

How to pay the SEVIS FEE

I-901 SEVIS Fee for F and J Nonimmigrant Students and Exchange Visitors

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has mandated a fee to cover the costs of the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP).

F-1 & J-1 students are issued either a Form I-20 or Form DS-2019 which has their SCHOOL CODE/ PROGRAM CODE for UIW and their unique SEVIS ID starting with N00. You are required to pay the fee because it is used to link your Form I-20 or Form DS-2019 with the online Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS). Payment of the I-901 fee will be recorded and tracked in SEVIS, the web-based system for collecting, maintaining, and managing information about F-1 & J-1 students in the United States.

Fee Prices:

For students (F-1) with Form I-20:	\$200 USD
For exchange visitors (J-1) with Form DS-2019:	\$180 USD

Spouses & dependent children (F-2) or (J-2) **do not** pay this fee.

When do prospective students or exchange visitors pay the SEVIS fee?

- ⌘ Applicants who require a visa to enter the United States must pay the SEVIS fee before going to the U.S. embassy or consulate for their visa interviews.
- ⌘ Applicants who are citizens of Canada, Bermuda, Bahamas and residents of certain other islands in the Caribbean wishing to apply for F-1 or J-1 status at a Port of Entry into the United States must pay the SEVIS fee before appearing at the Port of Entry.
- ⌘ Nonimmigrants currently in the United States on another valid visa status who apply for student or exchange visitor status must pay the fee prior to filing their change of status application.

How is the fee paid?

- ⌘ www.FMJfee.com – by using a credit or debit card and completing Form I-901 online
- ⌘ 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

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 checking SEVIS. To allow for adequate processing time, the fee must be paid:
 - At least 3 business days prior to the visa interview date if paying electronically OR at least 15 business days prior to the scheduled visa interview if submitting payment through regular mail.

How will the payment be verified?

- ⌘ The payment will be recorded in the SEVIS system. However, it is recommended that the paper I-797 or Internet-generated receipt be brought to the visa interview.
- ⌘ Individuals who file electronically will be able to print an electronic receipt immediately at the time of payment and do not need to request mailing.
- ⌘ Individuals, who are paying by mail, may request Express delivery service for the I-797 receipts at an additional cost of approximately \$35 (fee subject to change).

FAQs for Student Visa Interview

1. Question: How should I prepare for my visa interview?

The best way to prepare for your interview is by relaxing and just being yourself! The large majority of student visa applicants get visas. Do not memorize your presentation or rely on stories from others about what they think you should say and how you should say it. Simply be prepared to tell about yourself, and why you wish to study in the United States.

2. Question: My brother or uncle will be sponsoring my education. Will this affect my application?

The Consulate understands that extended families are often a source of financial support. What is important is that your sponsor should be able to demonstrate that he/she has sufficient liquid funds to pay for the first year of tuition and access to sufficient funds for the following years.

3. Question: My dad is taking out a loan to pay for my education. Will this affect my application?

Taking out a loan will not affect your application, as long as you can show that you and your family can reliably be expected to repay the loan on its terms. Many American students also take out student loans. Remember, it is important that all students plan to return to their country after completing their studies.

4. Question: The school that accepted me is not an Ivy League school or a very well-known university. Will this affect my interview?

We are not looking for specific institutions, and we do not consider university rankings; but you should be able to explain why you chose a particular college, university, or program of study.

5. Question: Will my application be refused if my GRE or TOEFL scores are low?

Low test scores will not necessarily negatively affect your application. If a university has accepted you, that is generally enough. However, if your I-20 indicates that you are proficient in English, then answer the consular officer's questions in English.

6. Question: My I-20/ DS-2019 says that I do not have a scholarship, will I be denied because of this?

No, most students come to the U.S. do not receive scholarships. Just make sure you have all the personal financial documents listed on the U.S. Consulate website. Documents **cannot** be photo copies, but must be originals with original pen signatures.

7. Question: Is it true that I need to wear a suit on the day of the interview?

That is entirely untrue. As long as you are a bona fide student intending to study in the U.S. and have a residence abroad that you intend to return to after completing your studies, your choice of clothing will not affect the outcome of your interview.

8. Question: My sister is in the U.S., will that affect my chances?

Having family in the U.S. does not necessarily signify that you have the intent to remain in the U.S. While it is important that you accurately document all family members in the U.S. on your application, we are considering your intention to return to your home country at the conclusion of your studies and your ability to finance the education.

9. Question: What if my visa is denied?

Email Amy at adestefa@uiwtx.edu as soon as you find out your visa application has been denied. If denied will receive a "Denial letter" or "Denial Brochure" from the consulate. Email the letter to our office and we will help you understand why you were denied and how you should try again.

US-VISIT:

US-VISIT is a comprehensive entry-exit registration system at all international airports throughout the United States, pre-clearance inspection facilities and designated seaports servicing cruise ships.

