

# Tax Information for Trainees & Interns

The terms of your visa require you to comply with all U.S laws and regulations which includes that you file an accurate income tax return. Filing tax returns will ensure that you are following laws. It is also important for potential future immigration benefits. For example, you might be required to show proof that you filed if you wish to change your visa status, or obtain permanent residency, or regain entry into the United States once you have left.

It is also necessary to file a tax return to claim a refund of overpaid taxes or to pay a balance on underpaid taxes.

**IMPORTANT - Your host trainer MUST deduct taxes from every paycheck. If your host trainer is not deducting taxes, call the MAST office immediately. You will be responsible for paying these taxes the following year in one large lump sum.**

You are required to pay the following taxes:

- Federal Income tax
- State Income tax
- Local taxes (where applicable)

You DO NOT pay the following taxes:

- Social Security tax
- Federal Unemployment taxes
- Medicare

If Social Security, Federal Unemployment, or Medicare taxes are withheld from your check, you should ask your host trainer to refund them immediately. You can contact MAST International if your host trainer needs clarification.

## TERMS TO KNOW

TERM	EXPLANATION
NRA	Non-resident alien
W-2	Statement of wages earned and taxes withheld
Form 1040 NR	U.S. Non-resident Alien Tax Return (and instructions)
Form 1040NR-EZ	U.S. Non-resident Alien Tax Return short form (and instructions)
Form 1099-INT	A bank statement listing the amount of interest earned
Form 8843	Form filed by NRAs to show exemption from the substantial presence test
FICA	Federal Social Security Tax
FUTA	Federal Unemployment Tax
Tax return	Official statement filed with the IRS to report taxable income during a calendar year
IRS	Internal Revenue Service (branch of government that collects taxes)
Tax payer	YOU

# The Two Ws

When you start your training in the U.S., you will fill out a W-4 Form so your host trainer can estimate what income should be withheld from your wages for tax purposes. This is then paid directly to the U.S. treasury on your behalf. At the end of the tax year (every April), you must verify that you have paid the correct amount of tax by filing a tax return.

## W-4

Your employer may tell you to follow the instructions printed on the form, but this is not correct. The instructions on the W-4 Form are for U.S. residents; they are not for you. Please follow the instructions below.

1. Mark or check "Single" on line 3, even if you are married.
2. Claim "1" on line 5. If you are a resident of Canada, Mexico, Japan, South Korea, or a U.S. national, please visit the IRS website for instructions: [www.irs.gov/publications/p519/ch08.html](http://www.irs.gov/publications/p519/ch08.html)
3. Write "NRA" or "Non-Resident Alien" on line 6
4. Do not claim "exempt" on line 7. Line 7 should be left blank.

Separate here and give Form W-4 to your employer. Keep the top part for your records.

**Form W-4** **Employee's Withholding Allowance Certificate** OMB No. 1545-0074  
 Department of the Treasury Internal Revenue Service **2016**

► Whether you are entitled to claim a certain number of allowances or exemption from withholding is subject to review by the IRS. Your employer may be required to send a copy of this form to the IRS.

1 Your first name and middle initial: **John D.** Last name: **Doe** 2 Your social security number: **123-45-6789**

Home address (number and street or rural route): **123 Main St. #456** 3  Single  Married  Married, but withheld at higher Single rate. Note: If married, but legally separated, or spouse is a nonresident alien, check the "Single" box.

City or town, state, and ZIP code: **Collegietown, MA 54321** 4 If your last name differs from that shown on your social security card, check here. You must call 1-800-772-1213 for a replacement card.

5 Total number of allowances you are claiming (from line H above or from the applicable worksheet on page 2): **5** 6 Additional amount, if any, you want withheld from each paycheck: **Non-Resident Alien** 7  I claim exemption from withholding for 2012, and I certify that I meet both of the following conditions for exemption:  
 • Last year I had a right to a refund of all federal income tax withheld because I had no tax liability; and  
 • This year I expect a refund of all federal income tax withheld because I expect to have no tax liability.  
 If you meet both conditions, write "Exempt" here.

Under penalties of perjury, I declare that I have examined this certificate and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it is true, correct, and complete.

Employee's signature (This form is not valid unless you sign it.): **John Doe** Date: **06/10/2016**

8 Employer's name and address (Employer: Complete lines 8 and 10 only if sending to the IRS.) 9 Office code (optional) 10 Employer identification number (EIN)

For Privacy Act and Paperwork Reduction Act Notice, see page 2. Cat. No. 10220Q Form W-4 (2014)

## W-2

At the beginning of the year, your host trainer will send you a W-2 Form (he/she is required by law to mail your W-2 to you by February 15). Please give your employer your home country address. If you don't, he/she will not be able to send you the necessary forms to file for your tax return. You may also provide an e-mail address to receive an electronic copy. You will need the W-2 form to file your tax return and receive any refunds due.

Before leaving your job, give your employer a self-addressed envelope so that he or she can mail you your W-2. This form summarizes your earnings and taxes withheld from you the previous year. A W-2 usually has four copies: federal copy, state copy, local/city copy, and employee copy.

