

THE SEVIS FEE

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal SEVIS Fee took effect on September 1, 2004. The fee of \$180.00 is generally a one-time fee (see exceptions, below) and is required of those who are applying for a J-1 visa based on a DS-2019 issued to "begin a new program."

Proof of fee payment must be presented at the visa interview.

You must pay the SEVIS fee if you are:

1. Seeking an *initial J-1 visa* from an embassy or consulate abroad for initial participation in an exchange visitor program.
2. A CANADIAN citizen: who does not need a visa to enter the United States as an exchange visitor, but who will be applying for admission at a U.S. **port-of-entry** to begin initial participation in a Department of State designated exchange visitor program.
3. Exceptions: a fee is NOT required for a J-1 exchange visitors participating in a program sponsored by the U.S. Federal government.

SEVIS Fee Rules

1. The SEVIS fee must be processed **at least three business days** before the visa interview, unless you have a printed receipt from an Internet payment.
2. The SEVIS fee **cannot** be paid at the embassy or consulate, or at the U.S. Border.
3. **A visa will not be issued unless the visa officer can verify that the SEVIS fee payment has been made.** However, you may schedule your visa interview prior to paying the SEVIS fee.
4. The SEVIS fee is not refundable. If your visa application is denied, and you decide to re-apply for the same type of visa at a later date, you will not be asked to make a second SEVIS fee payment as long as your visa application is made within 12 months of the initial denial.

How to Pay the SEVIS Fee

Currently, there are two payment methods:

1. Payment in U.S. dollars by credit card over the Internet, or
2. Payment in U.S. dollars by check, money order, or bank draft, drawn on a U.S. bank, and mailed to an address in the United States.

Payment of the SEVIS fee may be made by you or by any other individual, either in the United States or abroad, including family or friends. However, anyone paying the fee on your behalf will need to have a copy of your DS-2019 form, or a completed copy of Form I-901.

Procedure for Paying the SEVIS Fee

1. Use the DS-2019 enclosed in this mailing.
2. Access the Form I-901 from the internet at <http://www.fmjfee.com>.
3. Complete the Form I-901, answering all questions. Be sure that you enter your personal information **exactly** as it appears on the DS-2019 form.
4. Pay the \$180 SEVIS fee according to one of the methods described below.

Note: to complete form I-901, you must enter two types of information: (a) J-1 students need to enter the Samford University Program Number, see item #2 of the DS-2019 and (b) enter your SEVIS ID number, which is printed at the top right of the DS-2019 form, above the bar code.

Paying on the Internet

1. Once you have received your DS-2019, you can make the fee payment by submitting form I-901 on-line using a credit card. The web address is <http://www.fmjfee.com>.
 2. MasterCard, Visa, or American Express debit or credit cards are accepted. It does not matter if the card was issued in the United States or overseas. Follow the on-line instructions, include the required credit card information, and print out the payment screen to verify your payment. The printed receipt should be presented at the visa interview or at the U.S. port of entry as proof of payment.
- For detailed information on the SEVIS fee payment process, and for a list of frequently asked questions, visit: <http://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901/index.htm>

Paying by Mail:

1. To pay by mail, you must download and print form I-901 from <http://www.fmjfee.com> or use the paper copy provided with your DS-2019, fill out the form and mail it with your payment to the address below.
2. Your payment must be in U.S. dollars by check, money order or bank draft, drawn on a U.S. bank. Your check, bank draft or money order should be made payable to: "I-901 Student/Exchange Visitor Processing Fee." Also, be sure to print your name and SEVIS ID number in the lower left-hand corner of the check, money order or bank draft.
3. The need for a check, bank draft or money order in U.S. dollars drawn on a U.S. bank does not mean that only a U.S. bank can issue the document. Many foreign banks are able to issue checks or money orders drawn on a U.S. bank, because they are chartered in the United States, or because they are foreign subsidiaries of a U.S. bank, or because they have arrangements with a U.S. bank to issue a check, money order, or foreign draft that is drawn on a U.S. bank.

<u>Mail the payment and form I-901 to:</u>	<u>To send by courier, use the following address:</u>
I-901 Student/Exchange Visitor Visa Processing Fee P.O. Box 970020 St. Louis, MO 63197-0020 USA	Student/Exchange Visitor Processing Fee 1005 Convention Plaza St. Louis, MO 63101 United States Phone Number: 1-314-418-8833 (United States Country Code 011)

NOTE: Payment by mail is not the recommended process for fee payment from abroad, as it can take as long as four weeks from the day you mail in the fee to the day that you receive the required receipt in the mail if you are applying from outside the United States, unless you pay for courier service.

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

1. The SEVIS fee must be paid and fully processed before the applicant arrives at the consulate for the visa interview.
2. For those non-immigrants who do not need a visa to enter the U.S. as an exchange visitor, the fee must be paid and fully processed before applying for entry at a U.S. port-of-entry.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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 in time for your visa interview you can still go to your interview as long as your fee has been processed by the Department of Homeland Security.

Showing Proof of SEVIS Fee Payment at the Visa Interview and/or the U.S. Port of Entry

You must be able to prove that the fee has been paid when you appear for your visa interview, and when you enter the United States. This is done by presenting a printed receipt, either from the Internet if you made an on-line payment, or a mailed receipt if you paid by mail.

Visa officers and U.S. port-of entry inspectors should be able to verify SEVIS fee payment electronically three business days after payment is processed, but in case of problems, having a printed receipt is the best evidence of fee payment. If you lose a receipt for fee payment, the U.S. government does retain an electronic record that the fee has been paid, and you can access that through www.fmjfee.com.

The visa will not be issued unless verification of the SEVIS fee payment can be made.

Helpful Links:

SEVIS I-901 Process - <http://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901/index.htm>

Visa Process Guide - <http://is.ua.edu/international-faculty-staff/j-1-exchange-visitors/applying-for-a-j1-visa/>