

## HOW TO OBTAIN A SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER

### Who must have a Social Security Card?

International students in F-1/J-1 visa status who have been offered on-campus employment, graduate assistantships, or who are authorized for off-campus employment, as permitted under immigration regulations, must apply to the Social Security Administration (SSA) for the Social Security Card to obtain a U.S. Social Security Number (SSN).

### Social Security Number (SSN)

This is a unique nine-digit number assigned by the SSA to all US citizens, permanent residents, and non-immigrants authorized to work in the US and being paid by the US employer. Its primary function is to track individuals for taxation purposes; it serves as a Federal Taxpayer Identification Number and is used by the Internal Revenue Service to collect federal income taxes and enforce tax reporting and collection law. Each individual may have only one SSN.

### New Students

*Please note: SEVIS information may not reach the SSA until 10 days after your SEVIS record has been activated. Therefore, the SSA advises students to apply for SSN no earlier than in 10 calendar days after the student's record is activated in SEVIS (activation will take place approximately 1 week after the student's Check-In with the Office of Immigration Services)*

### When to apply

You may apply for the SSN when you **have, or have been offered**, employment.

- a. If you are applying for the SSN for on-campus employment, graduate assistantship, or for CPT, AT, your employment start date **cannot be more than 30 days in the future**.
- b. If you have an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) issued by USCIS for OPT or for economic hardship employment, you need to apply for a SSN on, or after, the starting date indicated on the EAD. The SSA will not process your SSN application if the EAD shows a future authorization date.

### Required documents

You need to bring to the Social Security Agency (SSA) the following documents:

- a. If you have on-campus employment, an assistantship/fellowship:
  - An official, original letter from the employer on the department's letterhead (see a sample letter below).
  - An official, original letter from the OIS confirming your valid status (see "How to Obtain a DSO/RO's Letter of Valid Status" below)  
*\*\*Note: If J-1 students have the form DS-2019 issued by an organization other than The University of Akron (Fulbright, USAID programs), they must submit a letter from their organization permitting on campus employment.*
  - Copy of your assistantship contract if you are employed as a graduate assistant.
- b. If you are authorized to start CPT:
  - Submit the I-20 with the CPT authorization.
- c. If you start OPT or economic hardship employment:
  - Submit the EAD issued by the Immigration Service.
- d. If you are a J-1 student in AT or economic hardship employment:
  - Submit the letter of employment authorization from the OIS.

### **In addition to documents above, all applicants must submit:**

- A completed form SS-5, Application for a Social Security Card. The form can be obtained in a SSA office or downloaded at [www.socialsecurity.gov/online/ss-5.html](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/online/ss-5.html)
- Your immigration documents: valid passport with a visa stamp reflecting your F-1/J-1 status, the I-94 Form, I-20/DS-2019. *Note: Canadian citizens are exempt from visa requirements; The I-94 Form is*

Arrival/Departure Record created by the immigration officer at the port of entry's database. You may download this form from the website <http://www.cbp.gov/i94>.

- Your Zip Card (University of Akron ID).

### **Working While Awaiting an SSN**

You may work while your application for the Social Security Card is being processed. You need to submit the application receipt to the employer, so the employer will comply with its payroll withholding obligations. The employer can find information on how to report wages for an employee who has not yet received the SSN on the SSA's website <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/employer/hiring.htm>.

### **How to Obtain a DSO/RO's Letter of Valid Status**

- **F-1** Students – Complete the Letter Request Form and attach letter from on-campus employer (example below).
- **J-1** Students/Scholars with DS-2019 issued by organization other than the University of Akron – Attach letter from issuing organization

### **Once you have obtained the letters...**

Take them to the Social Security Administration, located on **2 S. Main Street, Akron, OH**

#### **SAMPLE LETTER FROM THE ON-CAMPUS EMPLOYER**

(The letter should be typed on **official department letterhead** and contain the **employer's original signature**)  
Social Security Administration

To Whom It May Concern:

This is to verify that \_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Name

has been offered on-campus employment [or is working] as a student assistant or a graduate assistant).

**Nature of Student's Job:** \_\_\_\_\_

Department of Employment: \_\_\_\_\_

**Start Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Number of Hours/Week:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Employer's Contact Information:** Empl. ID 34-6002924  
Employer Identification Number (EIN)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employer's Telephone Number

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Immediate Supervisor

Employer Signature (Original): \_\_\_\_\_

Signatory's Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_