

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AND SCHOLARS OFFICE

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER PROCEDURES FOR F-1 OR J-1 STATUS

In general, you must have a job to be eligible to apply for a Social Security Number (SSN). The U.S. Social Security Administration (SSA) is a federal agency that issues SSNs to non-immigrants who qualify on the basis of lawful status and legal employment. It is used by employers and employees for tax reporting purposes and you must apply for or have an SSN to be paid by Columbia University. Employment means compensation for providing services, such as being paid as a Teaching Assistant (TA) or by the hour to work in one of Columbia's libraries.

There is **one exception** to the employment requirement. A **doctoral fellowship recipient in F-1 status** who will be paid a stipend the first year without any teaching or research responsibilities, but will have teaching and/or research responsibilities later in their academic program as a condition of the fellowship is eligible to apply for an SSN. *Doctoral fellowship recipients in J-1 status* will need to contact their J-1 sponsor for instructions to apply for an ITIN (Individual Taxpayer ID).

Others who receive stipends or grants that are not compensation for work will need to apply for an ITIN and should come to the ISSO with their passports and scholarship/grant letter for instructions.

F-1 OR J-1 ON-CAMPUS EMPLOYMENT: You may apply for an SSN up to 30 days before the start date of the on-campus employment. You should have the following items with you when you go to SSA; **please note:** items 1-4 must be brought to the ISSO in order for us to endorse the SSN Verification Form.

1. Passport
2. I-20 (F-1 status) or DS-2019 (J-1 status)
3. I-94 arrival record (printed from <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94>) if you last entered the U.S. after April 29, 2013
4. *Completed **SSN Verification Form** (page 3 of this document) from hiring department **printed on their letterhead with an original signature.**

F-1 DOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENTS – If you are NOT working as a Teaching Assistant in the first year, you should have the following items with you when you go to SSA; **please note:** items 1-4 must be brought to the ISSO in order to get the SSN fellowship letter.

1. Passport
2. I-20
3. I-94 arrival record (printed from <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94>) if you last entered the U.S. after April 29, 2013
4. Copy of the official letter of admission / fellowship award letter from your Columbia school.
5. SSN fellowship letter from the ISSO

New students should apply for an SSN only after their SEVIS record has been updated to active status by the ISSO.

F-1 CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING (CPT): When an application for CPT is approved by the ISSO, the CPT authorization is printed on page 2 of the I-20. F-1 students who apply for an SSN on the basis of CPT must present the I-20 with the CPT authorization that is signed by an ISSO advisor. The I-20—plus your passport and I-94 admission record—are the only required documents for an SSN application based on CPT. If you are asked for anything else at the SSA, ask to speak with a supervisor. You are eligible to apply for an SSN up to 30 days before the start date of the CPT.

F-1 OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING and other off-campus employment authorized with an EAD:

F-1 students who apply for an SSN on the basis of OPT or off-campus employment must present their EAD card, passport, I-20 and I-94 admission record to the SSA. You may apply for an SSN on or after the effective date of authorized employment indicated on the EAD card.

Office & Courier Address: 524 Riverside Drive New York, NY 10027
Mailing Address: Mail Code 5724 2960 Broadway New York, NY 10027 212-854-3587 isso@columbia.edu

J-1 STUDENT ACADEMIC TRAINING (AT): Students in J-1 status who need an SSN to engage in Academic Training should inform the ISSO advisor at the time of application for AT. The ISSO will prepare a brief letter for the SSA that must include your job title.

J-1 RESEARCHER OR PROFESSOR: To apply for a Social Security number, you do not need a letter from the ISSO. Bring to the SSA your passport, DS-2019 form and I-94 admission record printed from <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94>

Where to Apply for an SSN

New York City residents (Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, Bronx, and Staten Island) must apply at a Social Security Card Center only. All Card Centers may be found at <https://secure.ssa.gov/ICON/main.jsp>
However, we recommend that Columbia students apply at the Manhattan Social Security Card Center.

MANHATTAN SOCIAL SECURITY CARD CENTER, 123 William Street, 3rd Floor, New York, NY 10038

Monday to Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Follow signs for the William Street exit at the Fulton Street subway station (2, 3, A, C, R, Z). When you exit, you will be directly across the street from the building

PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW ONCE YOU RECEIVE YOUR SOCIAL SECURITY CARD

You should receive a Social Security Card in the mail from the Social Security Administration 5 -10 days after an accepted application. **When you receive your Social Security Card for on-campus employment**, you must take it to your hiring department or office for them to resubmit paperwork with the number to Human Resources. If you receive an SSN for a fellowship stipend, take the card and a piece of identification to the Cashier's Office on the 2nd floor of Kent Hall.

After you have done this, **you are advised not to carry the Social Security Card with you**, but to memorize the number or make a note of it elsewhere and put the Social Security Card in a safe place with your other important documents.

OTHER NEW HIRE EMPLOYMENT FORMS

While the staff of the International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO) is neither qualified nor permitted to answer individual questions regarding tax liabilities and new hire forms, an overview of these forms which you will receive from your hiring department is listed below to assist you.

W-4 Form – This form relates to taxes withheld from each paycheck and must be completed by all employees, even those from countries having a tax treaty with the U.S. A guide by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) for international employees can be found at <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/n1392.pdf>

IT-2104 or IT-2104-E – This form relates to New York State and New York City tax withholding. You must read the Instructions to determine if you qualify for an exemption (form IT-2104 –E) or not (form IT-2104)

Tax Treaty Information – Currently the U.S. has tax treaties or agreements with 58 countries and territories under which their citizens may be exempt from all or part of U.S. income tax. To see if your country is among these and how a treaty may affect your tax status, see IRS publication #901 U.S. Tax Treaties <<http://www.irs.gov/publications/p901/index.html>>.

Your hiring department will have you complete Federal Form 8233 <<http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f8233.pdf>> with instructions at <<http://www.irs.gov/instructions/i8233/ch02.html>> to file with the Human Resources office to claim a tax treaty, if applicable.

Questions regarding Tax Treaty eligibility can be directed to Carlos Lira-Coppo in the Human Resources at CL1@columbia.edu, or (212) 851-2849

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