OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL SERVICES

University Center for International Studies
University of Pittsburgh

Social Security Numbers (SSN)

In the United States, a Social Security number (SSN) is a nine-digit number issued to U.S. citizens, permanent residents, and temporary (working) residents. The number is issued to an individual by the Social Security Administration. Its primary purpose is to track individuals for taxation purposes.

Social Security numbers are available only to those international students, scholars and employees **who have secured employment in the U.S.** Please review instructions on page 2 about how and where to apply.

If you have previously applied for and been granted an SSN, this number is yours for life. You should not apply for a second number.

Those who are required to file a tax return, but who are not eligible for a Social Security number, may need to apply for an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN).

Although you may be asked to provide an SSN for other services such as banking, utilities, cell phones, etc., it is only required for employment. For purposes other than employment, ask the service provider about acceptable alternative identification numbers.

On-Campus Employment (F-1 and J-1 students)

Students with on-campus employment in F-1 and J-1 status must submit an online request via My OIS to obtain a *Social Security Number letter*. OIS' typical processing time to create the letter is three business days. OIS will send you a confirmation email when your Social Security Number Letter is ready for pick-up.

- **NOTE**: The Social Security Administration cannot process your SSN application if your on-campus employment start date is more than **30 days** from your SSN application date.
- **NOTE**: The Social Security Number letter is also only valid for **30 days**, so apply quickly!

Curricular Practical Training (F-1 students)

F-1 students who have been authorized for Curricular Practical Training (CPT) must present a copy of their CPT I-20 to apply for a Social Security Number.

- **NOTE**: The Social Security Administration cannot process your SSN application if your CPT start date is more than **30** days from your SSN application date.

Optional Practical Training (F-1 students)

F-1 students who are close to degree completion and will apply for Optional Practical Training (OPT), may apply for an SSN as part of the OPT application process. Watch OIS' OPT Tutorials for more information.

- **NOTE**: If the OPT is approved, the Social Security card will be mailed within 7 business days *after* the start date listed on the Employment Authorization Document.

Academic Training (J-1 students only)

J-1 students who receive Academic Training authorization for off-campus activities may apply for an SSN.

- **NOTE**: The Social Security Administration cannot process your SSN application if your Academic Training start date is more than **30** days from your SSN application date.

J-1 Scholars and H-1B Employees

J-1 Scholars will need to provide their DS-2019 and employees in H-1B, TN, or another non-immigrant visa (NIV) status will need to provide their I-797 Approval Notice/I-94 record in order to prove their eligibility for a Social Security Number/Card. Canadian TN holders can show their passport entry stamp and I-94 record.

- **NOTE:** Scholars and employees do not require a letter from OIS in order to apply for the SSN.
- **NOTE**: J-1 scholars should only apply for the SSN after they have completed their check-in with OIS and their SEVIS record has been validated.

Instructions to apply for Social Security Number (SSN)

1. Make sure you qualify

- Have you secured employment in the United States?
- Do you have the proper authorization to work in the United States?
- F-1 and J-1 visa holders:
  - Have you completed your OIS orientation requirements after you arrived in the U.S.?

2. *F-1 & J-1 students only*: if you have an on-campus appointment, or an on-campus job offer

- Submit e-form in in My OIS:
  - **F-1 students:** "Social Security Number" e-form
  - **J-1 students:** "On Campus Employment Authorization" e-form
- OIS will review your request within 3 business days
- OIS will create a paper-based SSN letter and send a confirmation email
- Pick up your SSN letter at OIS' front desk (708 William Pitt Union)
- Bring the paper-based SSN letter to the Pitt office that hired you / will employ you
- The Pitt office that hired you must complete its portion **in ink** and return it to you

3. Submit online SSN application and schedule appointment at Social Security office

- Complete and submit Social Security Administration's online application
  - Make sure to write down the "Online Control Number" after you submit your online application
- As part of the application process, you **must** schedule an appointment to visit SSN office **in-person**
  - Social Security cannot process your application if your appointment is more than **30 days** before your employment start date
- **NOTE: OPT participants and J-2 dependents who requested a SSN as part of their Form I-765 application do not need to complete this or the following steps**

4. Attend your scheduled appointment at Social Security office with application materials

F-1 / J-1 students	Scholars / Employees
• Passport	• Passport
• Visa stamp	• Visa stamp
• I-94 record (printed result from I-94 website)	• I-94 record (printed result from I-94 website)
• I-20 or DS-2019 (printed version)	• **J-1 Scholar:** DS-2019 and Employment Offer/Invitation Letter
• SSN letter (*only* if working on-campus at Pitt), signed by OIS and the Pitt office that hired you	• **J-2 dependent:** EAD
• The SSN letter is valid for **30 days** after it is created	• **H-1B or NIV:** I-797 Approval Notice and offer letter
• Employment Authorization Document (*only* if participating in OPT)	• **Canadian TN:** Visa Entry Stamp and offer letter

5. Receive your SSN card

- You should receive your SSN in the mail in about 10 to 14 days
- Keep your SSN card in a secure location with your immigration documents
- Do NOT share your SSN with individuals or companies that you do not know or trust

If you have additional specific questions about the SSN application process, please email or schedule an appointment with your Immigration Specialist.