All F-1 & J-1 students and their dependents will need to provide a scan of two index fingerprints and a digital photograph. Race, national origin, and religion **are not** factors in the US-VISIT program. **Anyone could be subject to additional scrutiny** and should politely follow directions of the Custom and Borderer Protection Officer if additional information regarding itinerary, length of stay, or other security questions is required.

U.S. Port of Entry Information

Before you travel

- ⌘ If you are an initial student or exchange visitor entering to attend school for the first time, you cannot enter the United States more than 30 days before the program start date indicated on your I-20/DS-2019.
- ⌘ Before leaving your country, confirm that your passport and visa are still valid for entry in the United States. The passport should be valid for at least six months beyond the date of your expected stay.
- ⌘ Also, check to see that your visa accurately reflects your correct visa classification.
- ⌘ When you receive your nonimmigrant visa at a U.S. embassy or consulate, the consular officer will seal your immigration documents in an envelope and attach it to your passport. You should NOT open this envelope! The Customs and Border Protection Officer at the U.S. port of entry will open the envelope.
- ⌘ **BE sure to read this Port of Entry Information Sheet.**

When you travel

Do not check these documents in your baggage! If your baggage is lost or delayed, you will not be able to show the documents to the Customs and Border Protection Officer and, as a result, may not be able to enter the United States. **Here are the documents you should carry with you onto the plane:**

- ⌘ **Passport with F-1 or J-1 visa stamp**
- ⌘ **SEVIS Form I-20 or DS-2019 and Evidence of financial resources**
- ⌘ **Evidence of Student/Exchange Visitor Status: school acceptance letter, proof of financials, proof of enrollment in classes (if available)**
- ⌘ **Name and contact information for the UIW International Student Office (see acceptance letter) and writing instrument (pen)**

If you are traveling by aircraft, the flight attendants on board will distribute CF-6059 Customs Declaration Forms and I-94 Arrival-Departure Record Forms for immigration, before you land at your initial point of entry in the United States. Complete these forms while you are on the aircraft and submit them to the appropriate Customs and Border Protection Officer upon your arrival. **If you do not understand a form, ask the flight attendant for assistance.** Upon arrival at the port of entry, proceed to the terminal area for arriving passengers for inspection at one of the Department of Homeland Security stations. As you approach the inspection station, have your: **passport, SEVIS I-20 or DS-2019, Form I-94 Arrival-Departure Record, and CF-6059 Customs Declaration Form** available for presentation to the Customs and Border Protection Officer. The form I-94 should reflect the address where you will reside: **On Campus** – University of the Incarnate Word 4301 Broadway St. San Antonio, TX 78209 or **Off Campus:** Address of Hotel or Home you staying in.

If you are entering through a land or designated sea port, the Customs and Border Protection Officer will provide the necessary CF-6059 Customs Declaration Forms and I-94 Arrival-Departure Record Forms at the port of entry. **If you do not understand a form, ask the Customs and Border Protection Officer for assistance.** Like all entering visitors, you will be asked to state the reason you wish to enter the United States. You will also be asked to provide information about your final destination. **It is important that you tell the Customs and Border Protection Officer that you will be a student or exchange visitor.** Be prepared to include the name or address of UIW. Once your inspection is complete, the inspecting officer will: **Stamp your SEVIS Form for the duration of status for F and J visa holders and Stamp the I-94 and staple it in the passport.**

Secondary Inspection: Whether traveling by sea, land or air, if your information cannot be automatically verified by the inspector **or** you do not have all the required documentation, you may be directed to an interview area known as “secondary inspection.” Secondary inspection allows inspectors to conduct additional research in order to verify information. Verifications are done apart from the primary inspection lines so that an individual case will not cause delays for other arriving passengers.

In the case your admission/participation needs to be verified, **we strongly advise** that you have readily available the **name and phone number of our UIW International Student Office, 210.805.5705.** In the event you arrive during non-business hours (evenings, weekends, holidays), your phone call will be forwarded to the UIW Campus Police, they will then contact our office. ***Failure to provide proper documentation and to comply with entry/exit procedures is cause to refuse the student or exchange visitor admission into the United States.*** In limited circumstances, if a student is mostly, but not fully in compliance, he/she may be issued a Form I-515A “Notice to Student or Exchange Visitor”. This form authorizes temporary admission into the United States and requires the student or exchange visitor to immediately bring the form to **UIW International Student Office.** Noncompliance with the directions contained on these forms may result in being removed from the U.S.

The Day You Arrive in San Antonio:

F-1 Students should report to the International Student Office immediately upon arrival in the U.S. **J-1 Exchange Visitors** should report to the International Student Office before their “Program Begin Date” listed on their DS-2019, for validation and program participation.