

ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO



Welcoming International Seminarians: Legal Issues

National Association of Catholic and Theological Schools-
Annual Conference

October 4, 2025

Great Team

1. Designated School Official (DSO)
 - a) Pay for NAFSA. National Association of Foreign Student Advisors
2. Have an immigration attorney - School or Diocese
 - a) on staff or hire a law firm
 - b) understands F-1, B1/B2, R-1 and H-1B to advise you and the students.
 - c) Make sure no bar to coming to the U.S. – criminal or immigration
3. Staff/Program to help with acculturation.
 - a) Understand U.S. customs and work expectations. Respond to emails in 24 hours or do not ignore legal advice.



Start before the Seminarian comes

1. Plan Ahead
2. Type of Visa
3. Prepare for the Visa Application and Interview
4. Questions for the Audience
 - a) Are more international students getting their visa applications denied?
 - b) Has enrollment of international F-1 students dropped?



Plan ahead

1. Timing of the application to school
 - a) Plan 6-9 months ahead of time not 2 weeks before school starts
 - b) I-20 – be honest about funding and where will live

2. Visa Application
 - a) Form DS-160 – must complete all questions and be honest
 - b) Include all social media
 - c) All education since H.S.
 - d) All email addresses last 5 years



Plan Ahead continued

1. Visa interview –
 - a) must be honest
 - b) Why coming to the U.S.
2. Extreme Vetting of F-1 Students by U.S. State Department – will delay issuance of F-1. This includes all social media for content Anti-U.S. Administration, Israel, Pro-Gaza- Palestine



Visa Type

1. F-1 is for coming to Study
 - a) Can work if on campus or authorized by DSO off campus after been at school an academic year
2. B1/B2 tourism- cannot come to study for credit & cannot work
 - a) Should not use if plan all along to study – can be accused of fraud
 - b) Cannot use for CPE
3. R-1 – for Religious workers
 - a) meant to be working full time or part-time- not for studying full time.
 - b) Maximum of 5 years- most seminarians are in school for longer
 - c) 18-year backlog for green card



After the Int'l Seminar Arrives

1. DSO and Immigration attorney have mandatory meeting with F-1 students- include following info:
 - a) Do not work if not authorized- violate F-1
 - b) Do not travel internationally if can avoid it due to constant changes- i.e., travel bans and delays, denials
 - c) Do not listen to their friend's advice if not your attorney or DSO
 - d) This is the U.S. not your home country. Things are done differently here and if they don't comply, can affect if they can stay.
 - e) Do not reduce courseload without checking with DSO
 - f) Talk to DSO/Legal first before do anything. Easier to advise before make a mistake than to fix the mistake



Last Minute Changes in Immigration

1. Suspension of F-1's visa interviews.
2. Detention of F-1 students based upon 1st amendment speech
3. Travel Bans – full and partial
4. Extreme Vetting
5. TCN Visa appts- forget Canada



International Travel Bans

1. Full Travel Ban
2. Partial Travel Ban
3. Possible Travel Ban

Constant Changes

1. What I say today can change tomorrow. Why?
2. Administration last minute announcements?
3. Federal Litigation and stays of changes.
4. Best to have the International Students – contact DSO and/or Attorney before they do anything – especially – work, travel, courseload.
5. Good communication with the International Seminarians is key!



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