



Using Your I-20: How to Pay the SEVIS Fee and Apply for Your F-1 Visa

Your Santa Monica College I-20 is included in this packet. The U.S. Government database SEVIS (Student Exchange Visitor Information System), has generated your I-20. In the upper right hand corner of your I-20 you will see your unique SEVIS number, which begins with the letter "N".

All students receiving a new initial I-20 must pay the SEVIS fee of \$350 online. Please see fee payment instructions below. Generally, students will not have to pay the fee again as long as they maintain their F-1 status.

Who needs to pay the SEVIS fee:

- An alien seeking an "initial" F-1 visa from a U.S. Embassy or Consulate abroad.
- Canadian citizens who receive their F-1 entry stamp at the border (see below).
- An alien seeking a change of status to F-1 within the U.S.
- A student who is re-entering the U.S. with an "initial" I-20 in order to reinstate their status.

How to pay the SEVIS fee:

- Visit the SEVP I-901 processing website at www.FMJfee.com
- Complete the Form I-901 application.
- Payment options: credit card, check, money order or Western Union Quick Pay.
- Print proof of your payment from the website. A formal receipt (Form I-797) will be mailed to you.
- Bring proof of payment with you to the U.S. Embassy or Consulate when you apply for your visa. You need to pay the fee at least 3 days prior to your visa interview.
- Bring proof of payment with you when you are traveling into the U.S.

How to apply for an initial F-1 visa:

- You should apply for your F-1 visa now. The consulate can issue your visa up to 4 months before the start of classes.
- Visit the U.S. Department of State website at <http://travel.state.gov>
 - Complete the Nonimmigrant Visa Application (Form DS-160) online.
 - You will upload your photo while completing the online application.
 - Print the application confirmation page to take to your visa interview.
 - The visa application fee is \$160.00 and any applicable Issuance fee (based on nationality).
- Visit the website of the U.S. Embassy or Consulate where you will apply for the visa to learn about how to make an appointment and what required documentation you will need for your interview.

For students with a valid F-1 visa:

- If you have a current, valid F-1 visa in your passport and have been absent from the U.S. for less than 5 months, you can re-enter the U.S. on that visa. You do not need to apply for another visa. You only need to pay the SEVIS fee of \$200 for the new I-20 that you received from SMC.

Canadian citizens:

- Canadian citizens are not required to have an F-1 visa to enter the U.S.
- You will need to pay the SEVIS fee of \$350 and travel with proof of the SEVIS fee payment.
- You will also need to travel with proof of financial support and your passport must be valid for at least 6 months from the date you enter the U.S.
- You will receive an entry stamp in your passport with the date you enter, along with "F-1" and "D/S".