

# Carnegie Mellon University

## Office of International Education

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### Social Security Number (SSN) Application Instructions

A Social Security Number (SSN) is a unique, 9-digit identification number issued by the U.S. Social Security Administration (SSA). An SSN is a requirement for all persons who work and receive pay in the U.S. The SSN is used to report wages to the government.

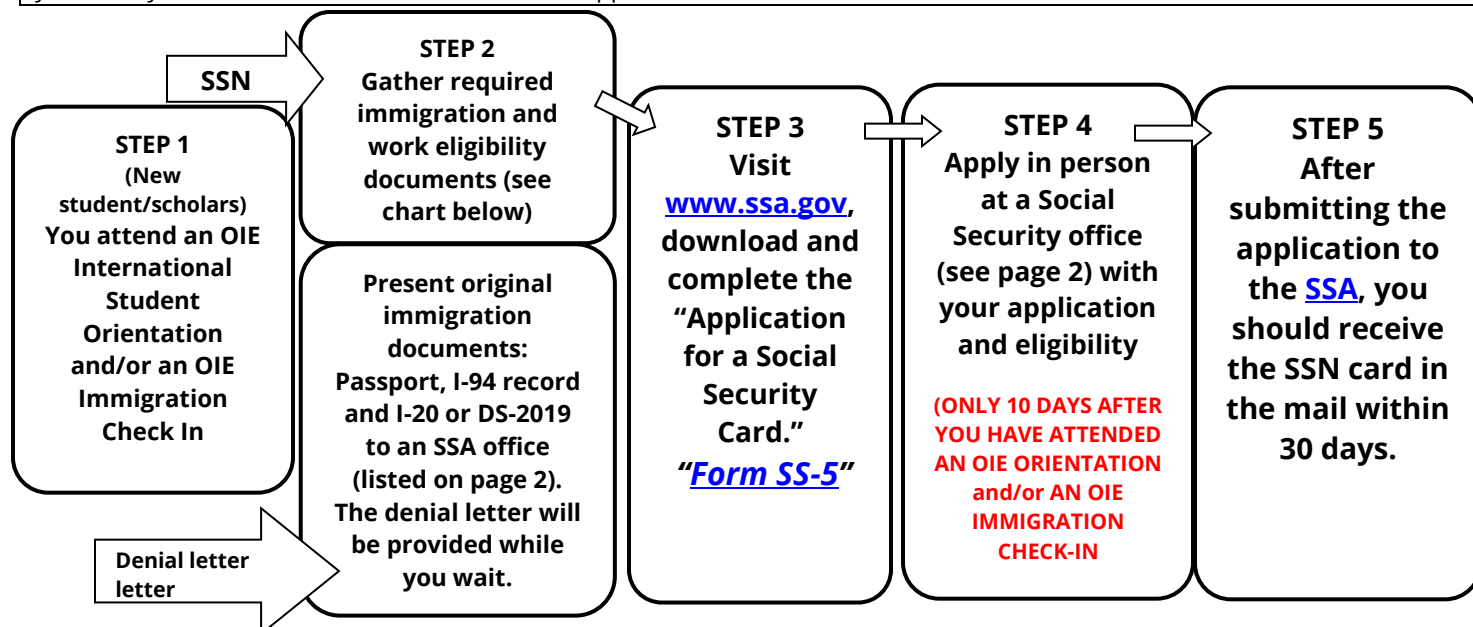
Your SSN and Student ID number are different. When you are asked for these numbers, be clear about which one is needed. The Student ID Number generally is valid only at CMU. **NEVER** give your SSN unless it is required.

#### THE APPLICATION PROCESS AND MATERIALS

International applicants apply **in person** at the nearest Social Security office. If you are a new international student/scholar, you may apply for an SSN **NO EARLIER THAN 10 business days** after attending an OIE International Student Orientation and/or an OIE Immigration Check-In.

To apply, take the original documents noted in the table below. With the exception of the [Social Security Card Application](#) (SS-5). All other documents will be examined and returned immediately to you. After submitting the application, you should receive the SSN card in the mail within 30 days. Students and scholars who need to be paid by CMU prior to receiving the card may discuss the possibility of a “payroll advance” with the hiring department; this will allow for partial payment from CMU before receiving the SSN.

To apply for the **SSN denial letter** (if you are not eligible for an SSN but need documentation required for PA driver’s license) present yourself in person at an office on page 2 with your original immigration documents. The denial letter will be provided to you while you wait. You do not need to make an appointment.



| REQUIRED DOCUMENTS   | F-1 STUDENTS/J-1 STUDENTS   | J-1 STUDENT INTERNS   | J-1 SCHOLARS | H-1B WORKERS                        |
|--|---|---|--------------|-------------------------------------|
| Passport (unexpired)   | Yes   | Yes   | Yes          | Yes                                 |
| I-94 record<br>Printed at <a href="http://www.cbp.gov/i94">www.cbp.gov/i94</a> | Yes   | Yes   | Yes          | Yes                                 |
| Non-immigrant document   | I-20/DS-2019  | DS-2019   | DS-2019      | Form I-797:<br>H-1B Approval Notice |
| Work Eligibility Document(s)   | <i>You must present A, B or C</i><br>A. <b>WITH ON CAMPUS JOB:</b><br>Completed “Social Security Number Form”<br><a href="http://www.cmu.edu/oiie/docs/ssn-form.pdf">http://www.cmu.edu/oiie/docs/ssn-form.pdf</a><br>B. <b>ON CPT:</b> CPT I-20<br>C. <b>ON OPT:</b> OPT I-20 and EAD card | OIE status verification letter<br>(Student Interns may request letter from OIE) | None         | None                                |

