Some additional factors that applicants should keep in mind when deciding between F-1 and J-1 visa status categories are the following:

**Will you be accompanied by a spouse who wishes to work?**
If you are married and choose J-1 status, your spouse and unmarried children (under 21 years of age) are eligible for J-2 status. J-2 dependents may apply for J-2 work permission after they have entered the US in J-2 status or have been approved to change their visa status to J-2 within the US. Please note that income from a J-2’s employment cannot be used to support the J-1 but may be used for the family's customary recreational, educational, cultural activities, and related travel. For more details on the requirements and process, please contact Multicultural Relations upon arrival at PTS.

If you choose F-1 status, your spouse and unmarried children (under 21 years of age) are eligible for F-2 status. F-2 dependents cannot work in the US under any circumstances.

**What is the J Visa Two-Year Foreign Residence Requirement, INA 212(e), and will you be subject to it if you choose J-1 status?**
In some cases, students who choose J-1 status and their dependents will be subject to the J Visa Two-Year Foreign Residence Requirement, INA 212(e). Students subject to this requirement will not be able to change status within the US, obtain an H-1 temporary work, or L-1 intracompany transferee visa for the US, or obtain permanent residence in the US, until they have either documented that they spent two years in their home country after the end of their J-1 program or they have obtained a waiver of the two-year foreign residence requirement.

Not all students who choose J-1 status are subject to the Two-Year Foreign Residence Requirement, INA 212(e). You will be subject to the requirement only if you receive funding from the US government or from your home country government for your J-1 study in the US, or if you study in a field which is in demand in your home country. Please see Exchange Visitor Skills List published by the State Department.

If you receive no government funding and if your country and field of study do not appear on the above list, you should not be subject to this requirement. This determination is normally made when your visa is issued. The consular officer will mark your visa and/or DS-2019 with the INA 212(e) requirement.

**Are F-1 and J-1 students eligible to work? What are the differences?**
Both F-1 and J-1 status allow students holding PTS issued I-20s or DS-2019s to engage in on-campus employment at the Princeton Theological Seminary up to 20 hours per week while school is in session and full-time during vacation periods.

Both statuses also allow you to work off-campus (not at PTS) in the US, but there are restrictions and prior authorization is required. You should discuss your eligibility to work with Multicultural Relations prior to accepting employment.

**Are there health insurance requirements for F-1 and J-1 students?**
The US Department of State (DOS) requires J-1 students and their dependents to be in compliance with the health insurance standards listed below:

1. Medical insurance must cover the entire period of participation in the J-1 Exchange Visitor program (refer to the program start and end dates on your DS-2019).
2. Medical benefits must provide a minimum of $100,000 per accident or illness.
3. Medical evacuation must be covered in the amount of $50,000, minimum (medical evacuation is emergency medical transportation to the home country).
4. Repatriation of remains must be covered in the amount of $25,000, minimum (in the unfortunate event of death, repatriation is the transportation of remains back to the home country).

5. Deductibles must not exceed $500 per accident or illness.

**NOTE**: Failure to maintain medical insurance is a violation of the J-1 status.

While the F-1 student regulations do not have the same requirement, the Princeton Theological Seminary itself requires all students and their dependents to have comprehensive medical insurance taken out through PTS.

**What types of documents qualify for Financial Certification?**

Your funds must be liquid. This means that they are cash that can be immediately accessed. Checking accounts or savings accounts without withdrawal prohibitions do qualify. An assessment of the value of your assets (home, car, property, jewelry) does not qualify. Proof of employment or salary does not qualify. A report on your stock and investment portfolio does not qualify.

The following financial documentation are examples of acceptable proof that you have adequate resources to cover your program of study at PTS:

1. **Certification Letter** by a bank official of all your personal funds that will be used to cover travel costs and educational expenses. This must be on bank letterhead and be signed by a bank official.

   If you are using a printout of your online bank statement, please make sure it includes the account holder's name, account type, and bank name.

   If your bank letter is not written in English, you must include a notarized translation into English. It is recommended that the bank statement be written in English.

2. **Notice of Funding Letter** from any sponsoring agencies (church body, foundation or other organization) on the agency's letterhead and signed by an agency officer, certifying the funds it will grant you for travel and/or other expenses for your Seminary Program, as well as when the funds will be sent.

