

## Social Security Number Issuance Guide

To receive wages legally in the United States, international students who want to work must apply for [a social security number \(SSN\)](#). As of October 13, 2004, the [Social Security Administration](#) will issue SSNs to international students only after they secure legal employment. The Social Security Administration (SSA) requires international students to provide proof of F-1 status, proof of employment, and work authorization to obtain an SSN.

If you do not have an SSN, and you did not receive one when you submitted your I-765 to USCIS, you must complete the following steps to apply for an SSN for optional practical training.

### Step 1: Secure an authorized employment position.

- “Authorized” means that the position is in your MAJOR field. Minor field is not acceptable. If you are applying for part-time pre-completion OPT, your position must be for 20 hours or fewer per week.

### Step 2: Complete your Form I-9 requirements with your employer.

- To satisfy your [Form I-9 requirements](#), you need to submit your original EAD to your employer. A photocopy or digital copy is not acceptable.

### Step 3: Make an appointment with a local Social Security Administration Office and apply for your SSN.

- Gather all the required documents and make an appointment with a local SSA Office to complete the social security application process. To find the SSA Office closest to you, please click [here](#).
- Suggested documentation:
  - Employment offer letter from your employer
  - EAD
  - Valid passport
  - Most recent I-94
  - I-20 showing your OPT recommendation
  - [Social security card application \(Form SS-5\)](#) – This form must be completed in blue or black ink. It may also be typed and then signed in blue or black ink.
- **Please note: Request a receipt indicating that you have applied for an SSN. Once the SSA processes your request, they will mail your social security card to you.** If you are a newly admitted student to Tarleton, please wait until at least 14 days after Undergraduate Admissions – Immigration has registered your SEVIS record before applying for your SSN. This delay helps ensure that the SSA Office’s database shows your active SEVIS status. If you apply too early, the SSA may be unable to verify your legal alien status and, therefore, will not issue you an SSN.

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### **Step 4: Report your SSN to your employer.**

- Once you either receive confirmation from the SSA informing you of your new SSN or you receive your social security card in the mail, you need to report your SSN to your employer.
- Your SSN is yours for the rest of your life. It never expires. Even after you stop working, you can still use your SSN to file your tax return, change your visa status, apply for post-completion or STEM OPT, apply for permanent residency, or for any other legal purpose that requires providing an SSN.

Please refer to the following resources for additional information regarding social security numbers, cards, and records:

- Pages 1-4 of your Form SS-5
- IRS publication "[International Students and Social Security Numbers](#)"
- IRS publication "[Guard Your Card](#)"
- IRS's fraud protection [website](#)
- Social Security Administration's [website](#)