



Student & Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) Fee

IMPORTANT INFORMATION. PLEASE READ CAREFULLY.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) now requires the collection of a one-time SEVIS fee of \$100 from international students and scholars seeking F-1 and J-1 visa classification. This fee is being collected to fund operation of the Student and Exchange Visitor Program Office, which has oversight of the Student & Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS).

WHAT IS SEVIS AND THE SEVIS FEE?

The Student & Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) is a web-based database tracking and reporting system overseen by DHS and used by other U.S. government agencies to access up-to-date information regarding international students and scholars in F, J, or M visa classification. The system was originally mandated in 1996 by the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act and was required to be self-supporting by collection of a user fee from internationals in F, J, or M visa classification.

After the events of September 11, 2001, development of the system was expedited and SEVIS became operational in January 2003. At that time, collection of the user fee was postponed until a viable payment system could be developed. On July 1, 2004, DHS published the long-awaited Final Rule to implement the user fee for SEVIS.

HOW MUCH IS THE SEVIS FEE?

The SEVIS fee is **\$100 USD** for any international coming to the University of Pittsburgh in F-1 or J-1 visa classification.

WHO MUST PAY THE SEVIS FEE?

The following internationals are required to pay the SEVIS fee if their Form I-20 or Form DS-2019 was issued *on or after September 1, 2004*:

- An individual applying for an F-1 or J-1 visa for initial participation in a program;
- An individual in the U.S. applying for a change of status to F-1 or J-1;
- An individual in the U.S. in J-1 visa classification who is in a U.S. government sponsored program and who is transferring to a non-U.S. government sponsored program;
- An individual in the U.S. in J-1 visa classification who is applying for a change of category (e.g., from J-1 Student to J-1 Research Scholar);
- An individual in the U.S. in J-1 visa classification who is applying for reinstatement for a substantive violation.

WHO DOES NOT HAVE TO PAY THE SEVIS FEE?

- **Continuing F-1s and J-1s:** No SEVIS fee is due for internationals in F-1 or J-1 visa classification whose **program began prior to** September 1, 2004, who **maintains that status**, and whose initial Form I-20 or Form DS-2019 for the current program was **issued prior to** September 1, 2004.
- **F-1s or J-1s applying for an extension of stay in the same program:** No SEVIS fee is due for internationals in F-1 or J-1 visa classification applying for an extension of stay in the same program.
- **J-1s Sponsored by the U.S. Federal Government:** No SEVIS fee is due for internationals in J-1 visa classification who are coming to the United States as a participant in a program directly sponsored by the U.S. federal government (e.g., Fulbright Scholars).
- **F-2 and J-2 dependents:** F-2 and J-2 dependents are not required to pay a separate SEVIS fee in order to obtain an F-2 or J-2 visa or during the time the F-2 or J-2 remains in that status in the U.S.
- **F-1s and J-1s Denied Visas:** No SEVIS fee is due for internationals seeking F-1 or J-1 visa classification who already paid the SEVIS fee, whose visas are denied, and who subsequently reapply for the same visa within 12 months of the initial visa denial.

HOW DO YOU PAY THE FEE?

An international in or seeking F-1 or J-1 visa classification, who is subject to payment of the SEVIS fee, must remit the fee directly to DHS by mail, online, or locally via Western Union Quick Pay. **Fees will not be payable at the Embassy/Consulate.** The fee must be accompanied by a Form I-901. The fee 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"
 - (a) Download the form from www.FMJfee.com, or

- (b) 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 Form I-20 or Form DS-2019.
- 3) Prepare a check, international money order, or foreign draft (drawn on U.S. banks only¹) in the amount of \$100 USD, made payable to the "U.S. Department of Homeland Security."
- 4) Mail the completed Form 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. Fee payments should be entered into your permanent SEVIS record but it is strongly recommended that you retain a copy of your fee receipt (Form I-797) to use as needed.
- 6) Present the Form I-797 Receipt Notice when applying for your visa.

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. (NOTE: Be sure to write your name exactly as it appears on your Form I-20 or Form DS-2019).
- 3) Print a copy of the online receipt. Be sure to make copies of your receipt and keep it with your other important immigration documents. Fee payments should be entered into your permanent SEVIS record but it is strongly recommended that you retain a copy of your fee receipt (Form I-797) to use as needed.
- 4) Present the receipt when applying for your visa.

To Pay via Western Union Quick Pay

- 1) Go to the following website and follow the instructions: http://www.ice.gov/graphics/sevis/i901/wu_instr.htm.

WHEN MUST THE FEE BE PAID?

The fee must be paid at least 3 business days prior to applying for your visa², or applying for admission at a U.S. port-of-entry for those exempt from the visa requirement. **Fees will not be payable at the Embassy/Consulate.** The fee must also be paid prior to submission of a change of status petition or reinstatement application.

WHAT IF MY F-1 OR J-1 VISA APPLICATION IS DENIED?

The SEVIS fee will not be refunded, however, if you reapply for a new F-1 or J-1 visa within 12 months of the denial, you will not have to pay the fee again (see "Who Does Not Have to Pay the SEVIS Fee" above).

HELPFUL LINKS

SEVIS Fee Frequently Asked Questions

<http://www.ice.gov/graphics/sevis/i901/faq1.htm>

Fees for Visa Services

<http://travel.state.gov/visa/vofoes.html>

Visa Denials

http://travel.state.gov/visa/frvi_denials.html

U.S. VISIT

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

U.S. Embassies Abroad

http://travel.state.gov/visa/questions_embassy.html

Visa Photo Requirements

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

Special Registration

<http://www.ice.gov/graphics/news/factsheets/nseersfaq120103.htm>

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact the Office of International Services (OIS) at 412.624.7120 or go to our website at www.ois.pitt.edu.

DISCLAIMER

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¹ Many foreign banks are able to issue checks or money orders drawn on a U.S. bank. You may, therefore, obtain a check from a bank chartered or operated in the United States, a foreign subsidiary of a U.S. bank, or 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.

² The fee must be paid prior to applying for a visa stamp, but the applicant can schedule an appointment at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate before actually paying the fee.