



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 and scholars who have secured employment in the U.S. 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.

Students and scholars 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 \(ITIN\)](#).

If you will be employed and you are still pursuing your course of study, you must apply for an SSN in person at the local Social Security Office. [Please review instructions about how and where to apply for the SSN](#). After submitting the application to the Social Security Administration, you will receive a written notice with estimated processing time.

On-Campus Employment

Students with on-campus employment in F-1 and J-1 status must request a Social Security Number letter from OIS. To do so, please log in to My OIS (my.ois.pitt.edu) and submit your request online. Typical processing time for your letter is three business days after your request has been submitted. You will receive an email when the letter is ready to pick up.

Curricular Practical Training

Students who have been authorized for Curricular Practical Training (CPT) may present a copy of their CPT I-20 in order to apply for a Social Security Number.

Optional Practical Training

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. You may indicate on the Form I-765 application for OPT that you wish to also apply for an SSN at the same time. If the OPT is approved, the social security card will be mailed within 7 business days.

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.