Welcome to CBU!

We are so happy that you have chosen to continue your education at our university. The following information will help you with visa and travel information. Please read it carefully as you plan for your arrival at CBU.

VISA INFORMATION

You should apply for your student visa well in advance of the date you would like to depart for CBU. Remember that you are required to show proof of having paid the Federal SEVIS fee when you appear for your visa interview. Holiday and vacation periods are very busy times at the U.S. embassies and consulates worldwide, and it is important for you to have your visa in time to arrive and begin orientation and registration activities no later than the start date on your I-20. Appointments are now mandatory for all student visas, and some U.S. embassies and consulates require that appointments be made at least four to eight weeks in advance. The actual visa interview may be as early as 120 days prior to your planned arrival date in the United States. All U.S. embassies and consulates have a website where you can read the latest information on visa procedures. Visit http://usembassy.state.gov to locate the embassy or consulate near you.

In order to enter the United States as an F-1 or J-1 student, you need to obtain a visa. If you are an F-1 student, please read carefully the restrictions and responsibilities on page 3 of your I-20 and then sign your I-20. If you are a J-1 student, read page 2 of the DS-2019 and sign the Exchange Visitor Certification at the bottom of page 1 in blue ink. If you have been issued I-20s or DS-2019s for dependents accompanying you, you must also sign their forms.

You may enter the U.S. no earlier than 30 days before the start date on your I-20 or DS-2019. Time and cost for the visa will vary from country to country. Under most circumstances, you must present the following documents at the embassy or consulate in order to obtain a visa:

1. Passport
2. Form I-20 (for F-1 students) or Form DS-2019 (for J-1 students)
3. Certificate of Financial Support
4. Evidence of your intent to return to your home country upon completion of your studies in the U.S. (Depending on the Consulate, you may be required to submit additional documents.)

MAINTAINING STUDENT STATUS

In order to maintain legal student status you must:

- be a full time student (9 hours for graduate students; 12 hours for undergraduate students).
- not work without authorization.
- not remain in the U.S. beyond your authorized period of stay (expiration of your I-20 or DS-2019).
- not take more than 3 credit hours/1 course online/distance education per semester.

ARRIVAL INFORMATION/IMMIGRATION

Upon arrival at a U.S. port of entry, you will be asked to show your passport, visa (which is in your passport) and I-20 or DS-2019. You may also be requested to produce your Certificate of Financial Support for inspection. Make sure to carry all this information on your person and not in your checked baggage, since you will not get your baggage until after the immigration inspection. Foreign visitors to the U.S. arriving via air or sea no longer need to complete paper Customs and Border Protection Form I-94 Arrival/Departure Record or Form I-94W Nonimmigrant Visa Waiver Arrival/Departure Record. Those who need to prove their legal-visitor status—to employers, schools/universities or government agencies—can access their CBP arrival/departure record information online.

CBP now gathers travelers’ arrival/departure information automatically from their electronic travel records. Because advance information is only transmitted for air and sea travelers, CBP will still issue a paper form I-94 at land border ports of entry. If travelers need the information from their Form I-94 admission record to verify immigration status or employment authorization, the record number and other admission information they are encouraged to get their I-94 Number.
Canadian Students: Make sure you stop at the border and present your I-20 or DS-2019 to the U.S. Immigration Authorities. Do not let the immigration officer just wave you through. If you are a J-1 student, you may be subject to the 2-year home country residence requirement in connection with your J-1 status if: a) your field of study appears on your country’s skills list, or, b) you have received funding from either the U.S. government or your own government to pay for your travel or stay in the U.S.

PLEASE MAKE COPIES OF ALL YOUR IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS (PASSPORT, I-20, DS-2019, ETC.) AND KEEP THEM IN A SAFE PLACE!

Note: If for some reason your immigration documents are not in order when you arrive, the Immigration Inspector may give you a form called I-515 to defer your inspection until later. If this happens, it is very important that you go to Dean Karen Barnett’s office in Rozier Hall immediately upon arriving on campus. Dean Barnett is CBU’s Primary Designated School Official (PDSO). She takes care of all student immigration matters.

