



University at Buffalo
The State University of New York

Office of International Education
International Student and Scholar Services

The SEVIS Fee Requirement: **What F-1 International Students Need to Know**

What is the SEVIS fee?

The SEVIS fee is a one-time fee of \$200 to cover the costs of the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS).

Who must pay the SEVIS fee?

- **Prospective students with “initial attendance” I-20s issued on or after September 1, 2004 who are applying for an initial F-1 visa outside the U.S.**

Note: The fee cannot be paid at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate.

- Since **Canadian citizens** are not required to get a U.S. visa stamp, they are required to pay the fee before going to the port of entry.

Note: The fee cannot be paid at a port of entry.

- **Prospective students with “initial attendance” I-20s issued on or after September 1, 2004 who are applying within the U.S. for a change of status to F-1 from another visa category.**

Note: The fee cannot be paid at a USCIS Service Center or District Office.

- **Continuing F-1 students who are applying for reinstatement after being out of status more than 5 months, and who have a reinstatement I-20 that was issued on or after September 1, 2004.**

Note: The fee cannot be paid at a USCIS District Office.

- **Continuing F-1 students who are re-entering the U.S. after being outside the U.S. for 5+ months, were not on an overseas study program and have an “initial attendance” I-20 that was issued on or after September 1, 2004.**

Note: The fee cannot be paid at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate.

Who does NOT have to pay the fee?

Continuing F-1 students do not have to pay the fee unless circumstances change so that they fit one of the categories mentioned above.

What about my F-2 dependents?

F-2 dependents do not have to pay the fee, even if the “dependent I-20” was issued on or after September 1, 2004

Do I have to pay the SEVIS fee if I transfer to another school, travel outside the U.S. or renew my visa?

The SEVIS fee is not required when continuing students transfer schools, change to another degree program or level, request a program extension, renew an F-1 visa (except when they were outside the U.S. for more than five months) or apply for F-1 benefits such as Optional Practical Training. If you are in-status when you leave the U.S. and you do not stay outside the U.S. for more than five months, then you will not be required to pay the fee to return.

When do I pay the fee?

- **If you are applying for an initial F-1 visa at a U.S. Consulate outside the U.S. , you must pay the fee prior to applying for your U.S. visa.** *You can pay the fee online, by mail or at a Western Union agent location using the “Quick Pay” service. If you do not pay the fee online, we encourage you to pay it a few weeks in advance.*
Note: The fee cannot be paid at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate.
- **If you are a Canadian citizen and, therefore, do not need an F-1 visa, you must pay the fee prior to entering the U.S.** *You can pay the fee online, by mail or at a Western Union agent location using the “Quick Pay” service. If you do not pay the fee online, we encourage you to pay it a few weeks in advance.*
Note: The fee cannot be paid at a port-of-entry.
- **If you are applying for a change of status to F-1 or reinstatement to F-1 status, you must pay the fee prior to submitting a change of status or reinstatement application**
Note: The fee cannot be paid at a USCIS Service Center or District Office.

How do I pay the fee?

The fee can be paid either **online or by mail** AND **must be accompanied by Form I-901**. It can be **paid by you or by a third party, inside or outside the U.S.**

- **To Pay Online**

1. **Find Form I-901** at www.FMJfee.com.
2. **Complete the form online.**
3. **Pay the fee** by supplying the necessary Visa, MasterCard or American Express information.
4. **Print a copy of the online receipt.**
5. **Keep a copy of the receipt** for your records.

- **To Pay By Mail**

1. **Obtain Form I-901** by downloading the form in pdf format from www.ice.gov/doclib/sevis/pdf/I-901.pdf
2. **Complete Form I-901.**
3. **Prepare a check, international money order or foreign draft** (drawn on U.S. banks only) in the **amount of \$200 USD**, made payable to **“I-901 Student / Exchange Visitor Processing Fee”** **
*** 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) a bank chartered or operated in the United States; b) a foreign subsidiary of a U.S. bank, or c) 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.*
Note: It is also possible for someone else to pay the fee on your behalf.
4. **Mail the completed Form I-901 and payment** to the address listed on Form I-901.
5. **Wait for a receipt.** A receipt will be mailed to you within 3 days – 2 weeks of processing the fee.
6. **Keep a copy of the receipt** for your records.

- **To Pay by Western Union Quick Pay**

1. **Print out a copy of the “Western Union Quick Pay instructions for F Visas”** from the SEVIS Fee website: www.ice.gov/sevis/i901/wu_instr.htm
2. **Go to a local participating Western Union Agent location. Be sure to bring the “Western Union Quick Pay Instructions for F Visas” with you.** To find the nearest Western Union Agent location, go to www.payment-solutions.com/agent.asp or call the telephone number of

- the Western Union Commercial Services Network Agent in your country as listed in your phone book.
3. **Request and fill out the blue form at the Western Union Agent location.** Follow the “Western Union Quick Pay Instructions for F Visas” when filling out the blue form.
 4. **Get a receipt for your payment.**
 5. **Keep a copy of the receipt** for your records.

Can I pay the SEVIS fee at a university, U.S. Embassy or Consulate or U.S. port of entry?

No. At this time the SEVIS fee can only be paid via mail, Western Union or the Internet.

What do I need to do to apply for an F-1 visa, change of status to F-1 or reinstatement to F-1 student status?

1. Obtain the appropriate Form I-20 from your school.
2. Pay the SEVIS fee online, by mail or at a Western Union agent location.
3. Print your receipt or wait for it to arrive by mail.
4. Submit a copy of your receipt with your visa, change of status or reinstatement application. If you are exempt from U.S. visa requirements (i.e. Canadians), take a copy of the SEVIS fee receipt and present it with your I-20 at the port of entry. *(Please remember: it will not be possible to pay the fee at the port of entry).*

What happens if I pay the SEVIS fee for one school and then decide to transfer to another school? Is my paid SEVIS fee transferable?

Yes, the SEVIS fee is transferable.

What if my F-1 visa application is denied?

The SEVIS fee will not be refunded. However, if you reapply for a new F-1 visa within 12 months of the denial, you will not have to pay the fee again.

Will the DHS keep a record of my SEVIS fee payment on file?

Fee payments should be entered into your permanent immigration (SEVIS) record, but it is strongly recommended that you retain a copy of your receipt.

For more information on the SEVIS fee, please see:
www.ice.gov/sevis/i901/