

## SEVIS Fee for F-1 Students

Beginning September 1, 2004, a new [United States Department of Homeland Security](#) (DHS) rule went into effect. This rule requires F-1 and J-1 visa applicants to pay a one-time fee of \$100 to supplement the administration and maintenance costs of the [Student and Exchange Information System](#) (SEVIS). The following information specifically addresses fee issues for F-1 students.

### Who Pays the SEVIS fee?

- Prospective students with "initial attendance" I-20s dated on or after 9/1/2004 who are applying for an "initial" F-1 visa from outside the United States.
- Prospective students with "initial attendance" I-20s dated on or after 9/1/2004 who are applying for a change to F-1 status from another visa category.
- Current F-1 students in the United States filing for reinstatement after being out of status more than 5 months, and who are issued an I-20 issued for reinstatement that is dated on or after 9/1/2004.

### Will Other F-1 Students in the United States Have to Pay?

No, unless the student's circumstances change so that he or she fits one of the categories mentioned above.

### What about F-2 Dependents?

F-2 dependents do not have to pay the fee, even if the I-20 that the F-2 dependents use is issued on or after September 1, 2004.

### Do I Have to Pay if I Transfer to Another School, Travel Outside the United States or Renew My Visa?

The SEVIS fee is not required when transferring schools, changing to another degree program or level, requesting a program extension, renewing an F-1 visa or using F-1 program benefits such as practical training. If you are in status when you travel internationally and are not physically outside of the U.S. for more than five months, you will not be required to pay the fee.

### When Do I Pay the SEVIS Fee?

The fee must be paid at least 3 business days prior to applying for your visa, or applying for admission at a US port-of-entry for those exempt from the visa requirement. The fee must be paid prior to submission of a change of status petition or reinstatement application.

### Can I Pay the SEVIS Fee at a University, Consulate or Port of Entry?

No. At this time the SEVIS fee can only be processed by the Department of Homeland Security via mail or the Internet.

### How Do I Pay the Fee?

The fee can be paid to the DHS by mail or online and must be accompanied by a Form I-901. It can be paid by you or by a third party, inside or outside the United States.

#### To Pay Online

1. Find the Form I-901 at [Student and Exchange Visitor Program](#)
  2. Complete the form online and supply the necessary Visa, MasterCard or American Express information. Be sure to write your name exactly as it appears on your I-20 or DS-2019.
  3. Print a copy of the online receipt.
  4. Be sure to make copies of your receipt, and keep it with your other important immigration documents.
- A third party such as a friend, family member, or other interested party can pay the fee on your behalf through the same means described above.

### To Pay By Mail

1. Obtain a Form I-901 "Fee Remittance for Certain F, J, and M Nonimmigrants."

- Download the form from the [Student and Exchange Visitor Program](#)
- Request the form by phone at 800.870.3676 (inside the United States)

2. Complete the Form I-901. Be sure to write your name exactly as it appears on the I-20 or DS-2019.

3. Prepare a check, international money order or foreign draft (drawn on U.S. banks only) in the amount of USD \$100, made payable to "The Department of Homeland Security". Sources for such checks and money orders include banks chartered or operated in the United States, foreign subsidiaries of U.S. banks, or foreign banks that have an arrangement with a U.S. bank to issue a check, money order, or foreign draft that is drawn on a U.S. bank.

4. Mail the completed I-901 and payment to the P.O. Box listed on Form I-901.

5. A Form I-797 receipt notice should be mailed within 3 days of processing the fee. Be sure to make copies of your receipt, and keep it with your other important immigration documents.

### Will DHS Keep a Record of My Payment on File?

Fee payments should be entered into your permanent immigration SEVIS record but it is strongly recommended that you retain a copy of your fee receipt Form I-797 to use as needed.

### Is the SEVIS Fee Transferable?

Yes. DHS has confirmed that fee payment made on one SEVIS ID number (i.e. I-20) can be applied to another SEVIS ID number issued to the same individual. The student will need to bring in proof of the SEVIS ID number connected to the SEVIS fee – i.e. the unused I-20 or DS-2019. Bring the I-20s of both the school for which you paid the fee and the school you will be attending, as well as your SEVIS fee payment receipt, to the consulate or port-of-entry (if you are applying for a visa, you should bring both of the I-20s back to the consulate). To follow the procedure, visit [http://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901/faq7.htm#\\_Toc81222153](http://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901/faq7.htm#_Toc81222153)

### What Do I Need to Do to Apply for an F-1 Visa, Change of Status or Reinstatement?

- Obtain the appropriate I-20 from a DHS-approved school.
- Pay the SEVIS fee by mail or online.
- Make a copy of the Form I-797 (mail) or computer receipt (online) for your records.
- Submit a copy of the Form I-797 or computer receipt with your visa, change of status or reinstatement application.
- Students who are exempt from visa requirements, such as Canadians, should take a copy of the SEVIS fee receipt to present at the port of entry with the appropriate I-20. It will not be possible to pay the fee at the port of entry.
- For change of status or reinstatement applications, if you previously paid the SEVIS fee while attending a different school, you should submit a copy of that school's I-20 form with your application.

### What if My F-1 Visa Application is denied?

The SEVIS fee will not be refunded. However, if you reapply for a new F-1 visa within 12 months of the denial, you will not have to pay the fee again