



CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

International Student Tax Information

This document should be used only as a guide for understanding what is required of you as an international student. It is not intended to be a step-by-step guide to completing your U.S. tax forms. Please refer directly to the [Internal Revenue Service Website](#) for the most current information for international student taxes.

All International Students:

- are subject to taxation for money made while in the United States.
- are required to file some tax forms, even if you did NOT work.

Who must file taxes?

Tax forms are reports about money you earned and activities during the previous calendar year.

- If you were not in the United States in the previous calendar year, you do not have to file tax forms.
- If you were here even one day in the previous year, you may need to file tax forms.
- Tax forms are due each year on April 15th.
- **Important Note: the staff at the CIE are not trained in taxation and therefore cannot answer specific tax questions or help you prepare your tax forms. Ultimately it is your responsibility to meet your tax obligations and do so accurately.**

Why file taxes?

Every international student is required to file a tax return as a condition of your visa, but not everyone will pay taxes to the American government. International students are entitled to a number of benefits and exemptions, so many will not owe anything. In fact, if you paid too much tax throughout the year, you may be entitled to a refund check.

Consequences of Failure to File:

- Nonimmigrant alien status requires that the individual not violate any U.S. laws, including tax laws
- Penalty & Interest
- Taxed on worldwide income

How do I know if I earned US income?

If you earned wages from a job in the United States, received scholarship money (above and beyond the cost of tuition from an American organization, or made interest on money in an American bank account, you made US source income. The full list of potential income sources can be found on the [IRS website](#).

Steps to filing taxes:

If you are an international student or scholar, follow these steps to file a tax return:

[Step 1: Determine your residence status.](#)

[Step 2: Determine whether you had any income from US sources in the previous year](#)

[Step 3: Determine which forms you need to fill out.](#)

[Step 4: What information do I need to fill out these forms?](#)

[Step 5: Determine if you owe anything.](#)

[Step 6: Double-check the documents to make sure they are correct.](#)

[Step 7: Mail your forms to the appropriate address.](#)

[Step 8: Keep a copy of all the documents for your own record](#)

(Source: <http://www.internationalstudent.com/>)

In general, what forms must be filed?

If you did not earn money in the previous calendar year:

- [Form 8843](#)

If you have been in the US as a student, teacher or trainee for any part of more than 5 calendar years, you may be required to file your taxes in a different status. Please carefully review the information in part III on Form 8843 and on the IRS website to determine whether you can still claim an exemption as a student

- *This is a helpful 8843 Tax Wizard through internationalstudent.com:*

<https://www.internationalstudent.com/tax/form/>

If you earned money in the previous year:

- [Form 8843](#), and
- [Form 1040NR-EZ](#) or [Form 1040NR](#)
- 1 copy of form W2(s), if applicable and/or 1 copy of form 1042-S, if applicable

If you do it yourself, it is free. Professional tax preparation services charge a fee. The Center for International Education recommends that you use a tax service, like [Sprintax](#), to assist you with your tax return if you earned any money during the previous calendar year. Sprintax is designed specifically for international students, and is an easy-to-use, step-by-step tool to help you prepare your taxes online, hassle-free. Using this online service will help you be sure that you benefit from any tax treaties for your home country, and ensure that you don't miss anything. Below are sample prices for this service. (**note that non-residents may not use Turbotax to complete taxes. Sprintax is the service that works like this for international students)

| Form | Price |
|--------------|---------|
| Form 8843 | \$15.95 |
| Form 1040-NR | \$35.95 |

Where to send your Tax Forms:

Department of the Treasury
International Revenue Service Center
Austin, TX 73301-0215

Resources:

[Study in the States – International Students Learn about Filing Taxes](#)

[Foreign Students & Scholars Information \(IRS\)](#)

<https://www.internationalstudent.com/tax/faqs/>

You may also qualify to receive free tax return preparation through the [Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program.](#)