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Do I need a Social Security Number?** If you will be working on-campus, receiving a fellowship or stipend through Payroll or if you are a J-1 scholar being paid by CMU, then it is necessary for you to obtain a Social Security Number.

**Do I need an SSN to open a bank account, get utility services or a cell phone?** No. Although the SSN will be requested during many daily activities such as banking, utilities, phones, etc., it is only **required** for employment. However, if you do not have an SSN you will likely have to follow additional procedures, such as paying a deposit.

**Do I need an SSN before I start working?** No. You may work while the SSN application is being processed. However, without an SSN, a paycheck will not be issued. Your work hours will be accumulated and paid once your SSN is received. **BE SURE TO ASK FOR A RECEIPT** from the SSA in order to prove to your employer that you have applied for the SSN.

**When can I apply for an SSN?** New international applicants with a job offer can apply for an SSN **NO EARLIER THAN 10 DAYS** after attending an OIE International Student Orientation and/or an OIE Immigration Check In. An SSN cannot be issued for on-campus employment or for authorized CPT if the start date for the employment is more than 30 days into the future. Individuals applying for an SSN based on OPT approval may not apply until after the start date listed on the EAD card.

**How long will it take to get an SSN?** SSA must verify your documents with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) before assigning you an SSN. After receiving verification from DHS, SSA will mail your Social Security card. *Most of the time, you will receive your card within 7 to 14 business days.* If you do not receive the card within 30 days, return to the Social Security office to inquire. **DO NOT** apply for a second card; you will have only one SSN in your lifetime. If you continue to experience difficulties obtaining the card, contact OIE.

**What happens if my SSN card is lost or stolen?** You can replace your card for free if it is lost or stolen. To get a replacement card, you must take the same original documentation that you used when you first applied for an SSN to the local Social Security office, including proof of a current on campus job or off campus employment authorization (CPT, OPT). On the SS-5 form you will indicate that you are applying for a replacement. Your replacement card will have the same name and number as your previous card.

**How do I get my I-94?** In most cases, you can download and print your I-94 number from [www.cbp.gov/i94](http://www.cbp.gov/i94). Some students and scholars may have paper I-94 records (for example, with an approved change of status, H approval, entry through a land border). The paper I-94 is also acceptable to show to the Social Security Administration (SSA)

### **Tips to secure your Social Security Number**

It is very important that you do not share your Social Security Number with anyone else as this can lead to Identity Theft, i.e., someone can use your SSN to perform illegal transactions or activities that will be attributed to you without your knowledge.

Below are some tips that will help you to secure your Social Security Number:

- Memorize your SSN. The best place to keep your SSN is in your mind.
- Do not carry around your Social Security card in your wallet. Instead, keep it in a safe and secure place. You are issued one SSN for life. If you received a number previously, you keep the same number.
- Do not give out your SSN to anyone, including your family members or friends, unless it is absolutely necessary. If you are required to do so, don't hesitate to ask the reason they need your SSN.
- Beware of online transactions and phone call scams/scammers. Normally you are not required to give out your SSN. If you are told to do so, be sure that the site/person is trusted and secure. In some cases, you may have to give the last four digits of your SSN.
- As a customer, when you are talking with customer service agents requesting information or filing a complaint, avoid telling them your SSN. In most cases, agent will just ask you the last four digits of your SSN.

### **DIRECTIONS to NEAREST PITTSBURGH SOCIAL SECURITY OFFICES**

The SSN offices nearest to CMU are open on M, T, TH, F from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and W from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

**Please arrive at least 30 minutes before closing to process a SSN application**

**East Liberty: 6117 Station Street, 15206 (intersection of Centre Ave. and Station St.) 1-800-772-1213**

- Outbound 71B bus from Fifth & Morewood. Get off at N. Highland & Penn Circle North. Walk 1 block east. **OR**
- 71C bus (board it at 5<sup>th</sup> Ave.). Ask the bus driver to let you off in front of the Social Security Office.

**Downtown: 921 Penn Avenue, 15222 (corner of 9<sup>th</sup> & Penn) 1-800-772-1213**

- Any 61 bus from Forbes & Morewood to downtown Pittsburgh. Get off at 6<sup>th</sup> and Smithfield. Walk 5 minutes. **OR**
- Any 71 bus from Fifth & Morewood to downtown Pittsburgh. Get off at 6<sup>th</sup> and Smithfield. Walk 5 minutes.

**Social Security Administration**

**Telephone Service: 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. 1-800-772-1213 (national number) SS-5 forms available at: [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov)**

Updated 11/2018