



## BEFORE YOU APPLY FOR A J-1 EXCHANGE VISITOR VISA

### Paying the Required Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) Fee

The Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) is the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) central computerized system for maintaining and managing data for exchange visitors (J-1) and their dependents (J-2) during their stay in the United States. Your DS-2019 form was created by DHS through the SEVIS system and will be required for U.S. entry along with your J-1 visa.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has implemented a SEVIS fee of \$220 for all new J-1 Exchange Visitor applicants. Following are the requirements for the SEVIS fee as it pertains to visiting scholars applying for the J-1 visa status:

**Note: the SEVIS fee is separate and in addition to the Department of State's visa application fee, which has a different payment process.**

#### Individuals Who Must Pay the SEVIS Fee

- Scholars seeking an **initial** J-1 visa from a U.S. consulate for an initial program at UCSB.
- Canadian scholars seeking admission at a port-of-entry to begin an initial program at UCSB. (Canadians are exempt from applying for a visa. However, they must pay the SEVIS fee before going to the border to enter the U.S.)
- Non-immigrant scholars in a different visa status who are applying for a *change of status* to J-1.
- J-1 visa holders applying for a *change of category* (such as from Student to Researcher). Note: a change between Professor and Researcher Scholar does not count.
- A J-1 visa holder applying for *reinstatement* after a substantive violation, or one who has been out of status for more than 120 days but less than 270 days.
- A scholar who is Transferring from a J-1 Fulbright program to J-1 status at UCSB.

#### Individuals Exempt from the SEVIS Fee

- J-2 dependents.
- J-1 scholars transferring between programs (e.g. universities) in the same category (such as Professor or Researcher).
- A non-immigrant scholar who paid an initial SEVIS fee when applying for a J-1 visa, was denied a visa, and is applying again for a visa in the same exchange visitor category within 12 months of the initial denial.

#### When the SEVIS Fee Must Be Paid

- Scholars needing a visa to enter the U.S. and who are required to pay the SEVIS fee should do so **before** going to the U.S. embassy or consulate for their view interview.
- Scholars who are citizens of Canada and who are required to pay the SEVIS fee to apply for J-1 status, must pay the SEVIS fee **before** entering the U.S. at a port-of entry.
- Non-immigrants currently in the U.S. who apply for exchange visitor status must pay the fee **before** filing their change of status application.

#### Payment Process

- The payment form is the I-901 "**Fee Remittance for Certain F, J, and M Nonimmigrants**", and can be submitted online or by mail.

- The DS-2019 that will be used for the visa application will be needed in order to complete the I-901 form.
- The SEVIS fee can be paid by the scholar **or** any third party including family, friends and sponsors. If a third-party is paying the SEVIS fee, make sure they have a copy of your DS-2019 in order to complete the I-901 form.

#### To Pay Online

1. The I-901 form is available at **www.FMJfee.com**
2. Complete the form, being certain to write the scholar's name *exactly* as it appears on the DS-2019 form.
3. The online receipt is available immediately and should be printed.
4. Keep a copy of the receipt because you may be requested to present it at any time.

#### To Pay by Western Union Quick Pay Service (if available in your local area)

1. Instructions on the Western Union payment can be found at the website [http://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901/wu\\_instr.htm](http://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901/wu_instr.htm). Take these instructions with you to your local Western Union since they will not have them.
2. A receipt verifying the payment of the SEVIS fee can be immediately issued to you by the Western Union office.

#### To Pay By Mail

1. Download the I-901 form from **www.FMJfee.com**
2. Complete the form being certain to write the scholar's name exactly as it appears on the DS-2019 form.
3. Enclose a check or money order, drawn from a U.S. bank, for \$220 U.S. dollars. Many banks located outside the United States are able to issue checks or money orders that are drawn on a U.S. bank.
4. Keep a copy of your receipt (Form I-797) that will be mailed to you within three (3) days of processing the fee.

#### **Timing of Fee Payment**

- SEVIS requires that the fee payment must be processed at least three (3) business days prior to the date upon which a scholar reports to the consulate for the visa interview (or a Canadian goes to the port-of-entry at the border). UCSB's Office of International Students and Scholars (OISS) recommends payment of the fee at least a week to 10 business days before the visa interview (or border crossing for Canadians).
- Scholars should be able to schedule a visa interview before payment of the SEVIS fee. However, a visa will not be granted at the time of the visa interview if the visa officer cannot find a record of the SEVIS fee payment in the consular database. Information about visa wait times for a given embassy or consulate is available at <http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/en/general/wait-times.html/>

#### **Transferability of SEVIS Fee**

A fee payment made on one SEVIS ID number (i.e. DS-2019 form) can be applied to another SEVIS ID number issued to the same individual. The scholar will need to show proof of the SEVIS ID number connected to the SEVIS fee – i.e. the unused DS-2019. This situation might develop if a scholar possesses more than one DS-2019 (perhaps from different universities) and pays the fee using one DS-2019 but decides to apply for a visa using a different DS-2019. The scholar will not have to pay a second SEVIS fee if they can show the DS-2019 that they are not going to use.