

## APPLYING FOR SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER

**Disclaimer:** PUC OISS has prepared this guide to provide you with general guidance. However, any advice provided to you by our office, as well as the information in this document, should not be construed as legal advice. PUC international staff will provide regulatory and practice information as it stands at the time of the consult. Due to the fluid nature of governmental interpretation, individuals must understand that the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) office may change its interpretation of established immigration laws/regulations and eligibility requirements for benefits at any time. For legal advice, you may consult with an immigration attorney.

The Social Security Numbers (SSN) is a 9-digit number issued by the Social Security Administration (SSA) to those individuals who are eligible to work in the United States. The SSN is required in order to be paid for any work you do in the U.S. whether it is on-campus or for practical training. Though the SSN is only required to be paid by an employer, many other institutions in the U.S. ask for an SSN (i.e. banks, cell vendors, the Department of Driver's Licenses). It is generally easier to obtain services from these institutions if you already have an SSN, but there is no obligation to obtain services from these institutions if you already have an SSN. You are under no obligation to obtain a SSN; however, if you plan to work in the United States, you will need to obtain one.

The SSA requires that a student secures a job offer in order to qualify to apply for an SSN. You will need to obtain written confirmation of your job offer before you will be able to apply for the SSN; the PUC department that offers you a job can provide this. You will also need a Social Security Verification form letter (accessible from your DSO/international student advisor). *Please note: you must have a job offer, receive approval from your international student advisor, and have a Social Security Number before you start working.*

The SSA must verify your student status with the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) before issuing you a number. This process can take from 10 days to 12 weeks to complete. The Social Security Administration will mail your Social Security card as soon as they have all of the necessary information. Generally, you will get your Social Security card within 10-14 business days from the date your application is processed.

Please contact the PUC Human Resources Office/Payroll Department for job listings and applications. You can also refer to [www.puc.edu/puc-life/student-employment/home](http://www.puc.edu/puc-life/student-employment/home) for student employment job listings for on-campus employment. You must speak with your international student advisor to ensure compliance with SEVIS and USCIS, and any other relevant government agency, concerning federal work regulations.

When you apply for your number, you will fill out an SSA application form (your international student advisor can provide you with a copy of the application and/or link to access the application online). You may need to make an appointment with the local Social Security Administration office (if they do not accept walk-ins due to COVID-19). You will then present the SSA application and the following original documents for their review (see next the next page for the list of needed documents).

- Form I-20
- Valid passport
- F-1 Visa
- I-94 (printed from the U.S. Customs and Border Protection website), or the white card stapled to your passport)
- Form letter from International Student Advisor (Social Security Verification Form), which includes supervisor and employer information.
- If you have been issued CPT authorization for an internship, you may present the I-20 in lieu of a letter from the employer.
- If you have been approved for OPT, you may present the EAD card in lieu of a letter from the employer.

Here are the basic steps to receive a Social Security number while studying in the United States:

1. Talk with your designated school official (DSO) / international student advisor about working and training in the United States.  
--Your DSO will share important information regarding the regulations and requirements for F students, and confirm whether you are eligible to apply for an SSN.
2. Ensure you are in Active status in the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) for at least two days before applying for a SSN.
3. Wait 10 days after arriving in the United States before applying for an SSN to allow enough time for your arrival information to update in all government systems.
4. Visit your local SSA office (once you have completed the SSA application and have all of the required documents). Check with them first to see if you need to make an appointment. You may be able to complete the SSA application at the Social Security Administration, possibly with added wait time.

**Address for local office:**

Social Security Administration  
1850 Soscol Avenue, Suite 102  
Napa, CA 94559

**Social Security Application**

<https://www.ssa.gov/forms/ss-5.pdf>

If you are not able to use online or automated services, call toll-free at 1-800-772-1213. All calls are confidential. Specific questions can be answered from 8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. You may also visit <https://www.ssa.gov> for any updates on the Social Security Administration website. It is recommended you view this website for timely updates on their processes.

For additional information, see International Students and Social Security Numbers located online at <https://www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10181.pdf>

Visit <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/students/obtaining-a-social-security-number>

*If you have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact Student Life / International Student Advising at [isa@puc.edu](mailto:isa@puc.edu) or (707) 965-7362.*