OMB No. 1545-0008

a Control number	1 Wages, tips, other compensation	2 Federal income tax withheld
b Employer identification number	\$4,000.00	\$210.00
c Employer's name, address, and ZIP code	3 Social security wages	4 Social security tax withheld
JOHN DOE COLLEGETOWN, STATE 54321	5 Medicare wages and tips	6 Medicare tax withheld
d Employee's social security number	7 Social security tips	8 Allocated tips
123-45-6789	9 Advance EIC payment	10 Dependent care benefits
e Employee's name, address, and ZIP code	11 Nonqualified plans	12 Benefits included in box 1
54321 DORMATORY RD COLLEGETOWN, STATE 54321	13	14 Other
15 Statutory employee <input type="checkbox"/> Deceased <input type="checkbox"/> Person <input type="checkbox"/> Legal <input type="checkbox"/> Deferred <input type="checkbox"/>	16 State Employer's state I.D. no.	17 State wages, tips, etc.
		\$4,000.00
	18 State income tax	\$160.00
	19 Locality name	20 Local wages, tips, etc.
		21 Local income tax

Form **W-2** Wage and Tax Statement  
 Department of the Treasury—Internal Revenue Service  
 Copy 1 For State, City, or Local Tax Department

**TAXES ARE DUE APRIL 17, 2018**

# How to File Your State & Federal Tax Return

1. You can complete and file the forms yourself. You will need:

- W-2 Form
- 1040NR-EZ Form
- State Income tax forms (These forms are different for each state. You can find more info at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov).)

2. You can use a company to file the tax returns on your behalf.

## CAUTION:

- Do not use commonly advertised tax preparation products such as TurboTax, H&R Block, Tax Act, or any others not designed specifically for non-resident aliens.
- Using those will cause errors, delays and possibly additional tax penalties since they were not designed for NRAs.

MAST International recommends using **Sprintax**, it offers:

- Multi-lingual information
- Has 24/7 live tax assistance by phone and online chat
- You can complete a State Income Tax return for an additional fee
- Allows you to save your return to continue later
- Guarantees IRS compliance

**Sprintax IS NOT affiliated with MAST International or the University of Minnesota.**

Here is how it works. Gather the following documents/information before starting your returns:

- Passport
- U.S. entry and exit dates for current and all previous visits to the U.S.
- All tax forms you've received (W-2, 1099 bank interest statement, etc)
- Visa/Immigration status information (DS-2019)
- Social security number
- (For State Tax Returns you will need your completed Federal Tax Return)
- Current U.S. address AND permanent foreign (home country) address
- Copy of past year's tax forms (if you had any)

When you have all the documents/information then:

1. Create an account at Sprintax.com
2. Answer some easy-to-understand questions
3. Sprintax then reviews your details for all applicable allowances and deductions
4. Sprintax finalizes the calculations and prepares your tax return
5. You print your tax return, sign it and mail it to the IRS

# **IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING TAXES**

**READ ALL THIS INFORMATION CAREFULLY**

**While MAST International is happy to help you with questions, tax advising is NOT one of them. MAST International staff are not tax professionals and cannot assist or advise on tax preparation.**

TAXES ARE DUE **APRIL 17, 2018**. Your return or check must be *post-marked* by this day. It is recommended to send your tax return by certified mail.

If you worked more than one job, you will have more than one W-2. Make sure you have all W-2s before you file your return.

If you were present in the U.S. during any part of 2017 you must complete and submit some type of tax document. If you arrived in December but did not receive any wages in 2017, you must complete and return form 8843. This form is simple to complete and can be downloaded from: [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov).

You may want to keep your U.S. bank account open through the tax season after you go home. That way, you can deposit your check (by mail) then close your account online and wire the balance back to yourself.

Another option is to coordinate with a friend in the U.S. from your country who may be able to facilitate the deposit for you.

If you are having the check returned to you by mail rather than direct deposited to your bank account, remember, it will be sent to the address that you give the IRS. If you move before your refund arrives, you must make arrangements.

If you are leaving the U.S. before filing your return, make arrangements to receive your final paycheck and W-2 **BEFORE DEPARTING THE U.S.**

**Tax Treaties.** Some MAST students ask about tax treaties. Depending on your nationality and other conditions, you may be able to claim a tax refund under an international 'tax treaty'. Tax treaties are agreements between the U.S. and other countries that allow you to claim back tax you paid while working in the U.S. Sprintax always checks if you're eligible for an international tax treaty when preparing your tax return. Your eligibility depends on factors like your nationality (tax residence), length of stay, purpose of your stay, type of income and visa.

If you are preparing your own taxes, you can find information about tax treaties in Publication 901 available at: [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov)

**If you get a letter from the IRS:**

You should contact the IRS directly at +1 267 941 1000, which is the phone number of the Non Resident department within the IRS. The best option is to call early in the morning (they open at 07:00 AM eastern time) when the hold time may not be as long.

Before calling, review the IRS letter and compare the issue(s) identified in the letter with the tax return completed in Sprintax (or on your self-prepared form) and provide the information/documents requested by the IRS (if any) by the due date stated in the notice.

Sprintax is a self-preparation tool so the information on your tax return will depend on the information you entered through the Sprintax software.

**WARNING:**

If the U.S. government owes you a refund, but you don't file a tax return, you will not get a refund.

If you owe the U.S. government additional taxes, but you don't file a tax return or pay your tax bill, you will owe penalties.

If you apply for a future visa status or permanent residency in the U.S., you will be asked to provide copies of all tax forms and tax returns for every year you were present in the U.S. If you failed to do so, your process will be delayed or negatively affected.

\*\* Always keep a complete copy of your U.S. tax returns and forms 8843. \*\*

**BEWARE:**

There are many bad people trying to trick people, especially international students, during tax season by using phishing scams or phone scams. Phishing scams are fake e-mails that look like they come from the IRS. The official IRS website is: [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov). They may look like *irs.gov*, *irs.net*, or *similar*. The IRS does not initiate contact by e-mail, text message or social media, period. Phone scams are fake calls from imposters pretending to be IRS agents. Both phishing or phone scams may tell you that you owe money and to avoid jail you can pay immediately with a credit card or they may say that they have huge tax refund for you but you must give them your personal information such as bank account, credit card, or social security number.

Don't be fooled. HANG UP or DELETE!

**(The above tax information is not meant to be legal advice, just helpful and useful guidelines.)**