3. **Notarized Certification Letter** from individual(s) who will sponsor you, outlining how much they will give you to meet the cost of your Seminary Program and when they will send you the funds. If the sponsor is an American citizen or "green card" holder, this certification must take the form of a Form I-134, Affidavit of Support.

   Individual sponsors must also provide the Seminary with proof on bank letterhead and signed by a bank officer that they have the resources to meet their commitment to you.

   **IMPORTANT NOTE**: In preparation for your visa interview with the U.S. Consulate, it is highly recommended that you obtain original, official bank statements, as well as original, signed funding letters or Forms I-134 for your visa interview with the U.S. Consulate.

**APPLYING FOR A US VISA WITH THE US EMBASSY**

**If You Are Outside the US:**

**How to Apply for an Initial F-1 or J-1s Entry Visa**

Carefully read and follow the following procedures:
**Step 1:** Receipt of your Form I-20 (F-1) or DS-2019 (J-1) from Princeton Seminary. Your Form I-20/DS-2019 indicates that Princeton Seminary has created a record for you in the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (“SEVIS”), a national database for international students and scholars. Your unique assigned SEVIS ID number is in the upper right corner of page 1. Please check to see that all information is correct and that your expected completion date is in the future.

If the Seminary invited your dependents (husband, wife, or children under the age of 21) to accompany you to the US, each of them will receive their own “dependent” Form I-20 or DS-2019 needed for applying for their F-2 or J-2 visas and to enter the US in F-2 or J-2 visa status. If your family name is different from your dependents, be prepared to show documents that prove your relationship.

**Step 2:** Make an appointment for an interview at an US Consulate/Embassy to apply for an F-1 or J-1 entry visa. You will require the Form I-20/DS-2019 from the Seminary at the time of your appointment. **DO NOT MAKE AN APPOINTMENT UNTIL** you have received the Form I-20 or DS-2019 Form or are sure that you will have the Form I-20/DS-2019 in time for the appointment. Multicultural Relations at the Seminary issues I-20s and DS-2019s in the order that complete applications are received, and is unable to rush yours because you made an appointment too early. Please check the following websites for more information on visa appointments:

- To locate the nearest US Consulate/Embassy and the instructions for applying for a visa (including links to required forms) see [http://www.usembassy.gov/](http://www.usembassy.gov/) where you will find a list of documentation required for the interview with the consular, as well as the procedures for paying the visa application fee and any visa issuance fees, if applicable.
- For information about current wait times for the appointment and for visa issuance, see [http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/en/study-exchange/student.html](http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/en/study-exchange/student.html). **NOTE:** the processing wait times do not include extra time that may be required for security clearances.
- Potential Delays in Visa Issuance: [http://travel.state.gov/visa/a_zindex/a_zindex_4353.html](http://travel.state.gov/visa/a_zindex/a_zindex_4353.html)

**Step 3:** Make sure your passport is valid.

When you apply for a visa or enter the US, your passport must be valid for at least 6 months into the future. Some countries are exempt from this requirement and have their passports automatically extended for 6 months which means that you can use your passport up until the written expiration date. This rule applies to subsequent entries to the US while traveling as a student. The list of countries exempt from this rule can be found at [http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/types/types_1268.html#6](http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/types/types_1268.html#6).

**Step 4:** The SEVIS fee ($200) will be paid by Princeton Seminary and the SEVIS I-901 fee receipt will be included with your original Form I-20/DS-2019. Please keep this original fee receipt with your Form I-20/DS-2019 as you will need these documents when you have your appointment with the US Consulate.

**Step 5:** Complete all required Department of State visa application forms and pay the required visa application processing fees in advance of your appointment:

- **DS-160:** Everyone applying for a non-immigrant visa must complete this form. **COMPLETE THIS ELECTRONIC FORM ONLINE** and take a printed copy with you to the interview with the US Consular.

**Step 6:** Refer to Step 5 and follow instructions for paying any visa fees required in advance of your appointment. Procedures may vary from country to country, and even post to post within the same country. Note that application and issuance fees are based on reciprocity and generally reflect your country's policies in granting visa privileges to visiting US students.
Step 7: Bring a passport-size photo less than six months old. Check Nonimmigrant Visa Photograph Requirements for details.

