Carnegie Mellon University
Office of International Education

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. To guard against identity theft, **NEVER** provide your SSN unless it is required.

THE APPLICATION PROCESS AND MATERIALS

International applicants apply with the nearest Social Security office. To apply during the COVID-19 outbreak, each individual SSN office has its own specific procedures for processing SSN applications for international students. You should contact the SSA nearest you to find out their process. You can use the SSN Office locator tool, or call the national SSA line at 1-800-772-1213 to obtain the local SSA office number. After submitting the application, you should receive the SSN card in the mail within 30 days. To apply for the **SSN denial letter** (if you are not eligible for an SSN but need documentation required for PA driver's license)

Follow the instructions on the OIE COVID-19 Employment FAQ webpage.

STEP 1: *BEFORE* applying for an SSN Number or SSN Denial Letter new students/scholars *MUST* complete an OIE Immigration Check-In, where their immigration documents are checked by OIE, and the SEVIS Immigration Record is "Activated".

SSN

STEP 2	STEP 3	STEP 4
Complete OIE Immigration Check-in, if you have not already. Visit www.ssa.gov, download & complete "Application for a Social Security Card." "Form SS-5" Gather required immigration & work eligibility documents. (see chart below)	**Apply with a Social Security office with your application and eligibility** New students – wait at least *10 DAYS AFTER* you have completed your Student Immigration Check-In with OIE. New scholars - wait at least *10 DAYS AFTER* you have attended Scholar Orientation.	*After* submitting the application with a **SSA** office, you should receive the SSN card in the mail within 30 days.

Denial Letter

For A Denial Letter *ONLY*

Follow the instructions on the **OIE COVID-19 Employment FAQ webpage:**

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 Printed at www.cbp.gov/i94	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Non-immigrant document	I-20/DS-2019	DS-2019	DS-2019	Form I-797: H-1B Approval Notice
Work Eligibility Document(s)	*You must present A, B, C or D* **A. WITH ON CAMPUS JOB:** Completed "Social Security Number Form" **http://www.cmu.edu/oie/docs/ssn-form.pdf** **B. ON CPT:** CPT I-20 **C. ON OPT:** OPT I-20 and EAD card **D. On AT:** Authorization Letter	OIE status verification letter (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, your may need to create an alternate process, depending on the payroll system they use. **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 use the same original documentation that you used when you first applied for an SSN, 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 https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/#/home.
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.
- Only government agencies can require you to provide your SSN number, but make sure the request is coming from a verified government agency and is not a SCAM.

DIRECTIONS to NEAREST PITTSBURGH SOCIAL SECURITY OFFICES

The SSN offices are currently available by appointment only as a COVID-19 precaution.

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 5th Ave.). Ask the bus driver to let you off in front of the Social Security Office.

Downtown: 921 Penn Avenue, 15222 (corner of 9th & Penn) 1-800-772-1213
- Any 61 bus from Forbes & Morewood to downtown Pittsburgh. Get off at 6th and Smithfield. Walk 5 minutes. **OR**
- Any 71 bus from Fifth & Morewood to downtown Pittsburgh. Get off at 6th 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