

Social Security Checklist

(For International Students Who Do Not Already Have a Social Security

Number) **Welcome!**

As part of beginning your on-campus job at RISD, some international students will need to apply for a Social Security Number (SSN). This number is required for payroll possible tax treaties and tax reporting, and you'll keep it for life.

If you already have an SSN, you can skip this process. If you do not, please follow the steps below carefully. Once you complete them, you'll be ready to finish your employment paperwork with Student Employment and start your job.

Important Reminders

- You cannot begin working on campus until you apply for your Social Security Number (SSN) **and** complete employment paperwork with Student Employment.
- If you already have an SSN, you do **not** need to go through these steps.
- You may not apply for your SSN more than **30 days before your employment start date** (*the date on your employment verification letter*).
- Your Social Security card is yours for life — keep it safe.

Steps for Applying for a Social Security Card

1. Secure a Job & Employment Letter

- For **hourly jobs**: Your supervisor provides the Employment Verification Letter.
- For **Graduate Assistantships**: Student Employment provides the letter.
- The letter must be on RISD letterhead and list your job start date.
- If you were hired into more than one job, you only need **one Employment Verification Letter**.

2. Request ISSA Letter

- F-1 students: Submit the Social Security Letter Request via [Terra Dotta](#).
- J-1 students: Email issa@risd.edu.
- ISSA will then issue your Immigration Status Verification Letter.

3. Complete the SSN Application Online

- Go to the Social Security Administration (SSA) website and complete the [online SSN application](#).
- You'll be prompted to **schedule an appointment** at your local SSA office. •

Use this address for your appointment:

Social Security Administration

[6th Floor, One Empire Plaza](#)

Providence, RI 02903

(This office is within walking distance of the RISD campus.)

4. Appointment + Walk-In Option

- Even if the appointment date is far out, schedule it.
- SSA discourages walk-ins. Accepting walk-ins are at the discretion of the Social Security Administration (SSA) office. If you choose to walk-in, please be aware that you may be directed to return for your scheduled appointment.
- Your SSA appointment may be **after your intended job start date**. This is okay, but please remember: you **cannot begin working until your I-9 is completed** with Student Employment.
- If there will be a delay, please reach out to your **hiring department** to keep them updated.
- If your walk-in is successful, please **cancel your scheduled appointment** so another person can use the slot.

5. Gather Required Original Documents (no scans or copies)

- Employment Verification Letter (on RISD letterhead)
- Letter from ISSA
- Completed SSN application confirmation page
- Valid, unexpired passport
- Visa
- Most recent I-20
- Most recent I-94 (print at <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94>)

6. Submit Your Application

- Bring all documents to the SSA office.
- *Ask for a receipt showing you applied — you'll need this to complete your employment paperwork with Student Employment.*

7. Final Step

- Once you have your SSA receipt, schedule your **I-9 appointment** in [Penji](#) with Student

Employment.

- Bring all of your original documents with you to your in-person appointment. •
- After your I-9 is completed, you'll be cleared to begin working.

Need Help?

If you have any questions while completing this process, please reach out:

- **Student Employment Office**

20 Washington Place, 1st Floor

studentemployment@risd.edu | 401-427-6955

- **International Student & Scholar Affairs (ISSA)**

issa@risd.edu | [RISD ISSA Portal](#)

We're here to help you every step of the way!