Step 8: PLEASE READ CAREFULLY! Prepare for your interview appointment by learning what to expect. You will be applying for an F-1 student visa or a J-1 university student visa, a non-immigrant classification. According to US immigration law, “Every alien shall be presumed to be an immigrant until he establishes to the satisfaction of the consular officer, at the time of application for admission, that he is entitled to a non-immigrant status.” This means you need to establish that you have no intention of staying in the US permanently, but are coming here for a temporary purpose, i.e., to pursue your educational objective. While the consular officers are aware that it may be difficult for students to demonstrate strong professional and economic ties to their home countries, you should still bear this in mind as you prepare for your interview.

- In advance of your interview, please read the following:
  - Applying for a Student or Exchange Visitor Visa: published by Education USA, a division of the DOS; See You in the USA: an e-Journal published by the DOS. Note article “On the Other Side of the Visa Window,” by US visa officer in Cairo.
  - Ten Points to Remember when Applying for a Nonimmigrant Visa published by NAFSA: Association of International Educators, in consultation with the DOS. Although published in 1997, these general points provide good guidance and still are relevant today.

Step 9: Checklist of what to take with you to your visa interview:

- _____ A passport valid for at least six months
- _____ Form I-20 (F-1 visa) or Form DS-2019 (J-1 visa)
- _____ SEVIS Fee Receipt (Form I-901)
- _____ School admission letter
- _____ Completed visa applications (DS-160). Remember to complete the DS-160 electronically and take a printed copy with you. Consulates have advised that the electronic version will speed up the process.
- _____ A photograph in the prescribed format (see Step 7). A receipt for the visa application fee.
- _____ Financial evidence that shows you have sufficient funds to cover your tuition and living expenses during the period you intend to study.
- _____ Any information that demonstrates your intention to return to your home country after finishing your studies in the US. This may include proof of property, family, or other ties to your community.

Step 10: After the visa is processed, make sure you receive what you requested! Check your passport to be sure you obtained an F-1/J-1 visa, and that any dependents obtained an F-2/J-2 visa. Also, be certain that the Form I-20 or DS-2019 was returned to you, as you must have the original with you when you arrive in the United States. Sometimes, the document is returned to you in a sealed envelope which must be presented to the immigration inspector when you arrive.

Canadian Citizens: Canadian citizens do not require an entry visa to enter the US, but do require a Form I-20 or DS-2019. Effective June 1, 2009, all Canadian citizens entering the US by air, land or sea will be required to show a passport to enter the United States. A passport may also be required for other purposes while you are in the US, such as completing a form for employment on campus, or applying for a Social Security number.

At the port of entry, Canadian students must present the Form I-20 or DS-2019, Form I-901 (proof of payment of the SEVIS fee), and supporting financial documentation to the immigration inspector to be admitted into the US in F-1/J-1 status. You will be given an I-94 Admission/Departure card to complete. Be sure to look at your I-94
card before you leave the inspection area to ensure that it has the notation “F-1, D/S” or “J-1, D/S” written on it. Canadian students must have an I-94 card to confirm current F-1/J-1 status. If not, you are considered to be in Visitor (B-2) status, a status which does not permit study in the US.

Some Canadians have mistakenly assumed that regulations that apply to international students do not apply to them. Students from Canada are subject to the same regulations regarding employment in the United States, requirement for full-time study and all other provisions for maintaining their visa status. It is especially important for Canadian students to be vigilant about entering the United States in proper student status, as immigration inspectors are accustomed to admitting Canadian citizens as “visitors” and not as “students.”

Applying for an F-1 or J-1 Visa If You are Already in the US:

Carefully read and follow the following procedures:

Students currently in a status other than F-1 or J-1:
Admitted students to Princeton Seminary who are currently in the US in another visa status other than F-1 or J-1 are required to change status by either:

1) exiting the US to their home country to await their Seminary issued Form I-20 or DS-2019 and then apply for their F-1/J-1 visa at an US Consulate/Embassy (see Steps 1 through 10 above); or
2) filing an application I-539, Application to Extend/Change Nonimmigrant Status to request a change of visa status within the United States. Students must immediately report the results of their change of status application to Multicultural Relations when notified by US Citizenship and Immigration Services (“USCIS”).

