

Frequently Asked Questions on SEVIS

1- What does the acronym SEVIS stands for?

SEVIS stands for : Student and Exchange Visitor Information System

2- What is SEVIS?

The Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS), administered by the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), is an Internet-based system that maintains data on foreign students and exchange visitors before and during their stay in the United States. For more information about the SEVIS program, visit <http://www.ice.gov/sevis/index.htm>

3- Are all colleges and universities in the US included in this program?

In order to enroll students from other nations, U.S. colleges and universities must be approved by the School Certification the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP). Most U.S. institutions of higher education have received this approval, but check the list of approved schools on <http://www.ice.gov/doclib/sevis/pdf/ApprovedSchools.pdf>

4- When must the fee be paid?

The fee must be paid in time to ensure that the payment can be deposited and recorded in SEVIS prior to the scheduled visa interview. The interviewing consular officer will confirm that the fee has been paid by accessing SEVIS. To allow for adequate processing time the fee must be paid:

- At least three business days prior to the visa interview date if paying electronically.
- At least 15 business days prior to the scheduled visa interview if submitting payment through regular mail. (This time frame allows adequate time for the fee payment to be received at the DHS address listed on the Form I-901, deposited, and recorded in SEVIS.)
- Be sure to add local mail processing time to this processing estimate for accuracy.

5- How can the fee be paid?

The fee could be paid:

- Through the Internet at www.FMJfee.com by using a credit card or debit card and completing the online Form I-901 (Fee for Remittance for Certain F, M, and J Nonimmigrant); or
- Through the mail by submitting a completed Form I-901 and a check or money order drawn on a U.S. bank and payable in U.S. currency.

6-What is the primary purpose of the SEVIS I-901 fee?

- The SEVIS I-901 fee is mandated by Congress to support the program office and the automated system that keeps track of students and exchange visitors and ensures that they maintain their status while in the United States.

7-Does the SEVIS I-901 fee replace the visa fee?

- No. The visa fee is to defray the cost for machine-readable visas and to support the consulates. There is a separate non-refundable fee for anyone seeking a nonimmigrant visa for the United States.
- The SEVIS I-901 fee is a separate fee paid to SEVP. This fee supports the Student and Exchange Visitor Program in DHS

8-Who is exempt from paying SEVIS ?

Do not pay the SEVIS I-901 fee, if you already paid the SEVIS I-901 fee and are:

a- Reapplying for a visa within twelve months of the date of initial denial

OR

b- From a [visa exempt](#) country and reapplying for status as a student at the POE within 12 months of the date of initial denial

OR

c- Filing a motion to reopen a denied change of status application for a change of status to F-1, F-3, M-1, or M-3

9- Do I have to pay the SEVIS I-901 fee if I already paid it and my visa was denied?

You do not have to pay the SEVIS I-901 fee again if you:

- Reapply for a student visa within 12 months of the initial denial if the original application was for a student visa

- Reapply for an exchange visitor visa within 12 months of the initial denial if the original application and the reapplication are for the same exchange visitor category.

10- What if I am a returning to the United States to continue my studies?

Continuing students do not have to pay the SEVIS I-901 fee when returning to United States or applying for a visa to return to the United States after:

- An absence of less than five months to continue the same program of study
- Completing [authorized overseas study](#) as part of the current program (this absence may exceed five months)

11- What if I am transferring to a different school?

You do not have to pay the SEVIS I-901 fee if you transfer between approved schools at the same educational level. If you are an F-1 student your I-20 will have *Initial attendance at this school* in block 3, but your SEVIS records will show that you have maintained your status and are continuing your education. It will be helpful if you ask your DSO on campus to put *Continuing student – transfer* in the remarks (block 9). This will help prevent issues with visa issuance, reentry into the United States and fee payment.

12-What if I am changing my educational level?

You do not have to pay the SEVIS I-901 fee if you are an F-1 who is changing educational levels. Examples are:

- You graduated from high school and are going directly into college
- You received your Master’s degree and going directly into a doctoral program

13- How much is the SEVIS I-901 fee?

For students (F-1, F-3, M-1 or M-3)	\$200
For exchange visitors (J-1)	\$180

14- Do I need to pay the fee before I receive a Form I-20 or DS-2019?

No, you must have a Form I-20 or DS-2019 before you pay the fee.

15- Do I pay the fee for every Form I-20 or DS-2019 I receive?

No. If you receive acceptance packages from several schools or Exchange Visitor Program Sponsors, please select a school or program and use that Form I-20 or DS-2019 to pay the SEVIS I-901 fee.

We highly recommend that you pay the SEVIS I-901 fee using the form from the sponsor or school you will attend. Fee payment is made for a specific SEVIS ID number. Each Form I-20 or DS-Form DS-2019 has a SEVIS ID number. All SEVIS ID numbers start with the letter *N*.

