



SEVIS Fee Questions & Answers

What is the SEVIS fee?

This SEVIS fee is required of all foreign nationals who come to the United States for the purpose of pursuing a full course of study in institutions such as colleges, universities, and language training programs. It is payable one time for each single educational program in which an F-1 student participates, extending from the time the student is granted F-1 status to the time the student falls out of status, changes status, or departs the U.S. for an extended period of time.

This fee went into effect September 1, 2004. SEVIS fee payments will be used by the United States Department of Homeland Security to fund the Student and Exchange Visitor Program. This program makes it possible for international students and exchange visitors to attend schools in the United States. The fee also funds the Student Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS), a computer system employed to track international students and exchange visitors during their stays in the United States.

Who must pay the SEVIS fee and when?

You will need to pay the SEVIS fee if you were issued a Form I-20 AND one of the following conditions applies:

- 1) You are seeking an F-1 visa from a United States embassy or consulate. The SEVIS fee must be paid BEFORE visa issuance.
- 2) You hold a valid F-1 visa, have been absent from the United States for a period of more than 5 months (not working on your studies during this time with the prior approval of your school), and will re-enter the U.S. for a new program of study. In this case, the SEVIS fee must be paid BEFORE re-entry to the U.S.
- 3) As a resident of a contiguous territory or adjacent island, you are exempt from the visa requirement (for example, you are a citizen of Canada or Bermuda), and will apply for admission at 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.

F-2 visa holders, the spouse and dependents of the F-1 visa holder, are not required to pay the SEVIS fee. See the section entitled “A Note About Processing Times” for further important fee payment considerations.

How much is the SEVIS fee and how do I pay it?

The SEVIS fee is US\$ 200. 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.**

The fee can be paid by one of two means:

- 1) Electronically, by completing a form I-901 through the Internet and using a Visa, MasterCard, or American Express credit card.
- 2) By mail, by submitting Form I-901, Fee remittance for Certain F, J, and M Nonimmigrants, together with a check or money order drawn on a U.S. bank and payable in U.S. currency. Sources for such checks and money orders include banks chartered or operated in the U.S., 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.

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.

A Note About Processing Times and Payment Verification

If you pay the SEVIS fee by Internet, your payment is processed immediately and, at the time you make payment, you can print a receipt directly from your computer. This computer-generated receipt can be used to verify you have paid the fee at an embassy, consular post, or port-of-entry. Mailing the SEVIS fee does not constitute payment. The fee is processed when it is received by USCIS. If you mail your payment rather than pay on the Internet, it can take a considerable amount of time for payment to be received and for you to receive a receipt by return mail.

Whether you choose to pay the fee by the Internet or by mail, a paper receipt will be mailed to the address you provide on Form I-901. You may choose to have this receipt sent to you either by regular mail or, at an additional charge, by express delivery.

A paper receipt is not required in order for you to be issued a visa or to be admitted at the port of entry. Embassies and consular posts will be able to verify your fee payment without a receipt in most circumstances if you pay the fee far enough in advance of your visa interview. Electronic payments must be submitted at least 3 business days in advance of the interview if you will rely

on electronic fee verification at the consulate. Mailed payments must be sent in a manner that assures arrival at the DHS address listed on the I-901 at least 3 business days before the scheduled interview.

If I have already paid the SEVIS fee for one school, and then decide to attend another, do I have to pay the fee again?

If you have been accepted to more than one institution and paid the fee using the SEVIS ID number of an institution you will not be attending, you will not have to pay the fee again. 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)

Is the SEVIS fee refundable if I am denied a visa?

Once paid, the SEVIS fee is non-refundable, unless paid by mistake, even if your visa is denied or, subsequent to issuance of the visa, you choose not to come to the United States.

If you applied for an F-1 visa and paid the SEVIS fee within the last year but were denied a visa, you do not have to pay the SEVIS fee again as long as you re-apply for the same kind of program within 12 months of the initial denial.