KY 40280 USA. SBTS, including Boyce College, is authorized under federal law to admit non-immigrant alien students. However, only the Louisville campus – not extension centers – is authorized to enroll students in F-1 visa status. SBTS can enroll students in most visa categories, including H-1B, H-4, J-2, and R, but cannot enroll anyone with a B-1/B-2 visa, or anyone “visa-less.” Those in J-1 status must maintain their status with their J school. For internationals seeking F-1 student visas, there are four steps:

**Step 1: Admission; Step 2: Financial Evidence; Step 3: Housing; Step 4. The F-1 visa**

The details about admissions, transferring credits, and degree programs, are found in our on-line SBTS and Boyce College academic catalogs.

**QUESTIONS about Admissions?** Contact our Admissions Counselors at admissions@sbts.edu phone 502-897-4200, concerning requirements, selecting a program, your ministry goals, etc. Once you apply, a Counselor will be assigned to you. You will be able to track your admission file’s progress on-line with password access.

**QUESTIONS about the Student Visa, and relocation to Louisville?**
Contact Mike Withers at mwithers@sbts.edu phone: 502-897-4208, fax 502-897-4031.

**APPLICATION DEADLINES:**

**All Master’s programs (M.A., M.M., M.Div., Th.M.):**
Fall Semester — appl. due by July 15  
Spring Semester — due by December 1  

**January Term — due by December 1**  
**Summer Term — due by May 1**

**Professional Doctoral Programs:** Doctor of Ministry (D.Min.), and Doctor of Educational Ministry D.Ed.Min):
January Term – (application is due by) October 15  
Summer Term – due by March 15

**Doctor of Education (EDD) Summer Term** – due by January 15

**Doctor of Missiology (D. Miss.):** due 30 days prior to the doctoral qualifying exam

**Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.): School of Theology and Billy Graham School:**
Fall Semester – due by January 15  
Spring Semester – due by August 1

**Ph.D.: School Church Ministries:** Fall Semester only – (application is due by) January 15
STEP 1: ADMISSION

Apply on-line. Otherwise, you may scan your completed PDF application forms and email them to admissions@sberts.edu or mail them to: “SBTS, Admissions Office, 2825 Lexington Road, Louisville, KY 40280, USA.” Once we receive all your items – including official (academic) transcripts,* (explained below), and for non-native English speakers, a TOEFL iBT** score report (see exceptions below) – a decision on your admission (except Th.M. or Doctoral) will follow within two weeks.

*Official Academic Transcripts:

An “official transcript” is a school’s printout of all your courses by semester showing marks (grades) earned that is sealed by the school in its own envelope. If the transcript does not identify the name of the degree you earned and the date, this information should be shown on an attached document, such as a copy of a diploma. Unless your transcript is in English, Spanish, Portuguese, French or German you should provide an English translation, signed by someone attesting that he or she is a competent translator.

Boyce College applicants must provide transcripts from high school (at least grades 9-12), and any university-level schooling, if any. Neither the SAT nor the ACT test (standard tests for American high schoolers) are required.

Master’s or doctoral applicants must provide transcripts from every university-level (undergraduate or graduate) school you have attended, whether or not the school awarded you any academic degree. (This therefore excludes certificates or licenses from any specialized “vocational” or “trade” schools that typically do not require courses such as history, philosophy, the arts, and the sciences.)

If we are unable to determine that your school is sufficiently “credentialed” (recognized by a government or accredited by a reputable accrediting agency) for offering quality degree programs, we may request you to contact World Education Service www.wes.org for providing us its evaluation of your degree. (For master’s programs, your undergraduate degree (plus perhaps any further degree study whether or not a degree was earned) must equate to a 4-year US bachelor’s degree.)

**TOEFL iBT score:

Immigration law requires that SBTS and Boyce admit only students who have evidence of sufficient English ability for their degree program. Therefore an official TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) score report is required for the admission of non-native English speakers. No non-native English speaker may be admitted to master’s or bachelor’s programs without a TOEFL iBT (internet-based test) score, unless he or she has obtained an accredited bachelor’s degree from an English-speaking institution. All doctoral or ThM candidates must submit not less than a 90 TOEFL iBT score.

SCORE REQUIREMENTS: Boyce College requires 80 iBT (550 PBT); M.A. and M.Div. require 83 iBT; Th.M. and Ph.D. programs require 90 iBT. Since we do not offer ESL (English as a Second Language) courses, we cannot grant “conditional admission.” For information about the TOEFL test offered around the world, visit
www.ets.org/toefl. Official TOEFL score reports should be mailed directly by ETS to us. The SBTS/Boyce institutional code is 1724; if you put this number in the appropriate place on the ETS’s TOEFL test registration form, your score report will be mailed to us.

