



SEVP Final Fee Rule

Frequently Asked Questions

On May 23, 2019, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) [published](#) a final rule to adjust fees charged by the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) to international students, exchange visitors and SEVP-certified schools. The new and increased fees took effect June 24, 2019. Below are frequently asked questions about the new fee rule.

1. What new fees did DHS introduce?

DHS introduced the following new fees:

- A \$1,250 fee for SEVP-certified schools filing a petition for recertification.
- A \$675 fee when schools file the Form I-290B, “Notice of Appeal or Motion.”
- DHS maintained the \$655 fee for an initial school site visit but now also charges this fee when a SEVP-certified school changes its physical location or adds a new physical location or campus to its Form I-17, “Petition for Approval of School for Attendance by Nonimmigrant Student.”

2. What current fees increased?

DHS implemented an increase in the following fees:

- The I-901 Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) Fee for F and M international students increased from \$200 to \$350.
- DHS maintained the \$35 I-901 SEVIS Fee for J exchange visitors in the au pair, camp counselor, and summer work or travel program participant categories, but increase the full I-901 SEVIS Fee for other J exchange visitors from \$180 to \$220.
- The SEVP school certification petition fee for initial certification increased from \$1,700 to \$3,000.

3. Why are the increases happening now?

SEVP increased fees because the program is funded entirely by fees charged to international students and SEVP-certified schools. Although the program’s fees have not changed since 2008, SEVP’s operating costs have increased because of inflation, expanded program operations and SEVIS enhancements.

SEVP anticipated that if the program continued to operate at the previous fee levels, it would experience an average annual shortfall of \$68.9 million beginning in 2019. The increase eliminates this risk and allows SEVP to fully fund program operations.

4. Why does SEVP have the authority to increase fees?

The Secretary of DHS is specifically authorized to collect fees for SEVP from prospective F and M students and J exchange visitors, subject to certain limits for certain J-1 exchange students. 8 U.S.C. 1372(e)(1). The Secretary is authorized to periodically revise those fees, with certain exceptions, to take into account changes in the overall cost of carrying out the program.



5. What is SEVP responsible for?

SEVP is the Homeland Security Investigations program that administers SEVIS. It ensures that government agencies have essential data related to nonimmigrant students and exchange visitors to preserve national security. SEVP provides approval and oversight to schools authorized to enroll F and M nonimmigrant students and gives guidance to both schools and students about the requirements for maintaining their status.

6. What improvements will the fee increases go toward?

In developing the fee rule, SEVP identified three key program priorities that need additional funds. The fees will continue funding for SEVIS enhancements, increase the number of SEVP adjudication personnel and provide additional oversight of SEVP-certified schools. In return, the increase in funding will help SEVP respond to stakeholder requests to improve the SEVIS user experience and decrease school petition processing times.

7. How did SEVP determine its fees?

By tracing the cost of SEVP's activities such as maintaining SEVIS and certifying schools, SEVP forecasted fee payments to determine an appropriate amount for each fee. In the fee development, DHS balanced the challenge of minimizing the costs to schools and students while securing funding to support SEVP activities.

8. Why don't international students solely bear the cost of funding SEVP?

To preserve national security, it is SEVP's mission to ensure that both students and schools are compliant with all federal regulations. Federal regulation require that both students and schools must pay the allotted fees to support the program's activities and operational costs. In the fee rule development, SEVP worked to establish an equitable distribution of costs between students and schools, minimizing the impact on both students and certified schools.

9. Did SEVP review the comments on the proposed fee rule?

Yes, SEVP reviewed all substantive comments received during the comment period for the proposed rule and responded to those comments in the final rule.

10. When will SEVP increase its fees again?

While there is no exact estimate of when SEVP will increase its fees again, SEVP is required to review its fee structure every two years. Not every biennial review will result in a revision to the fee structure. Since the 2008 fee increase, SEVP has reviewed its fee structure five times and this is the second time the program is seeking to increase its fees.

Should SEVP propose another fee adjustment in the future, please remember that all proposed rules go through an extensive internal drafting and vetting process and must comply with the federal rulemaking process, which gives the public an opportunity to provide comments via the [Federal Register](#).

11. What will my school/students specifically get from the increases?

The fee increases will fund SEVP's continuous efforts to support national security and prevent immigration fraud by maintaining SEVIS, certifying schools to accept nonimmigrant



students, and monitoring certified schools and F, M, and J students for regulatory compliance.

In addition, the new and increased fees will fund SEVIS enhancements. The fees will also fund an increase in adjudication personnel to ensure that SEVP meets the congressional requirement for recertifying or withdrawing all currently certified schools every two years.

12. What is the goal for SEVP to review recertification petitions with the new recertification fee?

Increasing adjudication resources to meet SEVP's current and projected workload in addition to the congressional requirement for recertification are top priorities for the fee adjustments.

13. Why aren't the certification and recertification fees for SEVP-certified schools based on the number of international students that the school enrolls?

SEVP's fees are based on workload within SEVP, such as adjudication of a school's petition. The program's workload is not affected by the number of international students that a school enrolls. However, the program's workload is impacted when a school adds or changes a physical location or adds a campus. SEVP accounts for this impact with the expanded site visit fee.

14. Does SEVP plan to change the certification process with the new fees? If so, how?

New SEVIS functionality as a result of SEVIS enhancements will provide SEVP with enhanced flexibility to adjudicate school certification and exchange visitor sponsor designation updates and applications. Consequently, these improvements will enable SEVP to adjudicate petitions more efficiently. Additionally, SEVP is constantly adjusting the adjudication process to make it more efficient.

15. What happens if my school can't recertify as a result of the new fee or does not want to pay the new recertification fee?

If a school does not file for recertification because it is unable or chooses not to pay the new fee, the school will be considered to have voluntarily withdrawn their certification and will no longer be certified, and therefore [unable](#) to enroll nonimmigrant students. SEVP-certified schools must go through the recertification process every two years to remain certified in order to ensure schools remain in compliance with all regulations when enrolling F and M students.

16. How should SEVP-certified schools pay the new recertification, site visit and Form I-290B fees?

The recertification, site visit and Form I-290B fees must be paid through the federal government's secured [Pay.gov](#) website. SEVP-certified schools may use a bank account (ACH - Automated Clearing House), debit card or credit card to submit an electronic payment on [Pay.gov](#).

17. May schools charge an administrative fee to students to help cover the increase in SEVP costs?

It is at an institution's discretion to charge administrative fees to international students.