

## Social Security Number (SSN) Application Instructions For International Students, Scholars and Visitors

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

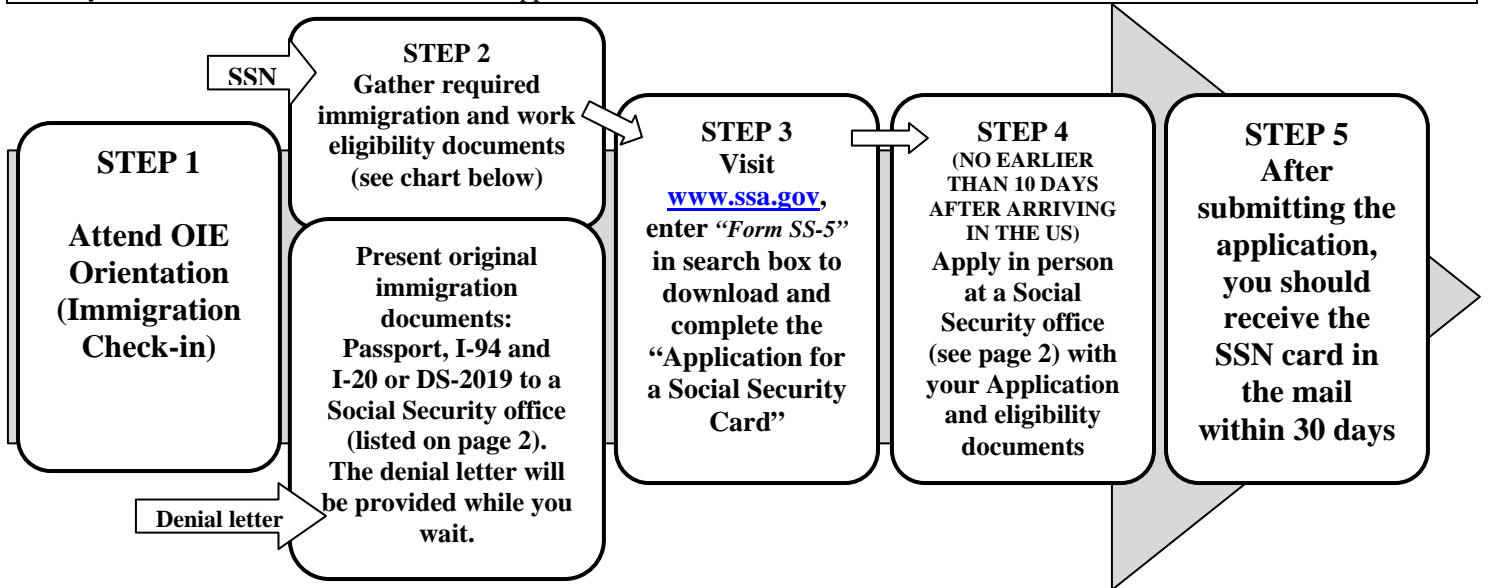
Your SSN and Student ID number are different. When you are asked for these numbers, be clear about which one is needed. The Student ID Number generally is valid only at CMU. NEVER give your SSN unless it is required.

### THE APPLICATION PROCESS AND MATERIALS

International applicants apply *in person* at the nearest Social Security office NO EARLIER THAN 10 days after arriving in the US. Only short-term scholars who will be in the US less than 5 weeks should apply for their SSN immediately after arriving in the US without waiting 10 days.

To apply, take the original documents noted in the table below. With the exception of the Social Security Card Application (SS-5, download at [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov)), all other documents will be examined and returned immediately to you. After submitting the application, you should receive the SSN card 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 Card	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Non-immigrant Document	I-20	DS-2019	DS-2019	Form I-797: H-1B Approval Notice
Work Eligibility Document(s)	<i>You must present A, B or C</i>		None	None
	<b>A. WITH ON CAMPUS JOB:</b> Completed “Social Security Number Form” <a href="http://www.studentaffairs.cmu.edu/oie/SSNForm.pdf">www.studentaffairs.cmu.edu/oie/SSNForm.pdf</a> <b>B. ON CPT: CPT I-20</b> <b>C. ON OPT: OPT I-20 and EAD card</b>		OIE status verification letter (J-1 Students & Student Interns may request letter from OIE)	

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Do I need a Social Security Number?** If you will be working on-campus, receiving a fellowship or stipend or if you are a J-1 scholar, 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. **DO NOT FORGET TO ASK FOR A RECEIPT** from the SSA in order to prove to your employer that you have applied for a Social Security Card.

**When can I apply for an SSN?** International applicants with a job offer can apply for an SSN NO EARLIER THAN 10 DAYS after your entry to the United States in your current status. 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 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 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.

### 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, secure and secret place and keep it forever. You are issued an SSN for life. If you received a number previously, you keep the same number.
- Do not give out your SSN to anybody, 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 with on-line transactions. Normally you are not required to give out your SSN. If you are told to do so, be sure that the site is trusted and secured. In some cases, you may have to give the last four digits of your SSN.
- As a customer, when you are talking with a customer service agent requesting information or filing a complaint, avoid telling him/her your SSN. In most cases, the agent will just ask you the last four digits of your SSN.

### DIRECTIONS to NEAREST PITTSBURGH SOCIAL SECURITY OFFICES

**East Liberty: 6117 Penn Circle North, 15206 1-877-405-3575 Hours: M-F 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.\***

**\* Arrive at the East Liberty Office no later than 2:30 PM to process the social security application.**

- 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) 1-866-770-2965 Hours: M-F 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.**

- 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)**