

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

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER ELIGIBILITY AND APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR STUDENTS IN F-1 STATUS

The U.S. Social Security Administration is a federal agency that issues Social Security Numbers (SSN) to U.S. citizens, permanent residents, and non-immigrants who qualify on the basis of lawful status and legal employment. It is used by employers and employees for tax purposes.

The 9-digit number that an international student is assigned by the University is NOT an SSN—it is an I.D. number for internal use only. The *only* way for a student in F-1 status to be eligible to apply for an SSN is to be employed or have an offer of employment. International students in F or J status are eligible to work on campus “incident to status”.

Note that all applications for an SSN require you to have your passport, I-20 (or DS-2019) and I-94 card with you at the time of application.

I. Applying for an SSN on the basis of On-Campus Employment

Eligible students must obtain a form or letter printed on the hiring department’s letterhead. The student must bring the completed form to the ISSO to be signed by an ISSO staff member. This signature, required by the SSA, verifies the student’s eligibility to work on-campus. The ISSO will provide further instructions for applying for an SSN at a Social Security Administration office.

The ISSO has prepared a template for departments to use as an alternative to creating a new letter. As required by SSA regulation, this must include

- Identity of student employee
- a brief job description
- anticipated or actual employment start date
- number of hours per week the student is expected to work
- employer identification number (EIN); Columbia’s EIN is 13-5598093
- employer contact information, including name and phone number of the student’s immediate supervisor
- original signature and signatory’s title
- Date

II. Applying for an SSN on the basis of Authorized Curricular Practical Training

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) authorization is reflected on the employment page of SEVIS Form I-20. F-1 students who apply for an SSN on the basis of CPT must present to SSA their Form I-20, properly endorsed by their DSO for Curricular Practical Training. A separate DSO letter, pay stub, or other verification of employment is NOT needed to establish CPT work authorization. You are eligible to apply for an SSN on or after the start date of the CPT.

III. Applying for an SSN on the basis of authorized Optional Practical Training (OPT) or off-campus employment

Optional Practical Training (OPT) and off-campus employment for economic necessity require an F-1 student to apply for an employment authorization document (EAD) from the USCIS (US Citizenship and Immigration Services). F-1 students who apply for an SSN on the basis of OPT or off-campus employment must present their EAD card, I-20 and I-94 card to SSA. You are eligible to apply for an SSN on or after the effective date of authorized employment indicated on the EAD card.

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

HOW TO APPLY FOR A SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER

You must apply for or have a Social Security number to be paid by Columbia University. **When applying, be sure to ask for a receipt.** The receipt may be needed in order to be added to the Columbia University payroll before the actual Social Security card and number are received.

To apply for a number, you may go to any Social Security Administration (SSA) office, unless you live in Brooklyn or Queens. Additional SSA addresses can be found online at www.ssa.gov

237 West 48th Street, 5 th floor between 8th Avenue and Broadway ----- 55 West 125 th Street between Lenox and 5 th Avenues ----- 9:00 am - 4:00 p.m. tel: 1-800-772-1213	ALL RESIDENTS OF BROOKLYN MUST APPLY AT: Brooklyn Social Security Card Center 625 Fulton Street, 6 th floor Brooklyn, NY 11201 Monday to Friday, 7 - 4:30 p.m. Thursday, 7a.m.- 7 p.m.	ALL RESIDENTS OF QUEENS MUST APPLY AT: Queens Social Security Card Center 155-10 Jamaica Avenue, 2 nd floor Jamaica, NY 11432 Monday to Friday, 7 - 4:30 p.m. Wednesday, 7a.m.- 7 p.m.
---	---	---

If you are in **F-1 or J-1 student status**, you must take:

- your passport
- the I-94 departure card (small white card often stapled into the passport)
- form I-20 (if you are in F-1 status)
- form DS-2019 (if you are in J-1 status)
- **a letter from hiring department or office, signed by the ISSO at the bottom**

If you are a **J-1 researcher or professor**, you may apply for a Social Security number only if you will be receiving a salary from Columbia University. If you are to be paid by Columbia University, take:

- your passport
- the I-94 departure card (small white card often stapled into the passport)
- DS-2019
- a letter from your department stating that you are employed.

Go directly to the designated floor between the business hours indicated above. Try to avoid lunch time, 12:00 – 2:00 p.m.

 It will be approximately three weeks before you receive your Social Security card in the mail from the Social Security Administration. When you receive your number, you take the following steps to ensure uninterrupted access to facilities and services currently authorized. After you have done so, **you are advised not to carry the Social Security card with you**, but memorize the number or make a note of it elsewhere.

1. If you are a student, take your current Columbia ID card and your Social Security card to the Student Services Center in 205 Kent Hall (Morningside) or Student Financial and Information Services, 1-141 Black Building (CUMC) to change your University Student Information System record.
2. Students in University Apartment Housing or on a wait list for housing through the Institutional Real Estate Office must visit the Office at 400 West 119th Street to notify the Office of the Social Security number.
3. Notify your Department Administrator of your Social Security number.
4. Notify your bank or financial institution of your Social Security number. Your bank will probably require completion of a form to make the change on your account.