IMPORTANT NOTE: Individuals in B-1 or B-2 and F-2 status are prohibited from enrolling in classes until the change of status to F-1 has been approved by USCIS, and there is no way of knowing how long this will take.

Students Currently in F-1 or J-1 Status at another US Institution who need to Transfer-In their SEVIS Record from another US School to Princeton Theological Seminary
This transfer form is only for non-US citizens who are currently studying in the US in F-1 or J-1 visa status. You must submit the transfer form to your international student advisor at your current US school and inform them of your intent to transfer to Princeton Theological Seminary. Your advisor must complete Section 2 on the transfer form and send it to Multicultural Relations per the instructions on the form. The advisor must also transfer your SEVIS record to Princeton Theological Seminary after you complete the program at your current US school or finish your Optional Practical Training (F-1 students) or Academic Training (J-1 students).
Forms to be completed and submitted to Multicultural Relations: The Application for Visa Certificate and the F-1/J-1 Student SEVIS Transfer-In Form. Please printout these forms so that you may sign and date them to scan and forward back to Multicultural Relations by email to: multicultural@ptsem.edu.

IMPORTANT NOTE: The Seminary must issue the student an updated Form I-20 (F-1) during the 60-day grace period and before they depart the US for their home country. A transfer-in student must enter the US to begin the fall semester with their updated Form I-20 or DS-2019 containing their Princeton Seminary’s degree program information.

If You Will Be Accompanied by Dependents:
If your dependents—spouse or unmarried children under 21 years of age—will accompany you to the US, you will need to provide Multicultural Relations with additional documentation showing that you have sufficient funding to meet your dependents’ expenses as indicated in the International Student Declaration and Certificate of Finances Form and copies of their passport ID pages. A Form I-20 (F-2 visa) or DS-2019 (J-2 visa) will then be issued for each of your dependents which they will use to apply for the F-2/J-2 visa. You may request a Form I-20 or DS-2019 for your dependents at any time during your stay at the Seminary.

REQUIRED ENROLLMENT AND VISA DOCUMENTATION SUBMISSION:
Please submit all required completed enrollment, financial, and visa documents to Multicultural Relations no later than Friday, April 21, 2016 to allow sufficient time to process your enrollment documentation and issue your visa documents. Please note that all students are to be in valid visa status by August 1, 2016.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Please return to the Entering Students Checklist webpage to complete all of the ten items listed that are required for your enrollment to be completed.

ARRIVAL AT PTS IN AUGUST 2016 FOR THE FALL SEMESTER ORIENTATION:
Upon arrival in the United States, all F-1 students and J-1 students and scholars new to the Princeton Theological Seminary or beginning programs in F or J status for the first time must report to Multicultural Relations in person to register their immigration status within 20 days from the program start date listed on the Form I-20 or Form DS-2019. Upon arrival in the United States, all Transfer-In students must report to Multicultural Relations in person within 15 days from the program start date listed on the Form I-20 or DS-2019 to register their immigration status or you be considered a “no-show” and your SEVIS record will automatically be terminated.

Housing & Orientation
- Housing, in the form of a dormitory room will be provided for you. Your on-campus housing will be available to you on and no earlier than Monday, August 29, 2016. Please do not arrive on campus prior to the pertinent date as your accommodation will not be open before then.
- Beginning Tuesday, August 30th, you will participate in the Seminary’s REQUIRED Orientation Program for All Newly Enrolled Incoming Students. This program will help you to become acquainted with the Seminary procedures, introduce you to other students, staff, and professors, and give you a sense of what living in Princeton is like. You will be required to attend all components of the International Orientation Program.
- Please complete the Student Contact Sheet and provide us with a current telephone number, facsimile number, and/or e-mail address and indicate the most efficient way to reach you in the coming months.

International Student Enrollment and Visa Forms to be completed and returned to the Office of Multicultural Relations.
- Document Comparing the Differences between an F-1 and J-1 Student Visa Categories
- Form I-134 Affidavit of Support
- Form I-134, Instructions for Completing Affidavit of Support
- Application for a Visa Certificate (F-1 or J-1)
- Student Contact Information Sheet (F-1 or J-1)
- Enrollment Review Form
- Transfer-In SEVIS Record to PTS Form
- J-1 Visa Student and Exchange Visitor Welcome Brochure
- DS-2019 Request Form