

Obtaining a Social Security Number to Work in the United States

Have you received a graduate assistantship, CPT, OPT, or permission to work on campus? To begin working in the U.S., you must complete the following steps to obtain a Social Security number.

1. Talk with your immigration advisor about working in the U.S.

Your immigration advisor will share important information regarding work regulations for F-1 and J-1 visa holders and confirm whether you are eligible to apply for a Social Security number.

2. Register as a full-time student.

To achieve full-time status, undergraduate students must register for 12 credit hours, and graduate students must register for nine.

3. Submit your international new semester immigration check-in form, and your immigration advisor will upload your Student and Exchange Information System (SEVIS) records.

Make sure your immigration advisor has your current U.S. address.

4. After arriving in the U.S., wait 10 days before applying for a Social Security number.

This waiting period will ensure that your arrival information is updated in all government systems.

5. Request an employment verification letter from your academic advisor/supervisor.

Your supervisor should write the letter using [this template](#). Bring this letter to your immigration advisor, who will then write a letter to the Social Security Administration.

6. Apply for a Social Security number at the Social Security Administration office.

Bring the following documents:

- [Completed Social Security card application](#)
- Valid passport
- I-20 (F-1 visa holders) or DS-2019 (J-1 visa holders)
- Printout of [your I-94 admission number](#)
- Your graduate assistantship job offer letter
- The employment verification letter from your supervisor
- The letter from your immigration advisor

The Chattanooga Social Security Administration office is located at 1290 Premier Drive, Suite 140, Chattanooga, TN 37421. The office phone number is (423) 954-9364.