On the Form I-20, the number is on the top right hand side of the first page under the words Student’s Copy and above the barcode.

On the DS-2019, the number is on the top right hand side of the page in the block about the barcode

16- Do I have to pay the fee every time I apply for a student or exchange visitor visa?

Not necessarily. If you are a continuing student or continuing to participate in the same exchange visitor program and you have continued to maintain your status, you do not need to pay the SEVIS I-901 fee before applying for a new visa

17.- Do spouses and minor children of students and exchange visitors pay the SEVIS I-901 fee?

No. Spouses and minor child of students and exchange visitors (F-2, M-2 or J-2 nonimmigrants) do not have to pay the SEVIS I-901 fee. However, if the spouse or minor child wishes to change status to F-1, M-1, or J-1, he or she must pay the SEVIS I-901 fee before filing a change of status application.

18.- If I participated in a short-term program and then decide to participate in another short-term program, do I have to pay the fee again?

Yes. If you complete a program and then apply for another program – even if it is from the same exchange visitor program sponsor - you must pay the SEVIS I-901 fee. You must pay the fee every time you start a new program.

19.-Can you give me a general overview of the SEVIS I-901 fee payment process?

In general, you need to:

Either be currently enrolled in an approved school or exchange visitor program or have been accepted into one. You will need a Form I-20 or DS-2019.

Pay the fee in time to have it processed before a consular or DHS official must make a decision about your visa, entry into the United States or other application where the fee is required

20.- How do I fill the Form I-901?

You will need to fill in a Form I-901 with information from your Form I-20 or DS-2019 and pay the required fee.

You can fill in the Form I-901 online at www.fmjfee.com or send a [paper version](#) to:

By Mail

I-901 Student/Exchange Visitor Processing Fee
P.O. Box 970020
St. Louis, MO 63197-0020
United States

By Courier (to expedite delivery to SEVP)

I-901 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)

If you have Internet access, completing the form online will help ensure that you provide all the information in the correct format. This helps speed processing.

21.- How can I pay the SEVIS fee? What are my options?

You can pay your fee by credit or debit card if you are submitting your form online. If you pay by credit or debit card, you should print out a receipt if you need one immediately and cannot wait to receive a receipt through the mail.

You can pay by international money order or check drawn on a financial institution in the United States and payable in United States currency. Checks are accepted subject to collection. If the bank on which it is drawn does not honor the check, you will be charged a \$35 fee.

If you fill in the Form I-901 online and choose the option to pay by check or money order, you will be able to print a payment coupon. There is a control number on the top of the coupon. Write the control number, your name and your SEVIS ID number on your check or money order and attach the coupon.

If you use a paper Form I-901, write your SEVIS ID number and name on your check or money order and attach the form before sending it in.

22.- What credit and debit cards are accepted?

SEVP accepts payment by:

- Visa, MasterCard or American Express credit cards
- Debit cards (also known as check cards) that have the Visa or MasterCard logo

Credit or debit cards can only be used when paying the SEVIS I-901 fee and completing the Form I-901 online at www.fmjfee.com.

23.- What documents do I need to fill in my Form I-901?

You need the information from your Form I-20 or DS-2019 to fill out the Form I-901. You do not need to send a copy with the Form I-901

24.- How do I find the SEVIS ID number on my Form I-20 or DS-2019?

All SEVIS ID numbers start with the letter *N*.

On the Form I-20, the number is on the top right hand side of the first page under the words *Student's Copy* and above the barcode.

On the DS-2019, the number is on the top right hand side of the page in the box above the barcode.

25.- How do I find the date of issuance on my Form I-20 or DS-2019?

The date of issuance is in block 10 on the Form I-20. It is in block 7 on the Form DS-2019.

26.- What is the fastest way to pay the SEVIS I-901 fee?

Using the Internet to fill in the Form I-901 at www.fmjfee.com and paying by credit card is the fastest way to pay the SEVIS I-901 fee. You can print a receipt immediately.

27.- Will I need my SEVIS I-901 fee receipt after I have my visa?

Yes. You may need the receipt to show that you paid the fee.

Keep your SEVIS I-901 fee receipt until you complete your exchange visitor program or receive your final degree

28.- What do I do when I arrive at the college or university in the U.S. as it relates to SEVIS?

Once you arrive on campus, you should report immediately to the office that is responsible for assisting international students and scholars. It may be called the Office of International Services, the Office of International Education, the International Programs Office, or some other similar name. Whatever the name, however, that office can help you with any questions or concerns you may have about immigration rules and regulations. Moreover, that office must report your arrival within the SEVIS system. If this report is not submitted, you may be considered to be in violation of your status in the United States, so be sure to make the international student office one of your first stops on campus.

29.- Where can I find out more information about the SEVIS I-901 fee?

For more information see the FAQ on <http://www.ice.gov/sevis>