SEVIS Fee Information for UW-Madison J-1 Scholars

What is it?
The SEVIS fee is mandated by U.S. federal law. The law requires students and Exchange Visitors in F-1, M-1 and J-1 status to pay a fee to fund the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System, or SEVIS. Congress allocated funds for the startup of the program, but the participants are required to fund the on-going costs of running the program. Check the SEVIS website for the most current fee amounts. The fee is not refundable if the visa is denied or the applicant decides not to enter the U.S. as an Exchange Visitor. Dependents are not subject to the fee, just the primary visitor. This fee is not imposed by UW-Madison, nor is the university involved in collecting the fee. This is a federal government program. The fee is separate from and in addition to the visa application fee that must be paid to the Department of State for visa issuance.

Who must pay?
- All Exchange Visitors issued a form DS-2019 dated on or after 1 September 2004 to be used for initial entry in J-1 status. This applies to those who must apply for a visa at a U.S. consulate, as well as Canadians who are visa exempt. It also applies to Short Term Scholars, no matter how short the duration of their stay.
- Anyone applying for a change of status to J-1 within the U.S.
- Anyone re-applying for a J-1 visa more than 12 months after the initial visa was denied.
- Anyone applying for reinstatement to J-1 status after a substantial violation.
- Any J-1 Exchange Visitor applying for a change of category.

Who is exempt from the fee?
- J-2 dependents, but they must have proof that the J-1 paid the fee.
- J-1 scholars continuing a program within the same category with the same sponsor.
- J-1 scholars applying for a new visa to return to the same program.
- J-1 scholars applying for a program extension within the same category.
- J-1 scholars applying for a transfer from one program to another, unless the change is from a fee exempt government program to a non-exempt program.
- J-1 scholars requesting reinstatement after a minor offense.
- J-1 scholars who paid the fee and whose visa was denied and who are applying again for the visa within 12 months of having paid the fee.

How must payment be made?
Exchange Visitors must complete form I-901 and send payment to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) along with the form. Payment can be made on-line at: http://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901/index.htm, by check via mail, or through Western Union Quick Pay.

When must payment be made?
DHS must receive the payment at least three business days prior to the prospective Exchange Visitor applying for the J-1 visa at a U.S. consulate, or in the case of Canadians, prior to them applying for entry at a U.S. port of entry.

Update 9/12/2008
How will I know if DHS received my payment?
DHS will issue an official receipt, which will be mailed to the address on the form I-901. If payment is made by credit card via the internet, an electronic receipt is issued immediately, and a paper receipt will be mailed. If payment was made through Western Union Quick Pay, the Western Union receipt serves as immediate proof of payment for purposes of a visa interview at a U.S. consulate or for admission at a U.S. port of entry.

How do I complete form I-901?
Carefully read and follow the DHS instructions, and refer to the International Faculty and Staff Services handout “Completing and filing form I-901 – Tips for UW-Madison J-1 Scholars.”

For detailed information from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, see: http://www.ice.gov/sevis/faq.htm.

For additional information and/or assistance, contact:
International Faculty and Staff Services
21 North Park Street, Suite 5101
Madison, WI 53715
Phone: 608-265-2257
Fax: 608-265-6547
www.ohr.wisc.edu/ifss/index.htm

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