

MANDATORY SEVIS FEE

International students and exchange visitors seeking to study in the United States will now be able to monitor the status of their Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) fee payments online, officials with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) announced today.

A newly upgraded Web site dedicated to the SEVIS I-901 Fee (<http://www.fmjfee.com>) allows students and exchange visitors to verify online if ICE has received their SEVIS I-901 fee payment and when the official receipt for the payment was issued. Previously, this information could only be obtained by contacting the SEVIS program office directly. The enhanced Web site is the latest improvement to provide enhanced convenience and customer service to participants in the SEVIS program.

SEVIS, administered by ICE within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), is an Internet-based system for maintaining information on foreign students and exchange visitors in the United States. As of February 2005, nearly 753,000 students and exchange visitors studying in the United States were registered in the system, along with more than 115,700 of their dependents.

Students and exchange visitors from abroad who register with the SEVIS program are required to pay the appropriate fee – in most cases, \$100 – prior to obtaining their visas. The fee applies to F, J and M non-immigrant visa classifications.

“Over the last two years, ICE has worked to improve SEVIS by providing more convenient options and improved customer service to all of the program’s stakeholders,” said Susan Geary, Acting Director of ICE’s Student and Exchange Visitor Program. “We’ll continue to enhance the program to make the SEVIS program more user-friendly and accessible. Our goal is to ensure that the nation’s immigration system is as secure as possible while facilitating the entry of international students and exchange visitors into the United States.”

The SEVIS fee was mandated by Congress and is used to cover the costs of maintaining the program and to provide assistance and technical support for SEVIS users. The fee can be paid on the Web, by mail and at Western Union offices that offer the Quick Pay™ service – currently in more than 130 nations nationwide.

The SEVIS I-901 Web site at <http://www.fmjfee.com> has emerged as a popular avenue for fee payment, with approximately 77 percent of all fee payments being made through the Web site.

The new capabilities on the Web site will help assure students and exchange visitors that their fee payment has been received and provide them with an estimate as to when they can reasonably expect the consular office to be able to independently verify the SEVIS fee payment in their system.

Additional help links on the site cover topics such as identifying who is required to pay the fee, the options for paying the fee, how a third party can pay the fee for someone else, and how to obtain further assistance.

For more information, please contact the Office of International Student Services at 516.877.4990.