Applying for a Social Security Number

A social security number (SSN) is a nine digit unique identification number assigned by the U.S. Social Security Administration to monitor and tax wages earned by employees in the U.S. It does not grant employment authorization, but it is required for all individuals employed in the U.S. A social security number is not needed to get a driver’s license, buy a cell phone, open a bank account or to get health insurance.

Eligibility

F-1 Students are eligible to obtain a social security number if:
- they are in valid F-1 status and have been offered an on-campus job
- they are in valid F-1 status and have been authorized for off-campus employment, either Curricular Practical Training (CPT) or Optional Practical Training (OPT)

J-1 Students are eligible to obtain a social security number if:
- they are in valid J-1 status

Any student or scholar who is eligible for a social security number must be physically present in the U.S. for at least 10 business days before applying in person at the Social Security Office. New students must have completed the immigration check-in process at the Slater International Center and be registered in SEVIS. Students should talk with the International Student & Scholar Advisor (ISSA) before applying for a social security number to ensure their record is “Active” in SEVIS. Once a record is activated in SEVIS, students should wait at least two business days before applying for a SSN to ensure the database is current.

Application Process

F-1 Students with an on-campus job offer:
1. Complete the “On-Campus Employment Form,” (available online at http://new.wellesley.edu/international/13821 or at the Slater International Center). This form verifies your job offer and your valid immigration status. Your hiring supervisor must complete and sign the top half of the form. Bring the completed original “On-Campus Employment Form” to the Slater International Center along with your passport, Form I-20, and copy of your Form I-94 during walk-in hours or by appointment. Your International Student & Scholar Advisor will verify your status and sign the form.

2. Complete a Social Security (SS) Application Form (available online at http://www.ssa.gov/ssnumber/ss5.htm or at the Slater International Center); for item # 5, select “legal alien allowed to work”.

3. Bring to SS Office:
   - Completed “On-Campus Employment Form”
   - Completed SS Application
   - Form I-20
   - Copy of your Form I-94
   - Passport

Note: Students who have on-campus employment cannot apply for a social security number more than 30 days in advance of their employment start date.

For more information go to www.socialsecurity.gov/ssnvisa or call 1-800-772-1213.
F-1 Students with off-campus employment authorization (i.e. OPT, CPT):

1. Complete a Social Security (SS) Application Form. (available online at http://www.ssa.gov/ssnumber/ss5.htm or at the Slater International Center); for item # 5, select “legal alien allowed to work”.

2. Bring to SS Office:
   - □ Proof of your employment authorization (i.e. EAC, CPT employment authorization letter)
   - □ Completed SS Application
   - □ Form I-20
   - □ Copy of Form I-94
   - □ Passport

Note: Students who are on CPT cannot apply for a Social Security number more than 30 days in advance of the employment start date. Students who are on OPT cannot apply for a Social Security number until their employment start date.

J-1 Students without on-campus employment or Academic Training (AT):

1. Complete and submit a “J-1 Social Security Number Letter Request Form” (available at the Slater International Center). The letter will be prepared within two business days. The letter will verify your valid immigration status and eligibility for a social security number.

2. Complete a Social Security (SS) Application Form (available online at http://www.ssa.gov/ssnumber/ss5.htm or at the Slater International Center); for item # 5, select “legal alien allowed to work”.

3. Bring to SS Office:
   - □ Original J-1 Social Security Number Letter
   - □ Completed SS Application
   - □ Form DS-2019
   - □ Copy of Form I-94
   - □ Passport

J-1 Students with an on-campus job offer:

1. Complete an “On-Campus Employment Form.” (available online at http://new.wellesley.edu/international/13821 or at the Slater International Center). This form verifies your job offer, your immigration status, and authorizes on-campus employment. Your hiring Supervisor must complete and sign the top half of the form. Please note that your employment start date must be at least 5 business days into the future to allow adequate time for processing. Bring the original form to Slater along with your most recent entry stamp in your passport during walk-in hours for a signature from the International Student Advisor.

2. Complete a Social Security (SS) Application Form (available online at http://www.ssa.gov/ssnumber/ss5.htm or at the Slater International Center); for item # 5, select “legal alien allowed to work”.

3. Bring to SS Office:
   - □ Completed “J-1 On-Campus Employment Form”
   - □ Completed SS Application
   - □ Form DS-2019
   - □ Copy of Form I-94
   - □ Passport

Note: Students who have on-campus employment cannot apply for a social security number more than 30 days in advance of the employment start date.

J-1 Students with off-campus employment authorization (i.e. Academic Training):

1. Complete a Social Security (SS) Application Form (available online at http://www.ssa.gov/ssnumber/ss5.htm or at the Slater International Center); for item # 5, select “legal alien allowed to work”.

2. Bring to SS Office:
   - □ Academic Training authorization letter
   - □ Completed SS Application
   - □ Form DS-2019
   - □ Copy of Form I-94
   - □ Passport
Social Security Office Locations

**Framingham**
1 Clarks Hill, Suite 305
Framingham, MA 01702
Phone: 866-964-7589
Office Hours: Monday-Tuesday 9:00AM-4:00PM, Wednesday 9:00AM-12:00PM, Thursday-Friday 9:00AM-4:00PM, except federal holidays.

