

International Students

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There are students here from all over the globe. Many are from developing countries where there are very few Bible colleges and fewer seminaries. When they return to their homeland they will quickly become leaders in the Christian community. God will use them mightily to shape the lives of others that cannot afford the time or money to come to the USA for advanced education. Often they will teach at a Bible college, lead pastor's conferences, plant churches and/or grow existing churches.

While a full time student, an international student cannot work off campus or more than 20 hours a week on campus. (Thus they can make 6 to 8 thousand dollars a year.) Their cost for tuition, books and living expenses comes to 17 to 20 thousand dollars. Scholarships, loans and gifts make up the difference. Approximately one third are here solo, one third with a spouse and the remaining one third with spouse and child(ren). Note that the wife cannot even be paid for baby sitting, least they risk deportation.

These students must be fluent in English to be admitted to seminary. They often have extensive ministry and leadership experience before coming here. They are dealing with a challenging academic load while also adjusting to a different culture. They usually come from cultures that are much more relational and community centered than what they find here. They very much want to meet American Christians and become their friends.

Overview of the International Student's Web Hub site

- International student inquires about attending the Christian school A team helps him or her to answer questions by email and phone.
- Inquiry is made early on about the need for financial aid. If that is the case, then much prayer is made.
- The prospective student is assisted with filling out all the financial aid forms that they qualify for. This is done in cooperation with the school's financial aid department. The Four Bridges volunteers have the time, experience and patience to guide the candidate through what can be very confusing processes. The right forms are filled out correctly. They get to the right people. And it is done before the deadline.
- If necessary, the Four Bridges financial support form is filled out also. This is similar to other financial aid forms. A Four Bridges group screens these. This is submitted to the various sources of financial aid that are associated with Four Bridges (wealthy individuals, Christian business owners, missions committees of local churches, families that can offer housing at low cost or no cost, others that God brings to us)
- Shortly after international student is accepted at the school, a special team swings into action to help facilitate the transition from living there, in their home country, to studying here in DFW. Working with the international student department; they guide through all the needed paperwork (passport, visa), packing list, airline reservations, housing arrangements, schooling for the child(ren), etc.
- Upon arrival another team greets them and they are charged with easing the transition for the first year. Plenty of help is offered at first to move in, unpack, get oriented to the neighborhood, register for classes, buy textbooks, get into good study habits, find a church home, etc.

- Toward the end of the first year another team becomes involved. This team specializes on the middle to the end of their time as international students. After the student (and their family) are moderately adjusted to the pattern of school and life in the USA – then there other issues.
 - Doing well academically
 - Balancing school, family, church, etc.
 - Dealing with home sickness and/or going back for a visit
 - Meeting Americans that will become long time friends and supporters
 - Preparing to make the transition from studying here in the USA to ministering back in their home country
- The last team addresses the challenges that follow graduation -- these include:
 - Placement into suitable ministry back home
 - The culture shock of re-entry
 - Maintaining and growing a support base in the USA