Applying for a Social Insurance Number (SIN)

What is a Social Insurance Number?

A SIN is a 9 digit number unique to you that the Canadian government requires you to have for taxation purposes if you are a worker. Without a SIN, you cannot get paid. You are required to give your employer your SIN at the time that you start working.

You are responsible for protecting your SIN. Ensure that you store documents containing your SIN and personal information in a safe place. For more information about protecting your SIN, please visit https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/sin/reports/shared-responsibility.html

NOTE: A valid SIN alone does not automatically make you eligible to work on or off campus. You must still meet the eligibility requirements (including a work permit if applicable) in order to legally work, even if you already have a valid SIN.

When is a SIN required?

A SIN is only required if you earn income in Canada for work on or off campus. You cannot get a SIN if you do not have at least one of the following: (1) a work permit; (2) a study permit with a notation confirming you may accept employment.

If you are not eligible for a SIN you can apply for an Individual Tax Number (ITN) for the purposes of filing a tax return. Please visit: https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/forms-publications/forms/t1261.html for more information.

Note that the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) requires SFU to include each student's SIN or ITN on their T2202-Tuition and Enrollment Certificate. As such, please be sure to update your SIN or ITN in goSFU by December 1, 2019. Visit the SFU website at https://www.sfu.ca/students/fees/social-insurance.html for more information about how to update your information in goSFU.

How can I apply for a SIN?

You can apply for a SIN online or by mail (recommended). You can also apply in person at a Service Canada office if you are unable to apply online or by mail.

1. Apply online
   Please visit the Service Canada website at: https://sin-nas.canada.ca/en/Sin/ to apply online for a SIN. To apply online you will need to complete an online application form and upload copies of at least 3 different documents:
   - a valid primary document that proves your identity and legal status in Canada (e.g. study permit, work permit), and
   - a valid secondary document to confirm your identity (e.g. passport, BCID, other government-issued ID), and
   - a proof of address (e.g. any document issued by SFU that shows your address, a bank statement, a residential tenancy agreement/lease)

   Digital copies of your documents must be clear and legible. Copies must include all the information that appears on the front and the back of the document(s) you are providing. For more information about applying online for a SIN, and the documents required, please consult the SIN Applicants Guide: https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/sin/applicants-guide.html#primary

2. Apply by mail
   To apply by mail you will need:
   - a completed SIN application form
   - the required original primary documents and supporting documents (if required). Photocopies are not accepted.

   If you are applying by mail, you should send your application by registered mail (Canada Post). For more information about applying by mail, please visit: https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/sin/apply.html

Use the chart below to determine which primary documents you will need to apply.

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If you hold a valid work permit:

Do you hold a valid work permit?

YES

Apply using your valid work permit.

NO

Does your study permit state that you "may work" or "may accept employment"?

YES

Apply using your valid study permit.

NO

You may need to request an amendment to your study permit or apply to change the conditions of your study permit. Contact an International Student Advisor, Immigration Specialist to see which option is right for you.
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3. Apply in person

Service Canada Centres are gradually reopening to help serve most Canadians within 100km of where they live and to support clients who are unable to apply online or by mail. To request an appointment, please use the online service request form which you can find at: https://eservices.canada.ca/en/service/

Find out if your local Service Canada Centre is open by visiting: http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/tbsc-fsco/sc-hme.jsp?lang=eng

How can I request an amendment to my study permit so that I can obtain a SIN?

Visit https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/application/application-forms-guides/request-amend-record-landing-confirmation-permanent-residence-valid-temporary-resident-documents.html for details on how to request an amendment to your study permit. There is no fee for this request.

The following documents must be included with your request:

- Application form (IMM 1436), completed and signed
- Original study permit
  - Keep a photocopy of your study permit for your records
- Photocopy of one piece of valid government-issued photo ID (e.g. passport, BC ID card, etc.)
- Photocopy of one piece of valid government-issued or internationally recognized identification from outside of Canada before your entry to Canada (e.g. birth certificate)
- Original (initial) letter of acceptance and/or confirmation of enrollment letter that you used to apply for your study permit

Mail the above documents to the address indicated on the application form using a trackable method (e.g. XpressPost). Keep photocopies of your completed application form and supporting documents for your records. Please visit https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/application/check-processing-times.html for estimated application processing times.

Once IRCC has approved your request, they will send your amended study permit to you by mail. You can then use this amended study permit to apply for a SIN. Please speak with an International Student Advisor, Immigration Specialist before applying to see if this is the appropriate option for you.

How can I request to change the conditions of my study permit so that I can obtain a SIN?

The process to change the conditions of your study permit is similar to applying for a study permit extension. More information about the study permit extension process can be found in our Extending your Study Permit handout. You will likely need to include a letter in your application explaining how you qualify for a change of conditions.

Once IRCC has approved your application, they will send your updated study permit to you by mail. You can then use this study permit to apply for a SIN. Please speak with an International Student Advisor, Immigration Specialist before applying to see if this is the appropriate option for you.

Is there an application fee for a SIN?

There is no fee for a SIN application.

How long will it take to get my SIN?

According to the Service Canada website, if your SIN application meets the requirements you will receive a letter with your SIN by mail within 20 business days from the date your application is received. If more than 25 business days have passed and you have not yet received your SIN, please contact the SIN program. Contact information can be found at: https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/corporate/contact/sin.html

Will my SIN have an expiry date?

Your SIN will expire at the same time as your immigration document (study permit, work permit, etc). When you renew your study or work permit, remember to renew your SIN (if eligible). You will only be able to renew your SIN if you still meet the requirements under the SIN Program.

Where can I find more information about Social Insurance Numbers?

For more information about the SIN Program, including tips on how to protect yourself from identity theft, please visit the Service Canada website at: https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/sin.html

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