The following degree programs have special admission requirements: Doctor of Philosophy, Doctor of Ministry, Doctor of Educational Ministry, Doctor of Education, Doctor of Missiology. Testing is required, and you should plan ahead to assure your score is submitted on time. The Admissions Office can supply you with the information you will need both to apply and prepare testing for these advanced degrees. ***Importantly, D.Ed.Min. and D.Min. applicants who are seeking an F-1 visa must contact the Manager for International Services about certain legal visa employment restrictions, since these programs require work in ministry.***

**F-1 TRANSFER STUDENTS (coming from U.S. schools):**
Transferring F-1 students already living in the U.S. should phone SBTS’s Manager for International Services toll free 1-800-626-5525 ext 4208 to discuss the simple process of SEVIS “F-1 transfer.” SBTS can issue a new I-20 for you only after your current school has “transferred out” your SEVIS record to us. If your school requires an F-1 transfer form, our International Services office can email it to you. Your current school will surely require you to offer clear evidence of your admission to SBTS. We require from you evidence of your sufficient annual support for studying at SBTS, (Step 2, below).

**STEP 2: FINANCIAL SUPPORT EVIDENCE**
The U.S. Government requires that you provide us proof of your financial support in an amount not less than the cost of your program of study plus all living expenses for the full length of your program (see table below).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Status</th>
<th>Must Evidence:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>$17,000 per year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student &amp; spouse*</td>
<td>$27,000 per year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student, spouse + 1 child*</td>
<td>$30,000 per year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student, spouse + 2 children*</td>
<td>$33,000 per year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student, spouse + 3 children*</td>
<td>$36,000 per year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student, spouse + 4 children*</td>
<td>$39,000 per year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Our policy requires that a married student and family live together, honoring Scripture’s concern for spouses and children (cf. I Cor. 7:1-5) as superior to study.
Evidence of Annual Financial Support: Once you are admitted, and ideally 3 or 4 months before you plan to arrive at Southern, you must provide SBTS, attention “International Office,” documents evidencing your annual (yearly) financial support for the length of your program (M.A. at 2.5 yrs., M.Div. at 3.5 yrs., Doctoral at 4.5 yrs.) Support may be expressed by any combination of your personal savings, if any, and/or pledged support from one or more sponsors. Sponsors should complete our simple, two-page “Statement of Financial Support” affidavit (official pledge), printable from the “International Students” page of www.sbts.edu. Importantly, sponsors must attach their bank or tax statements sufficiently (not necessarily fully) to show ability to honor their annual pledge. **Please observe that SBTS cannot solicit (request) support from any potential sponsors, but the Manager for International Services will be glad to answer their questions about best expressing support.**

“F-1 Deposit”: As an advantage at your student visa interview, and a convenience in your first semester, we also require (for the issuance of the Immigration Form I-20) an “F-1 deposit” of $5,000 for a single student, or $7,000 for a family. Transferring students already in F-1 status, and coming from other U.S. schools, need not make this deposit. The deposit may be made by check or electronic (wire) transfer. The check should be made payable in U.S. dollars to “The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary” and its memo/notes section should indicate “For student [your name].” Your bank will know how to do these things. It should be mailed to SBTS’s/Boyce’s International Office. The funds will be deposited into your student account for your immediate use when you arrive on, or promptly refunded if you do not. For electronic transfer details, contact the Manager for International Services.

Financial Aid: First, before scholarships are allocated to students a few weeks before each semester, it is important that you apply for aid by our firm deadline - August 1st for the Fall Semester, or January 1st for Spring Semester. By doing so, you will be guaranteed an “F-1 scholarship.” For M.Div. and M.A. students, the amount is $1600, paid $800 per semester. For Boyce students, $1,800 per year, paid $900 per semester. You must apply via http://student.collegeboard.org/css-financial-aid-profile, selecting the 2014 - 2015 academic year. Where the College Board form asks for a U.S. “Social Security Number (SSN), simply leave it blank, if you do not have one. For the so-called “CSS code,” for SBTS use 9856, or for Boyce use 9785. You will be required to re-apply in the same way each year. With questions over the College Board application visit: http://www.sbts.edu/current-students/financial-aid/sbts-scholarships/how-to-apply/

There are no seminary-funded grants or scholarships for Th.M. or doctoral students, but the Financial Aid page of our www.sbts.edu website will direct you to outside scholarships http://www.sbts.edu/current-students/financial-aid/outside-scholarships/.

