



## ARRIVAL INFORMATION FOR UNDERGRADUATE INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

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## WELCOME!

We are please that you have decided to pursue your ministry and educational goals at Manhattan Christian College. MCC exists to educate, equip and enrich Christian leaders for the Christian church and related ministries, leaders who have a foundational knowledge of the Scriptures and a biblical worldview. MCC strives to create an educational environment that fosters development of intellectual and spiritual maturity, leadership potential, and a global perspective on missions.

This packet contains important information for students accepted to MCC, who have an I-20 form from MCC, on student visa matters, travel to the U.S., housing, healthcare and banking. Please read it carefully so that you will have a successful start at the college. If you have any questions at all, please contact MCC using the information listed above.

## VISA MATTERS

### F-1 VISA INFORMATION

#### How do I obtain a student visa?

Most individuals coming to the U.S. for study use **F-1 student immigration status**. F-1 status is a *non-immigrant status*—this means the status will be valid for the full length of your degree program, but it does not allow you to immigrate to the U.S. permanently. To obtain this immigration status, you should use the Form I-20 issued to you by the Admissions Office to apply for an F-1 visa sticker at the U.S. embassy or consulate closest to your home city. The consular officer at the embassy will want to see the following items when you apply for the visa:

- The original I-20
- Proof of payment of the SEVIS fee
- Your valid passport (the passport must be valid for 6 months beyond the intended period of stay in the U.S.)
- A copy of the financial documents that you gave to the Admission Office
- A completed visa application (Form DS-156; some applicants complete additional forms)
- One 2 inch x 2 inch photograph
- Required Fee

The U.S. Department of State maintains an excellent web site that provides a complete overview of the visa application process at <http://www.unitedstatesvisas.gov/studying.html>. Visit this site to confirm any changes in the application process and to locate the embassy or consulate that serves your home city.

To pay the SEVIS fee, use the web site at <https://www.fmjfee.com/index.jhtml>. This site contains a description of the fee and how to pay it online or via post (Form I-901 is included in this packet). If you have questions, contact us using the phone and e-mail information listed above. Please note that the SEVIS fee is not the same as the visa application fee. Follow the instructions of the U.S. embassy where you will apply for your visa regarding the payment of the visa application fee.

If you already have an F-1 visa because you have been studying at another school, you do not need to go to a U.S. Embassy to get a new visa *if* your current visa has not expired. Even if the name of a different school is on the visa, you can still use the unexpired visa to attend MCC by presenting the visa with the Manhattan Christian College I-20 to the immigration official when you enter the U.S. You do not need to pay the SEVIS fee again if you are a transfer student.

### **What will the consular officer ask me?**

The officer will examine your documents to make sure that you have been admitted to the college and that you have the funds necessary for the tuition and living expenses. He or she will also make sure that your I-20 is verified in SEVIS, the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System. SEVIS is the electronic database used by the Department of State to confirm that an I-20 is a valid, original document. Please be assured that the university has fully entered all relevant information into SEVIS in order to speed processing of your visa application.

The officer may also ask about your academic background to guarantee that you are prepared for an advanced level of study. In addition, U.S. immigration regulations state that an applicant for a non-immigrant visa must prove to the consular officer that he or she intends to return home after the studies are completed. To qualify for a student visa, you must show that you have a permanent residence and other ties outside of the U.S. that will compel you to leave the U.S. at the end of your temporary stay.

Proof of strong ties differs from country to country, city to city, person to person. Some examples of ties to your home country are a house, immediate family members who will remain, a bank account, membership in professional, religious, or social organizations, a job when you finish your studies in the U.S., long-range future plans in your country. You should be prepared to answer the officer's questions about your plans to return home after you complete your studies.

### **When should I apply for the visa?**

You should apply for a visa **as soon as possible** because item 5 of your I-20 states that you must report to the school no later than the date listed. Often it can take several weeks or months to obtain an interview appointment, answer the questions of the consular officer and clear the security-check process. New security checks have been in place for visa applicants since September 11, 2001. *These checks can require anywhere from 20 days to 2 months of processing time.* The consular officer will not issue a visa if he or she believes that you cannot reach the United States by the report date on your immigration form. **We cannot**

**change the report date.** *Please note:* December, January and August can be an especially busy time for U.S. embassies and consulates. Due to holiday schedules, student visa appointments can fill up quickly. Also, remember that U.S. government offices overseas observe both local and U.S. holidays.

Carefully read “Instructions to Students” on page 2 of your I-20. Sign your I-20 on page 1. By signing the form and by using it to enter the United States, you acknowledge that it is **your responsibility** to know and comply with all U.S. immigration regulations pertaining to your immigration status.

**Canadian Students:** Because citizens of Canada are always exempt from visa sticker requirements, you need pay the SEVIS fee at least 3 days before your arrival in the US using the web site indicated. Present the SEVIS fee receipt and the I-20 to the U.S. immigration official at the border or airport along with proof of Canadian citizenship and proof of financial resources for the degree program. You will be asked questions about your intent to return to Canada after your studies. Because you are seeking admission as a non-immigrant, you should give the officer information that proves your plan to return home after graduation.

