

## Frequently Asked Questions about Taxes for Non-Resident Aliens

*All students in F status are required to file some form of tax returns, even if you have earned no income in the United States.*

**Forms you may receive prior to filing your taxes** (please note that you may receive any number or combination of these forms, and that it differs from person to person, so even if your friend received more or less than you, it is normal!)

- **W-2 form** - from any institution you have received wages from.
- **1042s form** - Form 1042s is used to report income paid to a non-resident regardless of whether the payment is taxable. The form has a number of purposes. It can be used to report wages exempt under a tax treaty, wages earned as an independent contractor, royalties, and **scholarship or fellowship grants**. This form is also used for students who are exempt because of tax treaties between the US and their home countries.
- **1098T** – Schools must send Form 1098-T to any student who paid "qualified educational expenses" in the preceding tax year. If you are filing as a Non-Resident, you do not use this form when you file.

### Documents needed to file your taxes

- Passport or other valid photo ID
  - US Entry and Exit Dates for current and all past visits to the US
  - All tax forms, including Forms W-2, 1042-S and/or 1099 - if you received them
  - Visa/Immigration Status information, including Form I-20 (for F visa holders)
  - Social Security Number (SSN) or Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN)
  - If you are using Sprintax for State Tax Return(s) preparation only you will need a copy of your already prepared Federal Tax return
  - Copy of 2014 tax return if you did one
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- An on-line program for filling out your Federal tax returns that is specifically for non-resident aliens, called **Sprintax** is available this year. A code will be needed at the end of your session, at which point you will contact the International Student Office and ask for either the Federal Tax code or the Federal and State combined Tax code. The program will allow you to print all of the required completed forms so that you can copy them and mail them to the IRS address listed in the instructions. You do not submit online!
  - Different kinds of taxes are withheld by employers. The W-2 form has boxes for reporting withholding of Federal Income Tax (box 2), Social Security Tax (box 4), Medicare Tax (box 6), State Income Tax (box 17) and local income tax (box 19). Some individuals who received form W-2 will find that all of these boxes have amounts in

them; others will find only one or none of the boxes showing tax withheld.

- International students in F-1 status for approximately 5 years or less (since 2010 or later) file tax forms as non-residents using a 1040NR or 1040-NREZ form. Research scholars or faculty in J-1 status for 2 years or less (since 2013 or later) also file as non-residents. If you did not earn any U.S. income during 2015, then you are required to only file form 8843, Statement for Exempt Individuals. One purpose of the 8843 is to verify that the non-resident qualifies for exempt days of presence, and thus shields the non-resident from being taxed as a resident. You do not need a Social Security Number to file an 8843. You may use the Sprintax to file the 8843 or use the link on the Current International Student website to file it on your own.
- International students who have been in for F-1 status for more than 5 years, research scholars and faculty who have been in J-1 status for more than 2 years, or those who are in other non-immigrant statuses, may need to file as residents for tax purposes and complete the regular 1040EZ forms.

If you were employed during 2015, you can expect to receive form W-2, Wage and Tax Statement and/or a 1042-S that indicates the amount of your financial aid that is taxable or is exempt by reason of tax treaty with your home country. Your bank, credit union or other financial institution may mail you a yearly statement of interest earned (Form 1099) as well.

**\*\*\*The deadline for filing your Federal income tax returns is April 15. If you are leaving for spring term, please complete these returns BEFORE you leave.**

**NOTE: No one in ISS or the Business Office is a tax accountant and cannot help you file your tax returns. If you are a non-resident and have questions, there will be a support function in the Sprintax program and I highly encourage you to attend one of the tax workshops. If you are filing as a resident for tax purposes, then we advise you to use one of the market softwares such as TurboTax or TaxAct.**

## **Consequences of Not Filing Tax Forms**

(For Tax Year 2015)

The material contained in this message comes from Internal Revenue Service publications, discussions with IRS staff, and other income tax publications and materials.

We in International Student Services are sometimes asked what can happen if an F-1 student fails to file tax forms yearly. There can be immigration consequences for failing to file tax forms. For example, applicants to change form F-1 to H-1B (the professional worker visa) can be asked by the Immigration Service to submit copies of previous years' income tax forms as part of their H-1B application. Applicants for permanent residency ("green cards") can be asked to show copies of tax forms filed for previous years. A person who appears at a U.S. consulate abroad for

consular processing of a permanent residency visa application may be asked to produce U.S. income tax forms from their previous years in the U.S.

While some states may take 2 to 3 years to figure out that you haven't paid any taxes due, they will eventually send you a letter and you will be required to either justify why you were exempt from paying taxes or have to pay penalties on the amount due.

If you did not file tax returns last year and should have, you will have to complete the forms on your own.

**The Office of International Student Services is neither qualified nor permitted to give individual tax advice. Students with complicated tax situations may wish to consult with a tax preparation service, professional tax accountant, or tax attorney who is knowledgeable about non-resident tax law.**

## **Assembling and Mailing Income Tax Forms**

(For Tax Year 2015)

How To Assemble Your Tax Forms Prior to Mailing Them:

If you are filing a federal form 1040NR-EZ or 1040NR with a form 8843, you should first staple the Copy B of any W-2 forms and/or 1042s forms to the lower FRONT of the 1040NR-EZ or 1040NR. If you are also required to submit any special schedules or additional forms, staple those behind the 1040NR-EZ or 1040NR. The last form behind the 1040NR-EZ or 1040NR should be form 8843.

If you owe taxes and are required to write a check, make the check payable to the 'U.S. Department of the Treasury'. In the memo or "for" line on the check, write "Income Tax 2015" and your social security number. Do not staple or tape your check to your tax forms, just enclose it with your forms in the same envelope. Of course, be sure to make a photocopy of each form before mailing!

**Before mailing anything, MAKE ONE COPY FOR YOUR RECORDS AND ONE COPY TO ENCLOSE WITH YOUR STATE OF MAINE TAX FORMS!**

The tax program will tell you the address to where you mail your Federal tax returns.

### **REFUNDS:**

Due to problems with processing for students with 1042-S, it is advised that you budget several hundred dollars to pay State taxes. Refunds for Federal returns have been significantly delayed.