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**Georgia Drivers License and**

**U.S. Social Security Card Information for International Students**

**Do I need a Georgia driver’s license or Social Security card? What are the benefits?**

Generally speaking, a U.S. driver’s license is the most common form of day-to-day identification in the U.S. because it contains your photo, a physical address and a unique, state-issued ID number. The U.S. has no “national identity card”. The driver’s license number is linked to law enforcement agencies for greater security in case of emergency. The driver’s license is convenient in many consumer transactions (personal checks, hotels, renting apartments, and buying certain items, such as alcohol.)

All employees in U.S. pay Social Security taxes to the federal government. Later in life, these taxes help fund retirement, disability and survivor benefits. As an international student, the advantages are more

short-term. A Social Security provides access to your personal credit history, which is normally checked when renting an apartment, applying for credit, purchasing a car, obtaining insurance, and accessing some federal services. A Social Security number is a **requirement** if you are legally employed in the U.S.

**I HAVE a Social Security number already, AND I’d like a Georgia driver’s license.**

Go directly to the Georgia Department of Driver Services to apply for a driver’s license. Be sure to bring your Social Security card with you, as well as the other documents listed in the next section.

**I DON’T HAVE a Social Security number, BUT I’d like a Georgia driver’s license.**

No person may obtain a Georgia driver’s license or state-issued identification card without providing a Social Security number. If you don’t have a Social Security number, you must first obtain Form SSAL676 (SSN Denial Notice) from your local Social Security office. This form is not available online and cannot be mailed. You have to pick it up in person.

After obtaining and completing Form SSAL676, bring it to any Georgia Department of Driver Services customer service center along with the following documents as proof of your legal resident alien status:

• Your Form I-20 (F-1 students), Form DS-2019 (J-1 students), or other U.S. visa documentation

• Valid passport

• Valid visa stamp (F-1, J-1 etc.) in your passport

• Valid, stamped I-94 card (Arrival-Departure Record, which is the small white card usually stapled in your passport/visa)

• Proof of Georgia residency—i.e., a copy of a lease or a utility bill (gas, electric, water or landline home phone bill) in your name. A letter from Clayton State University is not acceptable.

**I have a non-U.S. / International driver’s license. Do I need a Georgia driver’s license?**

If you are at least 16 years of age and have a valid driver’s license from your home country, you don’t need a Georgia driver’s license as long as you are a registered student in a Georgia school and you have paid your tuition for the semester in which you are registered. If you decide to use your home country driver’s license, it is recommended that you carry the following while driving:

• Your non-U.S. driver’s license

• Your student ID card or proof of registration at Clayton State University

• Proof of payment of your tuition to Clayton State University

• A copy of Georgia code 40-5-21(b) O.C.G.A.

You may download this form and print it from www.lexis-nexis.com/hottopics/gacode

**I have a non-U.S. / International driver’s license. Can I also get a Georgia driver’s license?**

If you tell the Georgia Department of Driver Services that you have a non-U.S. driver’s license from another country, they will take it from you in exchange for a Georgia driver’s license. However, if they are not aware that you have a driver’s license from another country, you will simply be issued a Georgia license. In effect, this will allow you to keep your non-U.S. driver’s license. Surrendering your non-U.S. driver’s license to the Georgia Department of Driver Services may result in difficulty getting another license from your home country. Therefore, if you apply for a Georgia Driver’s license, you should go with a friend in his/her car as if you don’t have a car or a driver’s license.

**What should I expect when I go to the Georgia Department of Driver Services?**

Normally, you must pass a vision test, a written test about Georgia traffic laws and signals, and a driving test. You must go in person to take the tests. The written test is given in English and in several other languages. You may call and ask in English if the test is given in your native language. You might need to call ahead for an appointment. Some offices operate on a walk-in basis.

The practical driving test is not given in rainy or bad weather, and you or someone you know must provide an insured car in good condition. (The driver’s license office does not provide vehicles for tests.)

**How long will it take for my driver’s license to arrive?**

F1 and J1 visa holders will not receive their driver’s licenses the same day of the application. You will be asked to return to the Georgia Department of Driver Services location where you applied, which usually takes five days or more. International students normally receive a driver’s license based on the end dates of their I-20 or other documentation which indicates the “program end-date” or validity.

This process takes time and patience. To complete the vision, written and driving test could take the entire day, with lots of waiting and standing in line. For that reason, it’s best to arrive early. People usually line up before the office opens.

**Social Security Card Information**

**I’d like a Social Security card.**

You must obtain employment in order to qualify for a Social Security number/Social Security card. The only employment enrolled F1 students are authorized to have, without additional approval from USCIS is

“on-campus” employment. Students who obtain employment through OPT or CPT may also qualify for a Social Security number.

Once you obtain employment, you may request two letters of support from your employer (i.e., Clayton State University employer, and ISSO). Take these letters with your Social Security application form to the

Social Security Administration Office. You may download and print the Social Security application from the agency’s Web site (see below).

**I’m interested in on-campus employment.**

On-campus employment (also known as “work-study”) is funded by two sources. The U.S. and Georgia governments help pay for some positions through federal and state taxes, so positions funded through *federal financial aid* are not available to international students. On the other hand, *institutional* work-study positions are funded by Clayton State University, and are open to all students. Positions are competitive and not guaranteed. For campus employment opportunities, contact the individual department or on-campus employer that interests you, or view student job postings at “Laker Career Zone” via the SWAN portal.

**IMPORTANT LINKS AND ADDRESSES**

**Georgia Department of Driver Services (DDS)**

Home page ................................................................................................................................... dds.ga.gov

Office locator …............................................................................................................. dds.ga.gov/locations

Driver’s license manual ……………..................... http://www.dds.ga.gov/docs/forms/FullDriversManual.pdf

Driver’s license information

for non-U.S. citizens.…………………….http://www.dds.ga.gov/drivers/DLdata.aspx?con=1741471757&ty=dl

**DDS location** (nearest Clayton State University)

Tuesday–Friday, 7:30 – 6:30p.m; Saturday 7:30 – 12:00 noon

5036 Georgia Highway 85

Forest Park, GA 30297

678.413.8400 or 678.413.8500

Cash, personal check, money order, VISA, MasterCard, AMX and Discover accepted

**Social Security Administration**

Home page ………………………………………………..………............................................................................ ssa.gov

Office locator ……………………………………...…lower-left corner of ssa.gov. click ‘find a Social Security Office’

Application form …………........................................................................................... ssa.gov/online/ss-5.pdf