NEW SEVIS FEE REQUIREMENT: F-1 STUDENTS

Beginning September 1, 2004, a new United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS) rule goes into effect. This rule requires F-1 and J-1 visa applicants (including applicants for the I-20) to pay a one-time fee of $100 to supplement the administration and maintenance costs of the Student and Exchange Information System (SEVIS). The following information specifically addresses fee issues for F-1 students.

Who pays the SEVIS fee?
Prospective students with “initial attendance” I-20s dated on or after 9/1/2004 who are applying for an “initial” F-1 visa from outside the US.

When do I pay the SEVIS fee?
The fee must be paid at least 3 business days prior to applying for your visa, or applying for admission at a US port-of-entry for those exempt from the visa requirement. The fee must be paid prior to submission of a change of status petition or reinstatement application.

Can I pay the SEVIS fee at a university, consulate or port of entry?
No. At this time the SEVIS fee can only be processed by the Department of Homeland Security via mail or the Internet.

How do I pay the fee?
The fee can be paid to the DHS online or by mail and must be accompanied by a Form I-901. It can be paid by you or by a third party, inside or outside the US.

To Pay Online
2. Complete the form online and supply the necessary Visa, MasterCard or American Express information. *Be sure to write your name exactly as it appears on your I-20 form.
3. Print a copy of the online receipt.
4. Be sure to make copies of your receipt, and keep it with your other important immigration documents.

To Pay By Mail
1. Obtain a Form I-901 “Fee Remittance for Certain F, J, and M Non-immigrants.”
   • Download the form from http://www.FMJfee.com
   • 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 I-20 form.
3. Prepare a check, international money order or foreign draft (drawn on US banks only¹) in the amount of $100 USD, made payable to “The Department of Homeland Security”
4. Mail the completed 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

Will the DHS keep a record of my 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 fee receipt (form I-797) to use as needed.
What do I need to do to submit an I-20 application for an F-1 visa?

- Obtain the appropriate Form I-20 from a DHS-approved school.
- Pay the SEVIS fee by mail or online.
- Make a copy of the I-797 (mail) or computer receipt (online) for your records.
- Students who are exempt from visa requirements, such as Canadians, should take a copy of the SEVIS fee receipt to present at the port of entry with the appropriate I-20. It will not be possible to pay the fee at the port of entry.

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.

For more information regarding the new SEVIS fee requirement or other visa-related matters, contact our International Outreach Office at:

University of Washington
English Language Programs
Box 354232
Seattle, WA 98195 U.S.A.

Phone: (206) 543-6242
Fax: (206) 685-9572
e-mail: aid@u.washington.edu

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: 1) 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