How do I get a Social Security number if I am an F1 Student?

https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/obtaining-a-social-security-number

All F-1 students applying for a Social Security Number must furnish to the Social Security Administration the 1-94 Form and the student copy of their 1-20 Form as evidence of lawful non-immigrant F-I status in the US. Furthermore, the Social Security Administration requires documentation showing your authorization to work. To obtain a Social Security Card you must follow these simple steps:

❶ Make an appointment to get started:

Kristen Malinowski-Paine, PDSO
Director, Academic Center for Excellence and Support
International Programs
Located on the main floor of the library **by the IT Help Desk**
kristen.malinowski-paine@nichols.edu

❷ Complete the SSA application here: https://www.ssa.gov/forms/ss-5.pdf

➢ *For more information, visit: https://www.ssa.gov/ssnumber/ss5doc.htm (choose "Adult Original" and "Noncitizen")*

❸ Gather Supporting documents:

- Your passport
- Current electronic 1-94 *(you retrieve this online here: https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/)*
- Current I-20 form *(no copies – you must bring the most up-to-date signed original document)*
- Proof of employment and work authorization letters (2) from Student Life *(See Adrienne Boertjens, Fels 301)* that prove your eligibility for On-Campus Employment; letters must be dated within 30 days of your visit to SS Administration.
  - *WORK AUTHORIZATION LETTER: For on-campus employment, we will provide you with a letter from a designated school official that identifies you, confirms your current school status; and identifies your employer and the type of work you are, or will be, doing.*
  - *PROOF OF EMPLOYMENT LETTER: For on-campus employment, we also help you get evidence of the employment offer through a document letter from your Nichols supervisor. These will describe your job; an employment start date; the estimated number of hours you will be working; your weekly estimated pay total, and your supervisor's name and telephone number.*

❹ Go with all your documents in-person to:

51 Myrtle Street	Monday & Tuesday	9:00 AM – 4:00 PM
Madison Place	Wednesday	9:00 AM – 12:00 PM
Worcester, MA	Thursday & Friday	9:00 AM – 4:00 PM
866-331-9069	Saturday & Sunday	CLOSED

Check website for hours accuracy: https://www.ssofficelocation.com/worcester-social-security-office-s01678

❺ Wait for your SS Card to arrive!

Upon visiting the Social Security office, you will be given a receipt letter to show that you have submitted the application. Your Social Security Card will then be sent to you in the mail. Most of the time, the Social Security Administration can verify your documents quickly on-line through the Department of Homeland Security, however if your documents cannot be verified on-line, it may take DHS longer than normal to respond to the request.

International Students and Social Security Numbers

Are you temporarily in the United States to attend a college, language, vocational, or nonacademic school with a nonimmigrant **F-1**, **M-1,** or **J-1** student classification? Your school may ask you for your Social Security number. Some colleges and schools use Social Security numbers as student identification numbers. If you don't have a Social Security number, the college or school should be able to give you another identification number.

Social Security numbers generally are assigned to people who are authorized to work in the United States. Social Security numbers are used to report your wages to the government and to determine eligibility for Social Security benefits. Social Security will not assign a number to you just to enroll in a college or school.

If you want to get a job on campus, you should contact your designated school official for international students. This official can tell you if you're eligible to work on campus and can give you information about available jobs. Also, your school may approve certain limited off-campus employment, as permitted under Department of Homeland Security (DHS) regulations. **If your school has authorized you to work either on or off campus, and you meet Social Security's eligibility requirements described in the next section, you can get a Social Security number.**

In general, only noncitizens who have DHS' permission to work can apply for a Social Security number. We suggest you wait 48 hours after reporting to your school before you apply for a Social Security number. This waiting will help ensure we can verify your immigration status with the DHS.

To apply for a Social Security number at your local Social Security office:

- Complete an Application for a Social Security card (SS-5); and
- Show us documents proving your:

—Work-authorized immigration status;

—Age; and

—Identity.

Immigration status

To prove your immigration status, you must show us a current admission stamp in your unexpired foreign passport and *Arrival/ Departure Record* (Form I-94), if available. If you're an F-1 or M-1 student, you must also show us your *Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status* (Form I-20*).* If you're a J-1 exchange visitor, you must show us your *Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor Status* (Form DS-2019).

Work eligibility

If you're an F-1 student and eligible to work on campus, you must provide a letter from your designated school official that:

- Identifies you;
- Confirms your current school status; and
- Identifies your employer and the type of work you are, or will be, doing.

