New Students: SSN and ITIN

New international students in F-1 or J-1 visa status being paid by the university (e.g. compensation, taxable scholarship, fellowship, prize or award) are advised to take the steps listed below as soon as possible in the first semester. More information about Social Security Numbers and the application process. [1]

Step One: Register with the Yale International Tax Office & Complete FNIS

Some of you have already received an email from the Yale International Tax office with a request to complete the Foreign National Information System (FNIS) application. If you have not received an email, please follow the instructions on the International Tax Office website [2] to request the link to FNIS. Please complete this application as soon as possible.

Submitting a completed FNIS application will determine:

- Your U.S. tax resident status (Resident Alien [RA] or Nonresident Alien [NRA]) and proper tax withholdings.
- Whether you are eligible for a tax treaty benefit.

Once the International Tax Office receives and reviews your FNIS application, you will be notified of the next steps to follow. If you are:

- A non-resident F-1 and J-1 student, you will be exempt from OASDI and Medicare tax withholding. Check your pay stub.
- A tax resident of a treaty country and you have reported either a U.S. SSN or ITIN to the Yale International Tax Office, you may be exempt from certain federal taxes pursuant to the treaty.

Step Two: Apply for SSN or ITIN

The following students are eligible to apply for a Social Security Number two weeks after registering with OISS:

- F-1 students who have secured on campus employment, are receiving for-service fellowships, or are working off-campus with OPT or CPT.
- All F-1 PhD students.
- J-1 students with letter of permission to work from their visa sponsor (either Yale or outside organization,
If you are an F-1 student, receiving taxable scholarship or financial aid, but are not eligible for an SSN, apply for an Individual Tax Identification Number (ITIN).

Normally OISS can certify your documents and submit your ITIN application on your behalf, but due to switching remote work we are unable to process ITIN appointments at the moment. We apologize for the inconvenience this might cause and hope to resume helping you again with your ITIN applications soon.

Warning: In some Yale systems and forms, you might see a 9-digit number filled in as your U.S. SSN, sometimes referred to as a “dummy SSN”. You are never “assigned” an SSN number by the university; this is only done for onboarding purposes. This number is likely to be your student ID number (SID) and cannot be used as an actual SSN. The only way to obtain an SSN is applying in person at the Social Security Administration office.

Important Note: We are unable to obtain ITIN for dependents in F-2 or J-2 status. We recommend that individuals in F-2 or J-2 status apply in person at the local IRS office [3].

Step Three: Report Your SSN or ITIN to Your Registrar

Once you received your SSN or ITIN, report the number by going to your registrar in person:

- Yale College and Graduate School students can do this at 246 Church St
- Professional School students should visit your own school registrars

If you are eligible for a tax treaty benefit, also send an email to inform the International Tax Office [4] that you have reported your new SSN to the Registrar. Put “SSN Received” in the subject line, but do not email your Social Security Number. Never email your SSN or give it to anyone over the phone.