**Directions:** *Driving from Wellesley:* Take Route 135 West through downtown Natick. Turn right onto Bishop Street, and then turn right onto Clarks Hill. You will see the Social Security Office on your right.

*Commuter Rail:* Take the Commuter Rail from the Wellesley Square Station to the Framingham Station. When you go out of the Framingham station, walk 0.7 miles on Waverly St., (approximately 14 minutes) turn left onto Bishop Street then turn right onto Clarks Hill.

**Roxbury**
10 Malcolm X Blvd
Roxbury, MA 02119
Office Hours: Monday-Tuesday 9:00AM-4:00PM, Wednesday 9:00AM-12:00PM, Thursday-Friday 9:00AM-4:00PM, except federal holidays.

**Directions:** *Commuter Rail:* Take the commuter rail inbound from the Wellesley Square Station to Back Bay Station. At Back Bay Station, take the Orange Line toward Forest Hills. Get off at Ruggles Station. At Ruggles Station, take bus 44 toward Jackson Square via Humboldt Ave. Get off at Malcolm X Blvd. and Shawmut Ave. Follow Malcolm X Boulevard for a short distance until you find the Social Security Office.

**Boston**
O’Neill Federal Building, Room #148
10 Causeway St
Boston, MA 02222
Office Hours: Monday-Tuesday 9:00AM-4:00PM, Wednesday 9:00AM-12:00PM, Thursday-Friday 9:00AM-4:00PM, except federal holidays.

**Directions:** *Commuter Rail:* Take the commuter rail inbound from the Wellesley Square Station to Back Bay Station. At Back Bay Station, take the Orange Line towards Oak Grove. Get off at North Station. On Causeway Street, walk towards Friend Street. The O’Neill Federal Building should be on your right.

Receiving your Social Security Card
One you have successfully applied for your SSN, the Social Security Administration (SSA) may need some time to verify your current immigration status before they can issue you a social security card. In most cases, a card should be mailed to the address that you listed on your application form within 10-14 business days. For general information applying for a social security number please visit [http://www.ssa.gov/](http://www.ssa.gov/) or call 800-772-1213.

Tips to Secure Your Social Security Number
It is important not to share your Social Security Number with anyone else as this can lead to “Identity Theft, i.e. someone can use your SSN to perform illegal transactions or activities that will be attributed to you without your knowledge. Below are some tips that will help you to secure your Social Security Number:

- Memorize your SSN. The best place to keep your SSN is in your mind.
- Do not carry around your Social Security card in your wallet. Instead, keep it in a safe, secure and secret place and keep it forever. You are issued one SSN for life.
- Do not give out your SSN to anybody, including your family members or friends, unless it is absolutely necessary. If you are required to do so, don't hesitate to ask the reason they need your SSN.
- Beware with on-line transactions. Normally you are not required to give out your SSN. If you are told to do so, be sure that the site is trusted and secured. In some cases, you may have to give the last four digits of your SSN.
- As a customer, when you are talking with customer service agents requiring information or filing a complaint, avoid telling them your SSN.
Frequently Asked Questions

Do I need an SSN? If you will be employed on or off-campus, receiving a fellowship or stipend through Payroll, you will need to obtain a Social Security number.

Do I need an SSN to open a bank account, get utility services or a cell phone? No. Although an SSN may be requested by banks, utility companies, phone companies, etc. it is only required for employment. An SSN is not required to obtain a driver’s license, or file federal tax Form 8843.

Do I need an SSN before I start working? It depends on your employer. You may work while your SSN application is being processed. However, without an SSN, a paycheck cannot be issued. Your work hours will be accumulated and paid once your SSN is received. Do not forget to ask for a receipt from the SSA in order to prove to your employer that you have applied for your SSN.

When can I apply for an SSN? F1 and J1 students and scholars with a job offer can apply for an SSN NO EARLIER THAN 10 BUSINESS DAYS after entry to the United States. An SSN cannot be issued for on-campus employment or for authorized CPT if the start date for the employment is more than 30 days into the future. Individuals applying for an SSN based on OPT approval may not apply until after the start date listed on the Employment Authorization Card (EAC).

How long does it take to get an SSN? The SSA must verify your documents with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) before assigning you an SSN. After receiving verification from DHS, SSA will mail your Social Security card. You should receive your card within 7-14 days. If you do not receive the card within 30 days, return to the social security office to inquire about the status of your application.

What happens if my SSN card is lost or stolen? You can replace your card for free if it is lost or stolen. To get a replacement card, you must take the same original documentation that you used when you first applied for an SSN to the local Social Security office, including proof of on-campus job or off-campus employment authorization (CPT, OPT). On the SSN application, you will indicate that you are applying for a replacement. Your replacement card will have the same name and number as your previous card.

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