

NEW SEVIS FEE REQUIREMENT

Beginning September 1, 2004, a new United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS) rule goes into effect. This rule requires F-1, J-1, M-1 and M-3 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).

Fee Payment Required if the Applicant is:

- a. Seeking an **F-1, F-3, J-1, M-1, or M-3** visa from an embassy or consulate abroad for initial attendance at a school approved by the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP), or for initial participation in an exchange visitor program designated by the Department of State (DOS). There is an exception, noted below in j, for J-1 exchange visitors participating in a program sponsored by the Federal government.
- b. A person who does not need a visa to enter the United States as a student or exchange visitor who will be applying for admission at a U.S. port-of-entry to begin initial attendance at a SEVP-approved school or initial participation in a DOS-designated exchange visitor program. There is an exception, noted below in j, for J-1 exchange visitors participating in a program sponsored by the Federal government.
- c. In the United States seeking a change of status to **F-1, F-3, J-1, M-1, or M-3**. There are exceptions noted below in sections j and n.
- d. A nonimmigrant who was initially granted **J-1** status as a participant in an exchange visitor program sponsored by the Federal government, as specified in section j below, and who is now transferring to another J program in the same category that is not sponsored by the Federal government.
- e. A **J-1** nonimmigrant who is applying for a change of category within the United States. There is an exception, noted below in j, for J-1 exchange visitors participating in a program sponsored by the Federal government.
- f. A **J-1** nonimmigrant who is applying for a reinstatement after a substantive violation of the rules governing your J status, or who has been out of program status for longer than 120 days but less than 270 days during the course of his or her program. There is an exception, noted below in j, for J-1 exchange visitors participating in a program sponsored by the Federal government.
- g. An **F-1, F-3, M-1, or M-3** nonimmigrant applying for reinstatement of student status, who has been out of student status for more than 5 months.
- h. An **F-1, F-3, M-1, or M-3** nonimmigrant who has been absent from the United States for a period exceeding 5 months, was not working towards completion of curriculum in authorized overseas study, and now wishes to re-enter for a new F or M program of study in the United States.

Payment is not Required if Applicant is:

- a. An **F-2, J-2, or M-2** dependent.
- b. A **J-1** participant in an exchange visitor program sponsored by the Federal government. An exchange visitor program sponsored by the Federal government is identified by a program number starting with **G-1, G-2, or G-3**.
- c. An **F-1, F-3, J-1, M-1, or M-3** nonimmigrant who has previously paid the fee, or whose form I-20 or DS-2019 for initial attendance was issued on or before August 31, 2004, and who is applying for a visa to return to the United States as a continuing student or a participant in a single, continuous exchange visitor program.
- d. An **F-1, F-3, M-1, or M-3** nonimmigrant transferring between approved schools, changing educational levels, or applying for post-completion practical training.
- e. A **J-1** nonimmigrant transferring between programs in the same exchange visitor category where no differential fee exists.
- f. A nonimmigrant applying for a change of classification from within the United States between **F-1** and **F-3** status or between **M-1** and **M-3** status.
- g. An **F-1, F-3, J-1, M-1, or M-3** nonimmigrant requesting/applying for an extension of stay in a single

program.

- h. Reapplying for a visa from an embassy or consulate abroad after having paid the SEVIS fee for a previous **F-1, F-3, J-1, or M-1** visa that was denied, and is applying again for the same type of program within 12 months of the initial denial.
- i. Reapplying for a visa from an embassy or consulate after having paid the SEVIS fee for a previous **J-1** visa that was denied, and is applying again for the same type **J-1** exchange visitor category within 12 months of the initial denial, unless there is a fee differential.
- j. A nonimmigrant who has paid the SEVIS fee in conjunction with an application for a change of status in the United States to an **F, M, or J** classification, had the initial application for the change of status denied, and is applying for a motion to re-open the case within 12 months of the original denial.

Documents needed to complete the payment process:

F-1, F-3, M-1, and M-3 status only: Form I-20 (Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status) issued to you by the SEVP-approved school you will attend.

J-1 status only: Form DS-2019 (Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor [J-1] Status) issued to you by the designated exchange visitor program in which you will participate.

All forms must be completed in English. The personal information used to fill out your form must be an exact match for information on your I-20 or DS-2019.

Can someone pay the fee for me?

Yes. You may have a relative, friend or even a school or program sponsor pay the fee for you. If you are paying from overseas and you do not have access to the payment methods described in this web site, you may find it easier to have someone in the United States pay the fee for you. If someone else fills out the form for you, be sure you give them a copy of your Form I-20/DS-2019 or the information from the form. Whoever fills out the form will need your personal information **exactly** as it appears on this document.

How can the fee be paid?

1. The fee can be paid by mail using Form I-901 together with a check or money order drawn on a U.S. bank and payable in U.S. dollars to "I-901 Student/Exchange Visitor Processing Fee."
2. The fee can be paid electronically by completing Form I-901 through the Internet and using a credit card. The website is: <http://www.FMJfee.com>

These options are similar to the usual means that any student or exchange visitor abroad would use to pay fees and expenses to the school or exchange visitor program. The requirement that a check or money order be drawn on a U.S. bank does not necessarily mean that an applicant living abroad must approach a United States bank to make a payment. Many foreign banks are able to issue checks or money orders drawn on a U.S. bank. Accordingly, payment may be made with checks from banks chartered or operated in the U.S., from foreign subsidiaries of U.S. banks, or from 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.

How can someone else pay the fee for me?

By Mail:

If you want to have someone in the U.S. pay the fee on your behalf, send them either a copy of your completed Form I-901 or provide them with the information needed to complete the Form I-901 for you. The person who pays your fee must attach the copy of your Form I-901 to the payment they submit. The Form I-901 and payment cannot be accepted if mailed separately. If a copy of your Form I-901 is not attached to the payment, we will be unable to determine for whom the fee was paid, and your payment will be returned to you based on the address provided.

Over the Internet:

You may also have someone pay your fee on-line. The person who pays the fee for you may complete the Form I-901 on-line and pay by credit card or check according to the instructions on this Web site. Be sure you provide the correct personal and school or exchange visitor program information to the person who completes the Form I-901 for you. The website is: <http://www.FMJfee.com>

When Can I Get My Visa and/or Enter the U.S.?

- The SEVIS fee must be paid and fully processed before the applicant arrives at the consulate for the visa interview.
- For those nonimmigrants who do not need a visa to enter the U.S. as a student or exchange visitor, the fee must be paid and fully processed before applying for entry at a U.S. port-of-entry.
- A receipt will be sent by mail to the address that you indicate with your payment. Further, for those that pay the SEVIS fee on-line, a payment confirmation can be printed out immediately after the payment is made, and used as a receipt until the mailed receipt is received.
- Applicants are strongly encouraged to bring a SEVIS fee payment receipt with them for the visa interview, or, for those that do not need a visa, to the U.S. port-of-entry.
- Having a receipt for the SEVIS fee payment will facilitate the visa application process. However, if you are unable to print a receipt from an on-line payment and/or do not receive your mailed receipt in time for your visa interview you can still go to your interview as long as your fee has been processed by DHS.
- For more detailed information on the fee payment process, go to the SEVIS website at <http://www.ice.gov/sevis>.