CUSTOMS

Once you have gone through the immigration inspection at the U.S. port of entry, you must pass through Customs. You will be asked to declare what you have brought into the country. Usually, you will have filled out a declaration form on the plane. At Customs, you will make a verbal statement to the official, who may or may not inspect your baggage. There may also be dogs sniffing for illegal drugs or food. If you do arrive in the U.S. with drugs prescribed for you by a physician, have the prescription readily available. You may bring anything for your personal use without paying duties, including clothing and jewelry. A total of $100 worth of gifts may be brought in duty-free every six months. Any value over $100 will be assessed duty fees. Any amount of money may be brought into or taken out of the U.S. You must, however, make an accurate determination of the amount you are carrying upon your arrival. If you are carrying over $10,000 in any form of currency or other negotiable on your person, you must declare it when you fill out the customs declaration form. No duty will be assessed. Certain articles may not be brought into the U.S., including meats, vegetables, fruits, plants, drugs without a doctor’s prescription, articles made of endangered species, pornographic materials, and firearms. Food items that are canned or hermetically sealed are usually acceptable. For more information on U.S. Customs, please contact the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate.

Please make plans to arrive to the Memphis International Airport before MANDATORY International Student Orientation (ISO), which will be August 17 and 18 for fall. *If you arrive after 20 August, you will not be allowed to attend classes at CBU in the fall.*

ACCOMMODATIONS (RESIDENCE HALLS)

If you have placed a deposit for a dorm room during the admissions process, Christian Brothers University will provide you with a key to your residence hall room upon arrival. (First time international students/exchange students have the option of a $129.99 Residence Hall Survival Kit. The kit will include sheets, hamper, bath towel, pillow, comforter, trash bags, bathroom tissue and additional items. The student should notify Karen Barnett at kconway@cbu.edu to order a kit.)*

WHAT TO BRING WITH YOU

Clothing: Because of the seasonal variation in the climate, it is important to bring a variety of lightweight and heavyweight clothing. Memphis temperatures range from 90-100°F (32-38°C) in August to 20-30°F (-6 - -1°C) in February. Winters are usually mild, even though an occasional ice or snow storm may occur.

There is no official dress code at CBU. Many men and women choose to wear jeans and T-shirts. You should bring at least one formal outfit for interviews and formal occasions. If you wear glasses or contacts, you may wish to bring an extra pair in case they are lost or broken. If you take medications, it is advised that you travel with some extra. Also, do not forget to bring your prescription with you. Also, since dental and vision care is not included in most health insurance plans in the U.S., it is a good idea to get a dental checkup and any new glasses prior to coming to the U.S.

WHAT NOT TO BRING

Voltage in the U.S. is 110V which is different from other countries. Electrical items such as hair dryers, shavers, etc., brought from home will need an adapter. The items function best if you buy them in the U.S.

HEALTH AND HEALTH INSURANCE

CBU requires that all students be covered by a health insurance policy. International students should also have medical evacuation coverage in the amount of $10,000 and repatriation of remains coverage in the amount of $7,500.

International students who are studying in the United States are required by Department of State regulations to purchase health insurance
for themselves and any dependents in the U.S. If you have health insurance from your home country, you need to submit proof (in English) from the insurance company that you have the required coverage. Also, the dates of coverage must be included. Health care in the U.S. is very expensive; therefore, it is important that you have a health insurance policy which does not require reimbursement—few students are able to pay thousands of dollars in cash for medical care and then be reimbursed later. Your insurance card should be in English and have coverage amounts listed in U.S. dollars to avoid problems at the doctor’s office or hospital. Please plan on purchasing insurance coverage right after or before your arrival.

CBU HEALTH FORM

During the admission process, you were asked to complete a CBU Health Form (located on the admission page). This Health Form shows proof of immunizations that are required in the State of Tennessee. It is very important that you complete the CBU Health Form before you arrive on the CBU campus. Immunizations are not typically covered by any insurance plan, and they can be quite expensive. We recommend you complete your Health Form before travelling to the United States. Please complete the form in English. CBU will take your completed Health Form when you arrive on campus. It will be placed in your college records. Please make your own copy to keep.

DRIVING IN THE U.S.

• If you plan on driving a car while in the State of Tennessee, you must have a Tennessee driver’s license within 30 days of establishing TN residency.
• In the State of Tennessee, it is illegal to drive a car without auto liability insurance.
• If you live in The State of Tennessee, you must have Tennessee license plates on your motor vehicle.