Employment: At your student visa interview, you cannot yet claim future work income toward your annual financial support, because the seminary cannot guarantee anyone a campus job. But you if you find a campus job, you could reasonably expect to earn
between $6,000 and $11,000 per year working part-time during semesters, and possibly full-time during the summer and winter breaks. (Sponsors are happy to learn this!) You could work off-campus only after your first two semesters and only for a limited period, under the Immigration Service’s (USCIS) authorization for “Practical Training” in your ministry field of study, or, in any work, if you can prove to the USCIS you have an unforeseen and extreme financial hardship.

**Insurance:** Our policy is that international F-1 students must purchase and maintain health insurance while at the seminary. Health insurance is now undergoing many significant changes, so you can arrange this after you arrive for study, and the International Office can advise. You should investigate whether perhaps your current insurance can be extended to cover you in the U.S. Single students in good general health are recommended to maintain “major medical” also called “catastrophic” insurance, which is the least expensive kind.

**Step 3: HOUSING**

The convenience of on-campus housing makes it most often the least expensive or best value among living options. Visit the Housing page of [www.sbts.edu](http://www.sbts.edu) for instructions and the PDF application form. The Housing Office welcomes you to contact them over your dormitory or apartment preferences via email housing@sbts.edu, or phone (502) 897-4203.

Campus dormitories are now undergoing complete renovations. *Leased housing units will not be available for occupancy until the Friday before classes start,* so plan your arrival accordingly. For those wanting or needing to investigate off-campus housing when they arrive, friends of the seminary can assist in the search effort. For those arriving early, there are two options for temporary housing on campus: 1. For single students, our “Fuller Hall Bunkhouse” at $25 per night. 2. For couples (or singles), our Legacy Conference Center Hotel at $52.99 per night. Be sure to inform the Housing Office when you plan to arrive on campus so that it can arrange to receive you (no matter how late!), after office hours, or on a weekend. If arriving after office hours, go to our Campus Security office (502) 897-4444, campuspolice@sbts.edu.

For Single Students: Dorm room and board costs are charged together each semester. For Married Students: One, two and three bedroom campus apartments are available for married students with or without children, ranging from $625 to $875 per month. Nearby off-campus apartment rates range from $450 to $900 per month. The seminary campus lies in Louisville’s “Crescent Hill” community on the northwest border of the large district to east called “St. Matthews” and is situated on or near three city bus lines (Louisville “TARC” routes 29, 19 & 31) so there is easy access to grocery stores, shopping centers, apartments, restaurants, and two large malls.
STEP 4: The F-1 Student Visa

We urge you to read carefully the US Government’s official and very helpful “Study in the States” website [http://studyinthestates.dhs.gov](http://studyinthestates.dhs.gov) explaining the F-1 visa process and living and studying in F-1 visa status. Also, visit the website of the US consular visa office nearest to you for its instructions on how to schedule the visa interview, the documents required (such as the on-line Form DS-160), and how to prepare for the interview. The “I-20 packet” you receive from SBTS contains essential documents for your student visa interview: the Form I-20, your SBTS admission letter, and signed copies of all your sufficient financial support documents.

Your SBTS Form I-20, which is our certification of your academic and financial eligibility for the student visa, contains your unique “SEVIS” number on the top right corner, something like “N0012345678.” This number is necessary for you to complete an on-line Immigration Form I-901 at [www.fmjfee.com](http://www.fmjfee.com) for paying the so-called “SEVIS” fee of $200, which helps to support the “Student and Exchange Visitor Information System.” This secure US Government website will instruct you how to pay the fee by credit card, and direct you to print out the receipt/confirmation as sort of a “ticket” to your student visa interview.

Planning for Your Visa Appointment and Arrival: The very earliest you could interview for the F-1 visa is four months before classes begin. And you could enter the U.S. no sooner than one month before classes start. Ideally, if your deposit and financial evidence reaches the seminary’s International Office within 4 to 5 months before classes start, you will have enough time to make good arrangements for the student visa and for travel. If you are granted the visa, very likely the US visa office will affix the visa into your passport within a day or two of your interview, ready for delivery or your collection.

It’s possible to enter SBTS or Boyce initially for our summer (late May) or winter terms (mid-December), when intensive, short-term courses are offered, provided that you enroll full-time. Full-time winter term enrollment is 3 credit hours (one class), and summer term requires 6 credit hours (two classes). A typical 3 credit hour course (involving 45 actual hours in the classroom during one 4 month (15 week) semester) is completed usually in only one to two weeks! Some courses, like Elementary Hebrew or Greek, may last 6 weeks. Because of their intensive nature, summer or winter term courses are not recommended for non-native English speakers in their first year.

Again, we welcome your questions and concerns! Please be sure to email the Manager for International Services, mwithers@sbts.edu with news of your visa result and, Lord willing, arrival details. May our Lord bless you and direct your steps in wisdom!