HOW TO OBTAIN A SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER  
(for F-1 students)

F-1 students are eligible to obtain a social security number for work purposes if they have fully checked in at the International Services Office and are enrolled in a full course of study (12 credits for undergraduates and 9 credits for graduate students), and if they have employment. The Social Security Administration is currently not issuing numbers to students unless they can verify that they are employed.

*Note: Social Security Numbers are for work purposes only, and are NOT work authorization.* Social Security Numbers are issued by the Social Security Administration (SSA). While other organizations may request your social security number, there are other documents that you can provide to document your status. Federal regulations require that F-1 students must demonstrate that they have a specific job in order to be issued a social security number.

In order to obtain a social security number, you must bring a letter from your employer to the ISO. We will issue a letter confirming this employment and your eligibility for an SSN. You will then take those letters, along with your passport, I-20, and I-94 or I-797 to the SSA office.

1. Obtaining a social security number support letter (for on-campus employment).

In order to issue you a letter, we must have copies of all your current documents in order to validate your status. If you have traveled recently and have a new F-1 visa or I-94, have extended your passport, or have not given us your most up-to-date documents, please submit copies of all your immigration documents. If you are requesting this letter during walk-in advising, please bring your documents with you. The following is required to make a request to the ISO for a social security letter:

- Student must be officially registered for a full course of study, reflected in the GWeb Information System.
- A copy of a letter from your employing department, on GW letterhead, detailing the following information (for on-campus employment only). Note: Original letter must be presented to the Social Security Administration when applying for a number
  - Your position title
  - The number of hours you will work per week
  - The location of the employment
- F-1 students with fellowships or Graduate Assistantships (GTA, GRA, or GAA) can provide a copy of their award letter in lieu of the on campus employer letter.

2. Applying for a social security number at the Social Security Administration.

To apply for a social security number, the SSA requires original documents establishing age, identity and lawful alien status.

Please take your I-20, passport, I-94 or I-797 approval notice, your social security support letter from the ISO, letter from your employing department (for on-campus employment) and your GWorld card to the Social Security Administration to apply for a number. The office that is closest to the GW Foggy Bottom Campus is located at 2100 M Street, NW – you can apply at any office, but that one has the most experience working with GW students. If you have any questions, please see an ISO advisor during walk-in advising hours, Monday – Friday 1:30 pm – 5:00 pm.

Applying for a Social Security Number based on off-campus employment

- Students authorized for Curricular Practical Training (CPT) must show their I-20 with the CPT endorsement on page 3 when applying for a social security number.
- Students authorized for Optional Practical Training (OPT) must show a valid Employment Authorization Document (EAD) in order to apply for a social security number.
- Students authorized for off-campus employment (international organization, severe economic hardship) must show a valid EAD in order to apply.
• You should also present a letter from your employer, on company letterhead, verifying your employment
• Take your passport, I-94 or I-797 approval notice, and your I-20 with you.