Matters that pertain to driving in TN will be reviewed in depth during the Fall MANDATORY International Student Orientation.

OTHER TRANSPORTATION

Memphis Area Transit Authority is the largest transit operator in the state of Tennessee. MATA transports nearly 40,000 riders throughout Memphis and the surrounding areas on 244 transit vehicles including vintage rail trolleys and conventional accessible buses. For more information and schedules, please visit their website at www.matatransit.com.

MONEY

Living, studying, and/or working in the U.S. is often more expensive than most foreign nationals think it is. Be sure that your finances are in order before departing for the U.S. and that you have sufficient funds to cover all your expenses for at least one year. Never keep large amounts of money on you while walking around Memphis. Plan on opening a bank account immediately upon arrival. You can wire your money from your bank at home to an account in a Memphis bank. However, be aware that this procedure may take some time.

Debit cards are probably the easiest way to manage money while in the US. Make sure to check with your bank to see if your card will be recognized while in the Memphis area. We will provide more information about opening a US account at ISO.

MEMPHIS

With a metropolitan population of close to a million, Memphis is the largest city in Tennessee, located on the Mississippi River. Memphis is the home of Elvis Presley, Federal Express, and the NBA Grizzlies. Memphis offers many cultural activities including theaters, art galleries, and museums. During ISO, you will learn a lot about Memphis and her surrounding towns.

EMPLOYMENT REGULATIONS

F-1 students may work on campus 20 hours per week while school is in session. During breaks and holidays, you may work full time on campus. Off-campus work is only permitted in certain circumstances. See Dean Karen Barnett, CBU’s Primary Designated School Official (PDSO) for further details and work authorization as related to your visa/I-20.

CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

Studying and living in a foreign culture can be a rewarding and an exciting experience. It can also be difficult at times. Preparing yourself for a new and challenging intercultural experience takes much strength and courage. With an open mind, sense of humor, patience, and curiosity, you will come to understand why Americans behave the way they do, and you will gain new insight into your own culture and behavior as well. The willingness to experiment, the reluctance to condemn, and the ability to laugh at oneself and at what seems absurd will certainly make your time in the U.S. a rich and worthwhile experience. Be prepared for the condition known as “culture shock” after
your arrival in the U.S. To experience culture shock is not uncommon. It may take you a few weeks or even months to adjust. Try to stay positive, and know that you are not alone.

**DEPENDENTS**

Your spouse and children may be admitted to the U.S. on an F-2 or J-2 visa, depending on your visa status. Please contact Dean Karen Barnett for information on required funding. The amount of personal funds required to support a spouse is $7,000. For each child, the personal funds requirement is $2,000. Once financial support is documented, an I-20 or DS-2019 will be issued for your dependents, and they may then apply for a visa at the U.S. Embassy or Consulate.

F-2 dependents may not work under any circumstances. J-2 dependents may work after applying for and receiving work authorization from the immigration authorities. Be aware that immigration currently processes such applications in about 90-100 days, and your spouse will not be able to apply until after you have both arrived in the U.S. Other relatives may come to the U.S. on a tourist visa (WT or B-2) to visit you, but they will not be considered your dependents. A B-2 visa is usually valid for 6 months; a WT for 3 months.

If you want your child/children to attend school in Memphis, the following documents are required:
- birth certificate
- proof of recent medical examination (within six months) in English
- Tennessee Certificate of Immunization or a temporary Certificate of Immunization
- two pieces of proof of TN residency (utility bill, lease agreement, etc.)

For information on transfers or other school registration information, please contact the Shelby County Schools: [www.scsk12.org](http://www.scsk12.org). Children are usually assigned to the school closest to their home, so you might want to consider this fact when choosing a place to live. In addition, there are several private schools in the Memphis area.

**BUSINESS OFFICE**

All international students are expected to finalize their enrollment by the first day of class. In order to finalize, you will be expected to pay your tuition, fees, room, and board (if applicable) before moving into the residence halls. Please make sure to finalize tuition and costs, before the beginning of the semester.

Please contact Dean Barnett if you have any questions:

Dean Karen Barnett
Christian Brothers University
650 East Parkway South, Box T-4
Memphis, TN 38104 USA
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Office: Rozier Center E
kconway@cbu.edu
1 (901) 321-3536

**WELCOME TO CBU! WE ARE DELIGHTED TO HAVE YOU!**