# OBTAINING A SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER

In order to work in the United States, you must obtain a Social Security Card. This card contains your unique taxpayer identification number, or Social Security number (SSN). A non-U.S. citizen may obtain an SSN if s/he has permission to work in the United States or is required to by a federal, state, or local government agency. If you require a written confirmation that you are not eligible for an SSN, you should apply for an SSN by completing form SS-5 and request written confirmation when that application is denied. *Note: The SSN should not be confused with the Georgetown Identification Number on your GOCard or in your student record. These numbers are not SSNs and should not be used as such.*

A non-U.S. citizen who is ineligible for an SSN and is required to file a U.S. tax return to report a scholarship, grant, or investment income should instead apply for an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) by filling out a Form W-7 and submitting the form along with his/her tax return. Copies of this form are available at: www.irs.gov. In order to determine which number you will need while at Georgetown and for information on how to apply for an ITIN, contact the Tax Accounting Office at 2121 Wisconsin Ave, NW, 4th Floor, at (202) 687-5448.

## What You Need to Apply

All applicants must present:
- **A completed application for a Social Security Card (Form SS-5)**
- **An unexpired passport\***
- **Form I-94**

   *If your passport is less than one year old, it is advisable to bring another piece of identification with you (identification card issued in your home country, old passport, etc.). The Social Security Administration (SSA) will not issue an SSN if the passport is less than one year old without another document to prove your legal age and identity.*

**F-1 students must also present:**
- SEVIS Form I-20
- **Proof of employment and employment authorization**

   **On-campus employment:** Students engaged in on-campus employment must provide employment information and verification of on-campus work eligibility. Both of these requirements are met by using the Employment Form Letter. Please see the F-1 Verification of Eligibility for On-Campus Employment Request Form for the Employment Form Letter and more information: http://oip.georgetown.edu/isss/f-1on-campus.pdf.

   **Off-campus employment**: This may be in the form of an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) issued by U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS) or a Curricular Practical Training (CPT) authorization on page three of Form I-20.

**J-1 Exchange Students and Scholars must also present:**
- SEVIS Form DS-2019
- **Proof of employment authorization**. A J-1 student must have a letter from the exchange program sponsor authorizing employment. For J categories in which employment is authorized incident to status, Form DS-2019 should be sufficient.

**Employees in H-1B, O-1, E-3, or TN status:**
Work authorization is inherent to your status. Additional documentation is not needed.

## Where to Apply

The Social Security Administration (SSA) office closest to Georgetown is located at 2100 M Street NW and is open from 9:00am to 4:00pm. The M Street office has been found to be the most knowledgeable about international students and scholars. For directions and information about other local SSA offices, please see: https://secure.ssa.gov/apps6z/FOLO/fo001.jsp.

## When to Apply

If you are not starting work right away, it is recommended that you wait 10 days from your arrival in the United States to apply. If you are starting work right away, however, you will need to apply for the SSN as soon as possible after your arrival. **Please note:** F-1 students applying for an SSN to begin either on-campus employment **OR** off-campus employment via CPT may submit an application for an SSN up to 30 days before the scheduled employment start date. F-1 students applying for an SSN to begin off-campus work requiring an EAD, such as OPT or work with an international organization, are not permitted to apply for an SSN prior to the start date listed on the EAD.

## Processing Time

It takes the SSA anywhere from two weeks to three months to process the application. The actual card will be sent to the address listed on your application form. However, you will immediately be given a receipt showing that you have applied for a Social Security Card. You may complete Form I-9 to verify employment eligibility and begin work upon issuance of the receipt. If your Social Security Card has not been issued after 10 business days, you may take your receipt to the Georgetown Tax Accounting Office at 2121 Wisconsin Ave, NW, 4th Floor, in order to be issued a temporary number so that you may be paid without further delay. If you have not received a Social Security Card in 30 days, please see your IS Advisor. Once you receive your SSN, please inform the Tax Accounting Office and your hiring department immediately so they can update your forms.

## Application for Social Security Card (Form SS-5)

The SS-5 Form may be found on the Social Security Administration website: http://www.ssa.gov/online/ss-5.pdf. **Please leave blank any questions on the SS-5 form you are unable to answer. When you go to the Social Security Office in person, you may ask for help to complete the form.** For more information on Social Security numbers, call the SSA toll-free at 1-800-772-1213. Recorded information is available 24 hours a day. Service representatives are on call from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. on business days.