### **When should I arrive in the U.S.?**

Students in F-1 status can enter the U.S. up to 30 days before the start date listed in item 5 of the I-20. Choosing when to come to Manhattan is a matter of personal preference. Some students like to come early to arrange housing, visit friends and family in the U.S., or see the sites. You are welcome to choose the arrival date that is convenient for you.

**Under no circumstances should you plan to arrive after term start date as indicated on line 5 of your I-20, as the immigration official at the airport may refuse to admit you and require you to immediately take a flight back to your home country.**

### **Can I bring my family to the U.S. with me?**

If your spouse and/or children will join you during your stay in the U.S., we will need to indicate on Form I-20 that we have inspected additional evidence of financial support to provide for the expenses of family members. Additional annual expenses are currently \$10,000.00 for the first dependent (spouse or child under the age of 21) and \$5,000.00 for each additional dependent. (These amounts include the cost of health and accident insurance.) We also need to issue a dependent I-20 for each family member. Please contact the Admissions office if this has not already been completed for your family. With dependent I-20's, your family can apply for F-2 visas. **Please note that F-2 visa holders cannot work or attend university while they are in the United States.** It is not possible for MCC to arrange work visas for dependents of students.

### **What can I do if my visa application is denied?**

Sometimes an F-1 visa application at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate may be denied if the consular officer is not convinced that the applicant is a non-immigrant. A non-immigrant's intent must be a **temporary** stay in the United States. Fortunately, a visa denial for this reason is not always permanent. After a denial, the consular officer may agree to reconsider a case if additional evidence of ties outside the U.S. can be presented. Also, your visa can be denied

for other reasons such as insufficient evidence of enough financial resources to support your entire educational and living expenses in the U.S. If your visa application is denied, try obtaining a written explanation of the specific reason for the denial of the visa, and ask about re-application procedures before you leave the embassy. Also, try to obtain the full name of the officer who interviewed you, as well as his/her fax number.

*Please note:* Only the consular/visa officer has the authority to reverse a visa decision. Visa applicants must qualify according to their own circumstances, not on the basis of a sponsor's (or a college's) assurance. Other than providing you with advice, *schools do not have any power or authority to make the officer give you a visa.* It is your circumstances and the information and documents that you submit that will determine whether or not you will be granted a visa.

### **Can I use the Visa Waiver Program or Tourist/Visitor Visa (B-1 or B-2) ?**

Do not use the Visa Waiver Program (other names: WTV, Waiver of Tourist Visa) to enter the U.S. While this program is a convenient way to travel to the U.S. for vacations, it is not intended for full-time study in the U.S. You must obtain the F-1 visa sticker in your passport to study. If you use the waiver program, your stay in the U.S. will be limited to 90 days only. In addition, you cannot attend school during the 90 day period, and you will not be permitted to extend your stay or change your visa type from within the U.S. The USCIS strictly enforces this rule and does not make any exceptions.

**\*\* DO NOT use a B-1/B-2 visitor visa to come to the U.S. to study full-time. \*\***

### **What is the B-2 Prospective Student Visa?**

You may request a "B-2 Prospective Student" Visa only if you have been admitted to Manhattan Christian College but have not yet received your I-20 and will not receive it before your appointment at the Embassy. **If the Embassy agrees to give you a B-2 Prospective Student Visa you must make certain that the words "Prospective Student" are printed on the Visa by the Embassy. If those words are not on the B-2 visa it will be a violation of immigration regulations if you enroll in classes after you arrive in the United States.**

### **What do I do if I am transferring to MCC from another U.S. University?**

Students who have attended another U.S. College or University and wish to transfer to MCC should complete the "Request for F-1 Transfer Information" form. This form, available by request, enables the college to obtain your SEVIS record from your previous school. When we have received your original SEVIS record we will generate a new I-20 that lists Manhattan Christian College as your new school. If you will travel, you may use the visa sticker from your old school with the Manhattan Christian College I-20 if the visa is still valid. If the visa sticker has expired and you are traveling, you should visit the U.S. embassy to obtain a new visa sticker. If you will remain in the U.S., you do not need to worry about an expired visa.

sticker. The visa sticker is necessary only when traveling outside of the U.S. and re-entering at an airport or border crossing.

### **If I hold a different immigration status, can I change to F-1 student status?**

In some limited circumstances, it is possible to change status to F-1 student without leaving the U.S. Please note that receiving an I-20 from the college does not confer F-1 status. The change-of-status must be requested through a formal petition with fee submitted to the Nebraska Service Center of the USCIS. The Service Center can require up to 4 months to process a change-of-status request for eligible individuals. Remember to pay the SEVIS fee and submit the receipt with your change of status application. If less than 4 months remain before orientation, we strongly encourage you to travel to accomplish your change of status.

