

SEVIS FEE REQUIREMENT for F-1 Visa Student

Beginning September 1, 2004, a new United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS) rule goes into effect. This rule requires F-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).

☞ **Who must pay 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 US.
- 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 US 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 9/1/04.
- Prospective students who are exempt from the F-1 visa requirement (residents of a contiguous territory or adjacent island, for example, citizen of Canada or Bermuda), and will be applying for admission at a U.S. port-of-entry to begin initial attendance at a U.S. school. In this case, the SEVIS fee must be paid **BEFORE** entry to the U.S. A valid receipt is required at the port-of-entry.

☞ **Will other F-1 students in the US have to pay?**

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

☞ **What about my 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 9/1/2004

☞ **Do I have to pay if I transfer to another school, travel outside the US 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 much is the SEVIS fee and how do I pay it?

The SEVIS fee is US\$100. This fee is separate from and in addition to the visa application fee. The SEVIS fee must be paid by the Internet or by mail. It cannot be paid at a U.S. embassy or consulate and it cannot be paid at port of entry.

To Pay By *Mail* – Please allow at least 2 to 3 weeks for mailing, processing of check and receiving of receipt.

1. Obtain a Form I-901 “Fee Remittance for Certain F, J, and M Nonimmigrants.”
 - Download the form from <http://www.ice.gov/doclib/sevis/pdf/I-901.pdf>
2. Complete the Form I-901. Be sure to write your name exactly as it appears on your I-20 form.
3. Prepare a check, international money order or foreign draft (*drawn on US banks only*¹) in the amount of US\$100, made payable to “The Department of Homeland Security”
4. Mail the completed I-901 and payment to the address 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

¹Many foreign banks are able to issue checks or money orders drawn on a U.S. bank. You may therefore obtain a check from: 1) a bank chartered or operated in the United States; b) a foreign subsidiary of a U.S. bank, or c) a foreign bank that has an arrangement with a U.S. bank to issue a check, money order, or foreign draft that is drawn on a U.S. bank

To Pay *Online* – *A faster method!*

1. Find the Form I-901 at <https://www.fmjfee.com/index.jhtml>.
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 form.
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

Will the 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.

I applied to more than one school, and have more than one I-20 form. What happens if I pay the SEVIS fee for one school, and then I change my mind and decide that I want to attend the other school? Is my paid SEVIS fee transferable?

Yes. But you must submit the I-20 form with the SEVIS ID number that you listed on the I-901 form with you to the U.S. consulate/embassy. For change of status or reinstatement applications, please see next question.

What do I need to do to apply for an F-1 visa, change of status or reinstatement?

- Obtain a Form I-20 from your school.
- Pay the SEVIS fee by mail or online.
- Make a copy of the Form I-797 (paid by mail method) or computer receipt (pay online method) for your records.
- Submit a copy of the Form I-797 or computer receipt with your visa, change of status or reinstatement application **OR**
- Students who are exempt from visa requirements, such as Canadians, should show a copy of the SEVIS fee receipt at the port-of-entry with the appropriate I-20. Please note that 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 re-apply for a new F-1 visa within 12 months of the denial, you will not have to pay the fee again.