SEVIS FEE INFORMATION

What is the SEVIS fee?
The United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS) uses SEVIS fee payments to fund and maintain the Student Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS), the immigration database used to process documents for international students and exchange visitors during their stay in the United States. The fee is required of all F-1 and J-1 non-immigrants who come to the U.S. for the purpose of pursuing a full course of study at institutions such as colleges, universities and language training programs, as well as visitors who engage in exchange programs. It is normally a one-time fee, with a few exceptions which are discussed below.

Who must pay the SEVIS fee?
- New F-1 and J-1 students who are issued an "initial attendance" I-20 or a "begin new program" DS-2019 on or after September 1, 2004.
- Students in the U.S. applying for a change of status to F-1 or J-1 with an I-20 or DS-2019 issued after September 1, 2004.
- Returning students and exchange visitors who have been outside of the U.S. for more than 5 months, were not enrolled in classes at a U.S. university on a full-time basis or were not pursuing an authorized study abroad or research program that would continue their nonimmigrant status.
- F-1 students who have violated their status and are issued a new I-20 after September 1, 2004, for the purpose of leaving and re-entering the U.S. to regain legal status.
- F-1 students who have violated their status and apply for reinstatement more than 5 months after the violation of status occurred.
- J-1 students who have violated their status and apply for reinstatement to the Department of State.
- J-1 students transferring from federally-sponsored exchange programs whose program codes start with G-1, G-2, and G-3 to non-government sponsored J-1 programs (e.g. UT Austin's J-1 program).
- J-1 exchange visitors who apply to change their J-1 category in the U.S.

Who does NOT have to pay the SEVIS fee?
- Continuing F-1 and J-1 students with an initial I-20 or DS-2019 issued before September 1, 2004 who are maintaining their nonimmigrant status. Applies even when student is traveling abroad or applying for a visa renewal.
- J-1 students participating in federally-sponsored exchange visitor programs whose program codes start with G-1, G-2 and G-3 (e.g. Fulbright program).
- F-1 and J-1 students transferring between universities or programs, changing degree levels or requesting a program extension.
- F-2 and J-2 dependents of students and exchange visitors.
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How much is the SEVIS fee?
The SEVIS fee is separate from, and in addition to, the visa application fee. This fee is US $200 for F-1 students and $180 for J-1 visa applicants.

How is the SEVIS fee paid?
The SEVIS fee can only be paid after an I-20 or DS-2019 is issued to you. Payment is made in one of the following ways:

- The fastest and most convenient method of payment is to do so on-line at www.fmjfee.com with a credit card (Visa, MasterCard or American Express) or a debit card with the Visa or MasterCard logo. The student needs to fill out an electronic form I-901 and print out a receipt as confirmation of payment. The information on Form I-901 has to match the I-20 or DS-2019 exactly. DHS will also mail the student a paper receipt.
- By mail with a check, money order or foreign draft drawn on a U.S. bank in U.S. currency. Make checks and money orders payable to “I-901 Student/Exchange Visitor Processing Fee.” Form I-901, which can be downloaded from www.fmjfee.com, needs to accompany the payment which is mailed directly to DHS:
  
  I-901 Student/Exchange Visitor Processing Fee  
  P.O. Box 970020  
  St. Louis, MO  63197-0020  
  The information on Form I-901 has to match the I-20 or DS-2019 exactly. DHS will mail the student a paper receipt at the address on Form I-901. Receipts are mailed with regular mail or at an additional charge with express delivery.
- Nonimmigrant students and exchange visitors in more than 130 countries are able to pay the SEVIS fee using the Western Union Quick Pay™ service located in their communities. This initiative allows Western Union to collect the fee in local currency. Western Union transmits both the payment and the Form I-901 data to DHS. For more information on this method of payment go to www.ice.gov/sevis/i901/wu_instr.htm.

Note: A third party such as a friend, family member, or other interested party can pay the fee on the student's behalf through the same methods described above.

Where and when do I use the SEVIS fee receipt?
Once you pay the fee, you will receive a receipt. This receipt is needed in the following circumstances:

- Present the SEVIS fee receipt at the U.S. Embassy or Consulate with an F-1 or J-1 visa application form and supporting documents. Embassies and consulates will be able to verify SEVIS fee payment electronically, but it is strongly recommended to have the paper receipt when applying for a visa.
- Present the SEVIS fee receipt at the U.S. port of entry when entering the U.S. (if exempt from the visa requirement, i.e. Canadian citizens) or making a new entry to the U.S. to regain legal status.
- Include a copy of the SEVIS fee receipt with an application to DHS to change status to F-1 or J-1.
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- Include a copy of the SEVIS fee receipt with an application to DHS for reinstatement to F-1 status (if it has been more than 5 months since the violation of status occurred).
- Include a copy of the SEVIS fee receipt with an application to the Department of State to change the J-1 category and with an application for reinstatement to J-1 status.

When is the best time to pay the SEVIS fee?
The length of time it takes to pay the SEVIS I-901 fee and get a receipt depends on how long it takes for: 1) the Form I-901 information and payment to get to DHS; 2) the payment to be processed; and 3) the receipt to reach the F-1 or J-1 applicant at the address provided on Form I-901. Once DHS receives and processes the payment, it takes approximately three working days for the transaction to be posted to SEVIS and the State Department. The on-line method of payment is fastest. Applicants outside of the U.S. choosing the mail or Western Union method of payment should take mailing times in their home countries into consideration when deciding when to pay the SEVIS fee.

If the SEVIS fee is paid with one school's I-20 can it be transferred to another?
Yes, the SEVIS fee is transferable to another I-20 or DS-2019. The student needs to bring both I-20s or DS-2019s to the embassy or consulate when applying for the visa as well as the SEVIS fee receipt.

Is the SEVIS fee refundable?
The SEVIS fee cannot be refunded if the F-1 or J-1 visa is denied, but it is valid for 12 months if the student chooses to make another visa application for the same kind of program.

Where can I get more information?
For more information regarding the SEVIS fee visit: https://www.fmjfee.com or http://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901.