



INFORMATION FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENT APPLICANTS

General Information:

Thank you for your interest in attending Bel-Rea's Veterinary Technology program in Denver, Colorado. Bel-Rea is authorized under federal law to enroll **non-immigrant alien students** (i.e. International students traveling to the U.S. temporarily to attend school).

A **M-1 Visa is required** to attend Bel-Rea. This is the type of visa utilized for study at all SEVP-approved vocational colleges/programs in the United States.

- An intent to maintain permanent residence in your home country and an intent to leave the U.S. upon completion of your degree are required for a M-1 Visa.
- Sufficient English proficiency is required.

Exemptions are available for residents of certain territories/countries:

- Requirements for U.S. citizens in **Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands** (U.S. Territories) and U.S. nationals from **American Samoa** (Unincorporated U.S. Territory):
 - Must provide documentation to Bel-Rea that proves U.S. citizen or U.S. national status (e.g. passport).
 - Fully exempt from the M-1 Visa requirement and all supporting paperwork, fees, and tracking.
 - Can apply for financial aid, work while attending school, and work/live in the U.S. mainland following graduation.
- Requirements for citizens of **Canada and Bermuda**:
 - Must provide documentation to Bel-Rea that proves Canadian or Bermudian citizen status (e.g. passport).
 - Exempt from the M-1 Visa requirement but not exempt from the supporting paperwork, fees, and tracking.
 - Must submit the I-20 Information Form and Financial Information Letter to Bel-Rea and pay the I-901 SEVIS fee (<https://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901>).
 - Must be tracked in the SEVIS system in the regular M-1 Visa manner (e.g. I-20s, travel endorsements, etc.).
 - Cannot apply for financial aid or work while attending school but can apply for OPT Employment (post-graduation experience) in the regular M-1 Visa manner.
 - Canada: <https://ca.usembassy.gov/visas/canadian-students/>
 - Bermuda: https://bm.usconsulate.gov/visas/visa-exemptions-bermudians/?_ga=2.211232469.1140146491.1544803010-279443703.1544803010

Our **Designated School Officials (DSOs)** will work with you to ensure proper enrollment status tracking and generation of required forms in the **Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS)** (<https://www.ice.gov/sevis>).

- SEVIS is utilized by the **Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP)** to monitor the visa adjudication process and to oversee the academic career of all international students in the United States.
- SEVP is administered by **U.S. Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE)** within the **U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS)**.
- Please note that approval for enrollment by Bel-Rea does not guarantee approval for a M-1 Visa by the U.S. Government. International students should wait for visa approval before arranging travel plans.

Bel-Rea's Approval Process:

1. Applicants to Bel-Rea will work with the program's designated Admissions Advisor for International Students (Aimee Potter, potter@belrea.edu, 800-950-8001) to apply for and enroll in the program.

Required Documents/Exam for Enrollment (Admissions):

- Proof of Foreign High School Equivalency from a foreign education evaluation service.
 - Admission Entrance Exam (if applicable).
2. Aimee will connect international applicants with one of **Bel-Rea's Designated School Officials (DSOs)** to obtain the program approval needed for a M-1 Visa application at the appropriate stage of the enrollment process. Information on the following documents is provided in the **Application Checklist email** that is sent once an application is received.

Required Documents for the DSO:

- A. I-20 Information Form:** Information on this form will be used by a DSO to generate the I-20 Certificate of Eligibility (COE) Form you will need from Bel-Rea to apply for a M-1 Visa.
- B. Financial Information Letter:** Total funds available must meet or exceed the cost of attendance for the first academic year of studies (tuition, books and supplies, living expenses) for a DSO to generate your initial I-20 Certificate of Eligibility (COE) Form.
- Funding can be a mix of personal funds and other funding sources (e.g. scholarships, sponsorships, company tuition contributions, etc.).
 - Multiple documents are welcome (e.g. letter from bank and a scholarship letter).

Please provide a letter as soon as possible from your financial institution and/or sponsoring organization illustrating that you have funds to meet all financial obligations for the first 9 months of attendance. Your total available funds must meet or exceed the cost of attendance for COE approval as M-1 Visa students are not permitted to work during the course of their studies.

Students from Canada and Bermuda are exempt from the M-1 Visa requirement but will still need to submit the I-20 Information Form and Financial Information Letter to Bel-Rea and to follow all other steps listed on www.ice.gov/sevis/students.

