

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS

The Social Security Administration (SSA) has many responsibilities, among them processing applications for Social Security Numbers (SSN) from our international students and scholars who are eligible to apply. You will need to present evidence of work authorization to an official at the SSA to apply for an SSN and the evidence you submit will depend upon your visa status (see below).

What to take to apply for a Social Security Number:

If you are an F-1 visa holder with on-campus employment, you must first obtain a job offer letter from your on-campus employer. [Click here](#) for a sample employer letter. Take the job offer letter to the HIO in order to get the HIO work authorization letter. Take your passport, your Form I-20 and Form I-94, along with the two letters mentioned above to one of the Social Security Administration Offices listed below. F-1 student visa holders are not eligible for Social Security Numbers unless they provide proof of employment at the time of their applications. *Please note that F-1 students are not eligible to apply for an SSN without having on-campus employment or off-campus work permission (either OPT or CPT).*

If you are an F-1 visa holder on OPT or CPT, take your passport, your latest Form I-20, your Form I-94, and, if on OPT, your Employment Authorization Document (or EAD) to one of the Social Security Administration Offices listed below. Students with CPT are allowed to apply up to 30 days in advance of the start date of the CPT authorization. Students with OPT cannot apply for an SSN until the start date of the EAD.

If you are a J-1 student under Harvard's J-1 program sponsorship: take your passport, Form DS-2019, your Form I-94, and a letter from the HIO indicating that you have work authorization to one of the Social Security Administration Offices listed below. If your J-1 visa is not sponsored by Harvard, please get the work authorization from your J program sponsor and follow the above instructions.

If you are a J-1 scholar, an H-1B scholar or an O-1 scholar, take your passport, your Form DS-2019 or your Form I-797 (for H-1B and O-1 visa holders), and your Form I-94 to one of the Social Security Administration Offices listed below.

When to apply: You must have been in the United States for at least **ten** days. This waiting period assures that your record will have been updated in the Government's database. In addition, you cannot apply before the effective date of your visa document (I-20 or DS-2019).

Additional Information: At the Social Security Administration office, you must complete the SSN application form. You will receive notification of your Social Security Number in the mail. The process usually takes four to eight weeks. If you have not heard within this time period, please contact the HIO. For more information, check the website: <http://www.ssa.gov> or call the Social Security Administration at 1-800-772-1213. Once you have obtained a U.S. Social Security Number, it is not necessary to apply for a new one if the employment changes. If you lose your SSN Card and need to apply for a replacement card, you must prove that you are eligible at the time of application.

Social Security Administration Offices are located at:

240 Elm St., Marks Building
Somerville, MA 02144.

*Take the Red Line to Davis Square; the office is across
from McKinnon's Market.*

Note: The Somerville SSA office is a small office that does not accommodate large groups. If you go to their office, they ask that you go between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. and that you do not go in groups.

10 Causeway St., Room 148, 1st floor
Boston, MA 02222. Open 9am – 4pm.

*Take the Green or Orange Line to North Station; the office
is in the Thomas P. O'Neill Building.*