



## Office of Global Engagement

# New J-1 SEVIS Fee Requirement

Beginning October 27, 2008, a new United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS) I-901 SEVIS fee goes into effect. This rule requires certain J-1 Exchange Visitor students and scholars to pay a onetime fee of \$200<sup>1</sup> to supplement the administration and maintenance costs of the Student and Exchange Information System (SEVIS). The following information specifically addresses fee issues for J-1 students.

### Exchange Visitors NOT Required to Pay the SEVIS Fee

- Continuing J-1s: No SEVIS fee is due for the J-1 students or scholars whose program began *before* 10/27/2008 who maintains that status and whose initial DS.2019 for the current program was issued *before* 10/27/2008.
- J-1s Sponsored by the U.S. Federal Government: No SEVIS fee is due for a J-1 exchange visitor who is coming to the U.S. as a participant in an exchange visitor program sponsored by the U.S. federal government, i.e. Fulbright.
- J-1 Dependents Visas: J-1 dependents (J-2s) are not required to pay a separate SEVIS fee in order to obtain J-2 status or during the time the J-2 remains in that status.

### Exchange Visitors who ARE Required to Pay the SEVIS Fee

- An individual applying for a J-1 visa for initial participation in a program
- An individual in the U.S. applying for a change of status to J-1
- An exchange visitor who is in a U.S. government sponsored program and who is transferring to a non-U.S. government sponsored program.
- An exchange visitor applying for a change of category, i.e. J-1 student to J-1 researcher.
- An exchange visitor applying for reinstatement for a substantive violation.

### Time of Payment of SEVIS Fee

All J-2 students or scholars who are subject to payment of the SEVIS fee must remit the fee directly to DHS by completing the I-901 form electronically using the internet or mail as follows:

Applying for the J-1 Visa Abroad: The SEVIS fee should be processed by DHS at least *7 business days* prior to the consular interview. *Fees will NOT be payable at the consulate.*

1. Receive a DS-2019 form from the International Students and Scholars (ISS).
2. Make visa appointment with U.S. Embassy/Consulate.
3. Submit SEVIS fee payment in time to allow DHS to process payment at least *7 days* prior to visa interview.
4. Print SEVIS fee payment receipt from the internet *or* wait to receive I-797 form from DHS visa mail *and* submit receipt with visa application.

Entering U.S. by Individuals Exempt from the Visa Requirements: The SEVIS fee should be processed at least *7 business days* prior to applying for admission at a

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<sup>1</sup> The fee for some exchange visitor categories is \$45. Those categories are 1) summer work/travel program, 2) au pair program, and 3) camp counselor program.

U.S. port of entry by non-immigrants who are exempt from the visa requirement, i.e. citizens from Canada, Bermuda, and other island countries listed in 8 CFR 212.1.

Change of J-1 Category: A J-1 student or scholar applying for a change of category within the U.S., i.e. J-1 student to J-1 research scholar, must pay the SEVIS fee prior to the Exchange Visitor Program approving a change of category.

Changing Status to J-1: A non-immigrant in the U.S. seeking a change of status to J-1 student or scholar must pay the SEVIS fee prior to submitting the application to USCIS for change of non-immigrant status.

Applying for Reinstatement: A J-1 student or scholar who is applying for reinstatement after substantive violation or who has been out of program status for longer than 120 days, but less than 270 days during the course of their program, must pay the SEVIS fee prior to applying to the Exchange Visitor Program for reinstatement to J-1 status.

*Note: SEVIS fees are transferable. If an applicant pays the SEVIS fee in connection with a previously issued DS-2019/SEVIS ID number other than the one associated with the document that s/he actually uses to apply for a benefit (new J-1 visa, change of status, reinstatement), it is strongly recommended that s/he submit a copy of the DS-2019 that is connected to the paid SEVIS fee, in addition to the original current DS-2019.*

**Circumstances Where No New Fee is Required:** J-1 students and scholars who have previously paid the SEVIS fee prior to obtaining his or her current status are not required to pay a new SEVIS fee in connection with:

1. An application for an extension of stay in the current program.
2. An application to transfer between programs in the same exchange visitor category where no differential fee exists, i.e. transfer between two non-fee-exempt exchange visitor programs or transfer between two fee-exempt exchange visitor programs.
3. A re-application for a J-1 visa following denial of visa application by consular officer, as long as the re-application occurs within 12 months of the original denial notice.
4. A motion to re-open a change of status application which was previously denied for reasons other than failure to pay the SEVIS fee, as long as the motion occurs within 12 months of the original denial notice.

#### **Procedures for Payment of the SEVIS Fee**

1. Online submission for the I-901 form ([www.fmjfee.com](http://www.fmjfee.com)) to DHS using credit card (Visa, MasterCard, or American Express accepted).
2. Mail-in submission of I-901 form to DHS address on form along with the \$180 SEVIS fee paid by check, money order, or foreign draft on a financial institution in the U.S. and payable in U.S. currency.

Another person (friend or family) can make the payment for an exchange visitor by one of the two methods above.

**Receipts**

DHS will issue and mail an official paper receipt (I-797) acknowledging every payment regardless of payment method. Express delivery service for the I-798 receipt may be requested for an additional cost. Anyone who submits an individual fee electronically will be able to print out an electronic receipt immediately at the time of payment for use in advance of the mail delivery of the official paper receipt.

Although SEVIS fee payments will be recorded by DHS in the J-1 students' and scholars' SEVIS records and will eventually be used by government officials to document the SEVIS fee payment, it is recommended that a SEVIS fee receipt be used to request any status-related benefit, i.e. application for visa, admissions at U.S. port of entry, application to change status.

*Note: DHS will not refund the SEVIS fee if J-1 students and scholars are not granted a visa or choose not to come to the U.S. after their visas are granted.*