## **Arrival in the United States**

### **Making Flight Arrangements**

MCC suggests international students travel to Manhattan *via Manhattan Regional Airport*. The airport provides connecting service to Kansas City (MO) International airport. If you have questions about the dates of future college holidays for the sake of setting a return date for your plane ticket, please refer to the college's campus calendar (online at: <http://www.mccks.edu/calendar/index.html>), or contact the Registrar's office at the college.

Airport pick-up in Manhattan (only) is available by contacting the Admissions office.

### **Inspection by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services**

On the airplane, shortly before you land in the U.S., the flight attendant will distribute 2 government forms for you to complete—one form for customs regarding the items you are bringing to the U.S. and one form for immigration called an *I-94 Arrival/Departure Record*. On the customs form, be sure to list all of the items as requested. On the I-94, you will list your name and home country. Your first activity in the U.S. will be "inspection" by an officer of Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). This inspection involves lining up with all of the other passengers and presenting your passport and I-20 to the officer. You should make sure to keep your important documents with your hand luggage – not in your checked baggage – so that you can present them to the officer.

The USCIS is a different branch of government from the U.S. Embassy that issued your visa sticker. The USCIS makes the final determination about your ability to enter the U.S. as a student, so you should be prepared to answer the same kinds of questions that the officer asked at the embassy. The officer will want to know about your plans for study and your plans to return home after your degree is completed. You should keep your letter of admission and your financial statement with your passport and immigration document "just in case" the officer has questions about your study. When you meet the officer, simply listen carefully to the questions and answer them briefly, truthfully and in a friendly manner. The immigration officer will:

- Examine your passport, I-20, Customs Declaration Form and the I-94 form
- Ask you some basic questions such as your purpose of entering the U.S.

- Ask you about the contents of your baggage

After the immigration officer is satisfied with your answers and your documents, he or she should:

- Stamp your passport with the date of arrival
- Stamp “F-1 D/S” on the I-94 card and staple it to the visa page of your passport
- Stamp page 1 of your I-20
- Write “F-1 D/S” on the I-20
- Return the I-20 to you

Before you move away from the immigration inspector, make certain that you have received your passport, I-94 card with the notation F-1 and D/S on it, and your I-20. Put your documents in a safe place as you leave the inspection area of the airport. It can be difficult to manage your luggage and your documents, so take care that you do not lose the documents at the airport.

## Arrival at Manhattan Christian College

**Please bring the following items to the Admissions Office:**

1. Passport
2. I-20 form
3. I-94 card (the small white card stamped by USCIS)
4. The address of any emergency contacts you have in the U.S. and in your country
5. Your new local address in Manhattan, if you have found other housing

*At this time your immigration documents will be collected and reviewed by Admissions staff members as required by the U.S. government, so it is essential for you to bring them with you to the Admissions Office.*

### Health Matters

Law requires that all students who are registered for nine or more credits have a health insurance plan to cover the cost of medical care while attending a college or university. All students will be automatically enrolled in the University sponsored health insurance plan, and the cost of the premium will be charged to the student’s university bill. The college’s Business office can answer any questions you have about the insurance requirement.

### Housing

Housing at Manhattan Christian College residence halls is available for single students (on-campus housing). You chose to live in the residence halls you will receive your room assignment prior to your arrival. If you have questions about the residence hall you can contact the Student Development office.

International students who want off-campus housing, including married students and students with family, Manhattan Christian College does own several apartments that may be available to rent. More information about apartments, or other off-campus housing options, may be obtained by contacting the MCC Business office.

## **Financial Matters**

During your first month in Manhattan you will need a considerable amount of money for tuition, food and transportation costs. Your expenses will vary according to your housing situation. When planning your budget, remember to bring enough money in traveler's checks or via credit card to cover your "getting started" expenses. Your tuition can be sent via certified check on a U.S. bank or via wire transfer. However, because a transfer can take a few weeks to be processed, you will still need to travel with the means to support yourself for your first month in Manhattan.

### **BANK ACCOUNTS**

We advise you to open a bank account as soon as possible. Below are three banks that are located near campus. Other banks are available in the city. In most cases, you will need at least two forms of identification (for example, passport and MCC identification card) to open an account.

Kansas State University Credit Union	1455 Anderson Ave	(785) 776-3003
Capitol Federal Savings	14 <sup>th</sup> & Poyntz	(785) 537-4226
Kansas State Bank	1101 Bluemont	(785) 587-4000

### **STUDENT ACCOUNTS AT THE COLLEGE**

Before you will be allowed to register for your classes, you will be required to pay for your semester tuition, fees, and housing (if applicable). Methods of payment include VISA or MasterCard, personal checks that are drawn on a U.S. bank, or wiring funds in advance. We recommend that you wire in advance if possible. Tuition funds can be wired directly to Manhattan Christian College's account. For information about how to arrange a wire transfer or any other aspect of paying your tuition at MCC, please contact the Business office at (785) 539-3571.

## **Final Words . . .**

Good luck with your plans. Do not hesitate to contact us if you have questions or concerns. Additional information about all of these topics can be found on the college web site at [www.mccks.edu](http://www.mccks.edu). We look forward to seeing you on-campus!