

SEVIS Fee Requirement

Section 641(e) of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigration Responsibility Act of 1996 (IIRIRA) requires the SEVIS program to be funded through a fee imposed on students and exchange visitors. On July 1, 2004, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced rules regarding payment of this fee. This rule took effect on September 1, 2004. New SEVIS fees for students and exchange visitors went into effect on October 27, 2008.

For more information about the SEVIS fee, visit <http://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901/index.htm>.

For answers to Frequently Asked Questions about the SEVIS fee, visit <http://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901/faq.htm>.

HOW MUCH IS THE SEVIS FEE?

- All foreign citizens applying to become an F-1 student must pay a \$350 SEVIS fee.
- Most foreign citizens applying to become a J-1 exchange visitor must pay a \$220 SEVIS fee.
- All foreign citizens applying to become an Au Pair, Camp Counselor, or Summer Work/Travel Program exchange visitor must pay a \$35 SEVIS fee.
- Government sponsored exchange visitors are not required to pay a SEVIS fee.

WHEN SHOULD THE FEE BE PAID?

The fee should be paid sufficiently in advance of the request, allowing for verification of fee payment to be possible before the benefit is adjudicated or granted. DHS guidelines suggest that fee payment should be processed at least three business days in advance of the date verification is needed. It is best to provide proof of receipt of fee payment when applying for the benefit.

WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU DO NOT PAY THE SEVIS FEE AND ARE REQUIRED TO DO SO?

Failure to pay the fee will result in denial of non-immigrant status or status-related benefits. For F-1 students applying for reinstatement, failure to pay the fee will be considered a willful violation, unless there are extenuating circumstances. For J-1 students applying for reinstatement, failure to pay the fee will be considered a “minor or technical infraction.”

YOU DO NOT HAVE TO PAY THE SEVIS FEE IF...

1. You have an initial or continuing attendance I-20 or DS-2019 that was issued prior to September 1, 2004 and you are maintaining status.
2. You are an F-2 or J-2 dependent of an F-1 student or J-1 exchange visitor.
3. You are an F-1 student seeking an extension of stay, transfer to another institution, change in educational level, practical training, or reinstatement within 5 months of the occurrence of the violation.
4. You are a J-1 student or scholar seeking an extension or transfer in the same category and with the same or lesser fee requirement.
5. You are an F-1 or a J-1 student who has previously paid the fee and you are applying for a visa renewal to return to the U.S. as continuing student in the same course of study.
6. You are an F-1 or a J-1 student who has paid the fee but have been denied a visa, and you are reapplying for a visa in the same visa classification, category, and with the same fee requirement within 12 months of the visa denial.
7. You have paid the SEVIS fee but have been denied a change of status to F-1 or J-1 and you are reapplying for the same status and category within 12 months after being granted a motion to reopen by DHS.
8. You are an F-1 student who has been absent from the U.S. for more than five months due to participation on a school-approved study abroad program.
9. You are a J-1 exchange visitor who is participating in a fee-exempt US Federal Government-sponsored program (such as USAID or Fulbright).

YOU MUST PAY THE SEVIS FEE IF...

1. You are seeking an F-1 visa from a U.S. embassy or consulate abroad for “initial” attendance at a U.S. school and your I-20 was issued on or after September 1, 2004.
2. You are seeking a J-1 visa from a U.S. embassy or consulate abroad to start your participation in a J-1 Exchange Visitor Program that is not that is not fee-exempt, and your DS-2019 was issued on or after September 1, 2004.
3. You are applying for a change of status to F-1 or J-1.
4. You are an alien exempt from the visa requirement (e.g. Canadian citizens) who is seeking entry at a U.S. port of entry for “initial” attendance at a U.S. school or Exchange Visitor Program
5. You are a J-1 who is applying for a change of program category within the U.S. (seldom allowed), with the exception of a change to a J-1 program that is a fee-exempt Federal Government sponsored program (such as Fulbright).
7. You are a J-1 transferring from a fee-exempt Federal Government sponsored program (such as Fulbright) to another J-1 program that is not fee-exempt.
8. You are a J-1 transferring from a reduced-fee J-1 program to a full-fee J-1 program.
9. You are out of legal J-1 status and are applying for reinstatement (in the U.S. or “by travel” and returning with an “initial” DS-2019).
10. You are out of legal F-1 status and are applying for reinstatement in the U.S. more than 5 months after the status violation or attempting to regain status by travel by returning with an “initial” I-20.
11. You are an F-1 student who has been absent from the U.S. for more than five months, were not participating in overseas study, and wish to reenter the U.S. to continue in the same or a different course of study.
12. You are an F-1 student returning to the U.S. in a different course of study on an “initial” attendance I-20.

HOW DO YOU PAY THE SEVIS FEE?

1. In order to pay the SEVIS fee, you must complete form I-901.
2. You can complete form I-901 and pay the SEVIS fee online.
 - <https://www.fmjfee.com/i901fee/>.
 - You will pay in U.S. dollars by credit card (Visa, MasterCard or American Express issued anywhere in the world) or debit card (Visa or MasterCard issued anywhere in the world).
 - Once you submit the payment, you can print out a receipt and use it for verification at the time of your visa application or your change of status application.
3. You can complete form I-901 online and pay the SEVIS fee by check or money order.
 - Once you complete form I-901 online, you will receive a payment coupon.
 - Mail the payment coupon along with your check or money order.
4. You can complete a paper form I-901 and pay the SEVIS fee by check or money order.
5. An I-797 receipt notice will be issued when the fee is received.
6. Send a payment via Western Union. For instructions, visit http://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901/wu_instr.htm.
7. Third parties may pay the fee on behalf of the student or scholar.
8. For more information on paying the SEVIS fee, to access form I-901, and to make electronic payments, visit the website <https://www.fmjfee.com/i901fee/index.html>.
9. For answers to Frequently Asked Questions about the SEVIS fee, visit <http://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901/faq.htm>.