



Social Security Number for J-1 Scholars

(This letter is not for the purpose of applying for a social security number)

To Whom It May Concern:

The purpose of this letter is to clarify certain requirements that must be met before J-1 Exchange Visitors in the research scholar, professor, short-term scholar or specialist categories (hereafter referred to as J-1 scholars) can obtain social security numbers.

Only a J-1 scholar who is authorized for employment may apply for a social security number. Employment is indicated either as financial support in Section 5 of Form DS-2019 or in a letter from the Responsible or Alternate Responsible Officer of the J-1 Program.

In addition, please note that the Social Security Administration requires all J-1 scholar records to be verified by the Department of Homeland Security. In some cases, this process can take “several weeks or months” according to the Social Security Administration (SSA). Therefore, the length of the process of obtaining a social security number after application has been made is beyond the control of any J-1 Scholar.

J-1 scholars who are authorized for employment are, however, eligible to start work without a social security number, provided that they are in valid immigration status, have applied for a social security number, and the number subsequently obtained is used for the reporting of wages to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). For more information about the IRS, please visit <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/employer/hiring.htm>.

While individuals are not required to provide social security numbers to private businesses, J-1 Scholars who are not eligible for a social security number or are waiting for a social security number to be issued are often refused services. As listed on the Social Security Administration website, J-1 scholars can obtain many benefits and services without a social security number <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs/EN-05-10096.pdf>. Please note that J-1 scholars are not eligible for most government assistance.

We hope that given the above circumstances, J-1 scholars who are unable to provide social security numbers can be given an exception to business policy and be provided with services for which they would otherwise qualify.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

International Student and Scholar Services
University of Denver