

NEW SEVIS FEE REQUIREMENT

SEVIS, the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System, is the Department of Homeland Security's central computerized system for maintaining and managing data about foreign students (F-1), exchange visitors (J-1), and their dependents (F-2 and J-2) during their stay in the United States.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) published a new rule to become effective September 1, 2004, implementing a fee of \$100 to begin this fall for all new F-1 and J-1 applicants. This fee is in addition to the Department of State's visa application fee that is also \$100 and has a different process. This new fee will affect most spring 2005 admits unless they are transferring schools.

Individuals Who Must Pay the SEVIS Fee

- Persons seeking an *initial* F-1 or J-1 visa from a U.S. consulate for initial attendance whose document was generated on 9/1/04 or after. *If the J-1 document was issued by the Federal government, the individual is exempt from the fee.*
- Canadians seeking admission at port-of-entry to begin initial attendance whose document was generated on 9/1/04 or after (*they are visa exempt, so the SEVIS fee must be paid before going to the border*)
- Aliens applying for a *change of status* to F-1 or J-1
- J-1 applying for a *change of category* (change between professor and researcher does not count)
- J-1 applying for *reinstatement* after a substantive violation or who has been out of status for more than 120 days but less than 270 days
- F-1 applying for *reinstatement* who has been out of status for five months or more
- F-1 who has been outside the U.S. (not on an approved study-abroad program) for 5 months or more

Individuals Exempt from the SEVIS Fee

- Continuing F-1 or J-1 whose *initial* documents were issued before 9/1/04
- F-2 or J-2 dependents
- J-1 in a Federal government-sponsored program
- F-1 applying for a visa to return to the U.S. as a continuing student or exchange visitor
- F-1 maintaining continuous status and changing educational levels
- F-1 transferring schools
- J-1 transferring between programs in the same category
- F-1 applying for an extension
- An alien who paid an initial fee when applying for an F-1 visa, was denied a visa, and is applying again for a visa for the same type of program within 12 months of the initial denial
- An alien who paid an initial fee when applying for a J-1 visa, was denied a visa, and is applying again for a visa in the same exchange visitor category within 12 months of the initial denial
- An F-1 applying for reinstatement who has been out of status for less than 5 months

Payment of the SEVIS Fee

The fee can be paid by

- The student *or*
- Any third-party including family, friends, sponsors, and the school/department

In special situations departments may wish to assist students in covering costs of the SEVIS fee. In those cases GENERAL FUNDS MAY NOT BE USED. While discretionary gift funds may be used this should be reviewed with International Student Services and with the College office before such a commitment is made. (Since students can use the payment of the SEVIS fee to attend any other school, ISS suggests that any department thinking about paying the SEVIS fee on behalf of the student consider reimbursing the student after the student's arrival.)

When the SEVIS Fee Must Be Paid

- Applicants needing a visa to enter the U.S. and who are required to pay the SEVIS fee should do so ***before*** going to the U.S. embassy or consulate for their visa interview.
- Applicants who are citizens of Canada who are required to pay the SEVIS fee to apply for F-1 or J-1 status must pay the SEVIS fee ***before*** entering the U.S. at a port-of-entry into the U.S.
- Non-immigrants currently in the U.S. who apply for student or exchange visitor status must pay the fee ***before*** filing their change of status application.

Payment Process

Students will be able to pay by mail or pay online. Payments are sent to an address within the United States. Obviously, those students who pay online will have an advantage because they will get a receipt immediately that they should print to use at the consulate or the port-of-entry.

Online payments should be done at least three business days before the visa interview. Mailed payments should be sent so that the payment is received and processed three business days before the visa interview.

To Pay By Mail

1. Applicants should get 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. Form I-901 should be completed. *Students must write their name exactly as it appears on the I-20 or DS-2019 form.
3. A check, international money order or foreign draft (drawn on US banks only) in the amount of \$100 made payable to "The Department of Homeland Security, Immigration and Customs Enforcement" should be included.
4. The completed I-901 and payment should be sent to: (P.O. Box listed on Form I-901).
5. A Form I-797 receipt form should be mailed within 3 days of processing the fee.
Students should keep a copy of the receipt because it can be requested at any time.

To Pay Online

1. Applicants can find the Form I-901 at www.FMJfee.com.
2. The Form I-901 can be completed online and must include the necessary Visa, MasterCard or American Express information. *Students must write their name exactly as it appears on the I-20 or DS-2019 form.
3. The online receipt is available immediately and should be printed.
4. Students should keep a copy of the receipt because it can be requested at any time.

Students from India and China

The State Department has indicated that they will pilot a program at the request of the Department of Homeland Security to have students pay the SEVIS fee at the consulates. There are no details yet of when or how the pilot will work so students may have to pay on-line or by mail until the program is set.

Impact

There should be little impact on current students in the U.S. and at Penn State. The additional cost, time and effort needed to meet the new fee requirements may adversely affect international enrollment. Departments may want to review the potential effects of the SEVIS fee on future enrollments of foreign students.

Transferability of SEVIS Fee

The Department of Homeland Security has confirmed that fee payment made on one SEVIS ID number (i.e. I-20 form) can be applied to another SEVIS ID number issued to the same individual. The new student will need to bring in proof of the SEVIS ID number connected to the SEVIS fee – i.e. the unused I-20 or DS-2019.

SEVIS FEE CHART

Fee Required	Amount
F-1 or F-3 academic student applying for “initial status” from outside the US	\$100
F-1 or F-3 academic student applying for reinstatement after being out of status more than five months	\$100
Spouse or dependent child of F, M or J visitor (F-2, M-2, J-2) *Dependents are not charged but proof of payment by the primary visa holder (F-1, J-1, M-1) is required for applications using I-20s/DS-2019s dated on or after 9/1/04.	None*
J-1 exchange visitor, standard student or research scholar program	\$100
J-1 exchange visitor violating status and cannot or does not resume status in the same program	\$100
J-1 exchange visitor changing to another program or program category (such as student to research scholar)	\$100
J-1 exchange visitor participating in federally sponsored program (designated G-1, G-2 or G-3)	None
J-1 exchange visitor participating in summer work/travel program	\$35
J-1 exchange visitor participating in au pair program	\$35
J-1 exchange visitor participating in camp counselor program	\$35
Student or exchange visitors applying for a change of status to F, M or J programs	\$100

