

SEVIS Fee Information



University of Texas at Austin - International Student and Scholar Services

What is the SEVIS fee?

The SEVIS fee is required of all F-1 and J-1 nonimmigrants 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, exchange programs. It is normally a one-time fee, with a few exceptions which are discussed below.

The fee went into effect on September 1, 2004. SEVIS fee payments will be used by the United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to fund 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, as well as to facilitate their travel abroad and visa applications.

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 after September 1, 2004.
- Students applying for a change of status to F-1 or J-1 in the U.S. 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 I-20 or DS-2019 issued prior to September 1, 2004, who are maintaining their nonimmigrant status, even when 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.

When does the fee need to be paid?

At least 3 business days prior to:

- applying for an initial F-1 or J-1 visa at an embassy or consulate;
- entering the U.S. for F-1 and J-1 students exempt from the visa requirement (Canadian citizens);
- submitting an application to DHS to change status to F-1 or J-1; or
- submitting an application to the Department of State to change the J-1 category.

How much is the SEVIS Fee?

The SEVIS fee is US \$100. This fee is separate from, and in addition to, the visa application fee.

How is the SEVIS Fee paid?

The SEVIS fee can only be paid **after** obtaining an I-20 or DS-2019, in one of the following ways:

- On-line at **www.fmjfee.com** with a credit card (Visa, MasterCard or American Express). 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 (made payable to *Department of Homeland Security*). Form I-901, which can be downloaded from **www.fmjfee.com**, needs to accompany the payment which is mailed directly to DHS at 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.
- F-1 and J-1 visa applicants in India and China may be able to pay the SEVIS fee at the U.S. Embassy or Consulate as part of a pilot program between the Department of State and DHS. Please check with your local consulate in India or China to see if the pilot program is available.

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?

- 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, as well as, when entering the U.S.
- 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.
- 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.

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.