We also need to see evidence of that employment, such as a recent pay slip or a letter from your employer. Your supervisor must sign and date the employment letter. This letter must describe:

- Your job;
- Your employment start date;
- The number of hours you are, or will be, working; and
- Your supervisor's name and telephone number.

If you're an F-1 student authorized to work in curricular practical training (CPT), you must provide us your Form I-20 with the employment page completed and signed by your school's designated official.

If you're an F-1 or M-1 student and have a work permit (Form I-766) from the DHS, you must present it.

If you're a J-1 student, student intern, or international visitor, you must provide a letter from your sponsor. The letter should be on sponsor letterhead with an original signature that authorizes your employment.

We cannot process your application if:

- Your on-campus or CPT work begins more than 30 days from your application date; or
- The employment start date on your work permit from the DHS (Form I-766) is a future date.

Age

You must present your foreign birth certificate if you have it or can get it within 10 business days. If you can't present your foreign birth certificate, we can consider other documents, such as your passport or a document issued by the DHS, as evidence of your age.

Identity

We can only accept certain documents as proof of identity. An acceptable document must be current (not expired) and show your name, identifying information, and preferably, a recent photograph. Social Security will ask to see your current unexpired foreign passport with DHS issued immigration documents.

All documents must be either originals or copies certified by the issuing agency. We cannot accept photocopies or notarized copies of documents. We also cannot accept a receipt showing you applied for the document. We may use one document for two purposes. For example, we may use your admission stamp in the unexpired foreign passport as proof of both work eligibility and identity.

We don't require you to have a Social Security number before you start work. However, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) requires employers to report wages using a Social Security number. While you wait for your Social Security number, your employer can use a letter from us stating that you applied for a number. Your employer may use your immigration documents as proof of your authorization to work in the United States. Employers can find more information on the Internet at *www.socialsecurity.gov/employer/hiring.htm.*

Contacting Social Security

The most convenient way to contact us anytime, anywhere is to visit *www.socialsecurity.gov*. There, you can: apply for benefits; open a *my* Social Security account, which you can use to review your *Social Security Statement*, verify your earnings, print a benefit verification letter, change your direct deposit information, request a replacement Medicare card, and get a replacement SSA-1099/1042S; obtain valuable information; find publications; get answers to frequently asked questions; and much more.

If you don't have access to the internet, we offer many automated services by telephone, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Call us toll-free at **1-800-772-1213** or at our TTY number, **1-800-325-0778**, if you're deaf or hard of hearing.

If you need to speak to a person, we can answer your calls from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday. We ask for your patience during busy periods since you may experience a higher than usual rate of busy signals and longer hold times to speak to us. We look forward to serving you.

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F1 Students: Can I work while I study?

In general, eligible international students may work **with permission** under three circumstances:

- **On Campus Employment (Institutional Work Study)**
- **Required Internship Employment during the degree program (CPT)**
- **Professional Employment (OPT)**

F1 students may NOT work off campus or make money in the United States at non-approved jobs/opportunities; doing so will jeopardize your F1 status and require termination of your SEVIS I-20

Please consult with the Office of Student Life *(Adrienne Boertjens, PDSO, Fels 301)* if you decide employment is something you want to consider as there are timelines, limits, permissions, and regulations that you must understand beforehand.

Eligible programs:

On Campus Employment (OCE) requires permission-documents from the Office of Student Life and the Nichols College hiring supervisor, along with a *Social Security number. OCE is restricted to actual departments of Nichols on the Nichols campus. Only non-federal financial aid may be used to fund on-campus employment.

A required internship (CPT) requires permission-documents from the Office of Student Life and the supervising Nichols professor, along with a *Social Security number. CPT can only happen after one full year of successful academic coursework. CPT must be directly related to a required internship, be supervised by a faculty member, and last only as long as the duration of the credit-bearing course it is related to, have an active course registration through the Registrar's Office.

Professional Employment (OPT) requires an approval from the Office of Student Life, a fee-bearing US government application for an Earning Authorization Document (EAD), along with a *Social Security number. OPT must be professional employment directly related to the Nichols major and course of study. Employment begins after graduation (post-completion OPT) and extends for 12 months of professional employment. Students should begin the EAD application process through the Office of Student Life 90 days before the graduation date.

*See *How do I get a Social Security number* handout in your SSN packet