A DSO will generate the I-20 Certificate of Eligibility (COE) Form needed for the M-1 Visa application process after an applicant is officially accepted to the program. However, applicants should start early to obtain the documentation needed by the DSO. Details on the M-1 Visa application process are available at <https://www.ice.gov/sevis/students>.

Please see the **International Student Application Checklist** for additional details on the required documents listed above and additional program application information. This checklist is provided by Admissions when an international student submits an application to the program.

Applying for a M-1 Visa:

The recommended way to apply for a M-1 Visa is at the U.S. Consulate or U.S. Embassy in your home country (your place of permanent residence). Visit the following sites for more information on the required documents, interview scheduling and wait times, application forms and fees, and tips on showing strong ties to your home country (in order to support your intent to return):

- <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/student-visa.html>
- <https://www.internationalstudent.com/immigration/m1-student-visa/>

Before you leave your U.S. Consulate or Embassy appointment, check that you were issued the correct type of visa (M-1). If there is a problem, bring it to their staff's attention immediately.

Applicants can apply for a M-1 Visa at the U.S. Consulate or U.S. Embassy in a country other than their home country, but the government warns that it is more difficult to qualify for a M-1 Visa in a country outside of your home country and you may face more stringent requirements.

If you already reside in the U.S. (e.g. under a parent's Visa) and are applying well ahead of your Bel-Rea start date, you can also consider applying for a change of nonimmigrant status with the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). Please note that this is typically a much longer process than applying for a M-1 Visa with the U.S. Consulate or U.S. Embassy in your home country and you may also face more stringent requirements.

Dependents (spouse or qualifying child) of M-1 Visa students can apply for a M-2 Visa to accompany the student to the United States. Please note that an additional funding amount will be required for each dependent in order for a DSO to generate their individual I-20 Certificate of Eligibility (COE) Forms.

Keep a copy of every document you fill out and send to the government (and all attachments).

Additional Information:

M-1 Visa students and their dependents are not permitted to work throughout their entire degree program. Therefore, you will also need access to sufficient funds to cover your second year of Bel-Rea's program.

M-1 Visa students are allowed to enter the U.S. up to 30 days before the program start date listed on their I-20 Form. Students trying to enter more than 30 days before that date will be refused entry.

Due to the fact that the SEVIS program dates are approved for only one year at a time for vocational degree programs, international students will work with a DSO at the start of their 4th quarter at Bel-Rea to obtain a new I-20 Form with updated program dates. Students must then submit the i-539 Form and the updated I-20 Form to obtain approval from USCIS for their second year of study. Visit the following sites for more information on forms, fees, and instructions:

- <https://www.uscis.gov/i-539>
- <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/m-1-extensions-of-stay>

M-1 Visa students are required by the government to keep a full-time class schedule throughout their education. Approved transfer courses (college, military, AP exams) may reduce the length of the degree program.

At the start of their final quarter, M-1 Visa students can apply for Optional Practical Training (OPT) Employment. This permission allows new graduates to remain in the United States for up to 6 months after graduation in order to gain additional experience in the field (based on Bel-Rea's 24-month program length). Otherwise, M-1 students must depart the country within 30 days of graduating from the program.

- M-1 Visa students must work full time in the veterinary medicine field during their OPT time period and report any changes in name/contact information to a DSO.
- M-1 Visa students at Bel-Rea should meet with a DSO at the start of their Pre-Clinical quarter (the quarter before internship) to initiate the OPT application process.
- Students completing Bel-Rea's program in less than 24 months due to approved transfer credit should see a DSO about the length of OPT time they can apply for (e.g. 1 month for every 4 months you are enrolled in the program).
- Information on the OPT application process is available at <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/sevis-help-hub/student-records/fm-student-employment/m-1-practical-training>.

Any time a M-1 Visa student leaves the country, he/she should take along the originals of any forms provided to/by Bel-Rea or the government to assist with re-entry to the country. Please always consult with the government or an immigration attorney that is comfortable with the specific M-1 Visa standards before leaving the country. Prior to leaving the country, international students will need to bring their most recent I-20 Form issued back to a DSO for a travel endorsement.

- <https://www.ice.gov/sevis/travel>
- www.ice.gov/doclib/sevis/pdf/faq_m_reentry.pdf (downloadable PDF)

Additional information will be provided to international students once they enroll at Bel-Rea.

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- Rev: 1/23/2019, TLP