

DATE: August 19, 2004
TO: F-1 Students/F-1 Student Applicants
FROM: International Student and Scholar Services Office
SUBJECT: Department of Homeland Security Announces New SEVIS Fee

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has announced they will require a new fee of \$100 for all initial attendance F-1 and J-1 applicants with I-20 or DS-2019 forms issued on or after September 1, 2004. The fee is required under the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) and is to be used by the DHS to cover the costs of operating the SEVIS program. This is a one-time fee for each nonimmigrant program in which the student or exchange visitor participates. The fee will also be required for individuals applying for changes of status to F-1 or J-1, J-1 changes of category, J-1 reinstatements, F-1 reinstatements if out of status for more than 5 months, and F-1 nonimmigrants who have been absent from the U.S. for a period exceeding 5 months, if not working towards completion of curriculum in an authorized overseas study in the U.S.

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 US
- 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 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

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?

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 US.

To Pay By Mail

1. Obtain a Form I-901 “Fee Remittance for Certain F, J, and M Nonimmigrants.”
 - Download the form from www.FMJfee.com
 - Request the form by phone at 1-800-870-3676 (inside the US)
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 only¹) in the amount of \$100 USD, 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

To Pay Online

1. Find the Form I-901 at www.FMJfee.com.
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 the appropriate Form I-20 from the University of Houston.
- Pay the SEVIS fee by mail or online.
- Make a copy of the I-797 (mail) or computer receipt (online) for your records.
- Submit a copy of the 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 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.

For more information regarding the new SEVIS fee requirement or other visa-related matters, contact the International Student and Scholar Services Office at 302 Student Service Center 1. Our telephone number is 713-743-5065.

Helpful Links:

U.S Embassies Abroad

<http://travel.state.gov/links.html>

http://www.ice.gov/graphics/enforce/imm/imm_sr.htm

USICE - Special Registration

**DHS Special Notice
North**

<http://travel.state.gov/specialnotice.html>

& Libya

Special Visa Processing for citizens of

Korea, Cuba, Syria, Sudan, Iran, Iraq,

<http://travel.state.gov/section306.html>

Visa Process Guide

<http://www.uga.edu/gaie/gettingavisa.pdf>

Canada

Visas for Third Country Nationals in

or Mexico

Fees for Visa Services

<http://travel.state.gov/vofees.html>

<http://travel.state.gov/tcn.html>

Visa Photo Requirements

<http://travel.state.gov/passport/pptphotos/index.html>

Visa Denials

<http://travel.state.gov/visadenials.html>

U.S. VISIT -

http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/interapp/content_multi_image/content_multi_image_0006.xml

Airport Security - Web videos in various languages

http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/interapp/editorial/editorial_0435.xml

Airport Status

<http://www.fly.faa.gov/flyfaa/usmap.jsp>

What to expect upon arrival at a U.S. port of entry

http://www.ice.gov/graphics/news/newsrel/articles/POEFactSheetUpdate_063004.pdf

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.