

Obtaining a National Insurance (NI) Number

What is a National Insurance number?

National Insurance is a compulsory UK Government tax managed by HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC), which is deducted automatically from each payment of an employee's salary, if they earn above the lower earnings limit (as set by the UK Government).

Who pays National Insurance?

Everyone who works in the UK and earns above the lower earnings limit must pay National Insurance contributions. International students are not exempt. National Insurance contributions cannot be claimed back.

If you have started or are about to start work or are looking for work (some employers require the NI number as part of the job application), you will need a NI number.

UK residents normally receive their NI number automatically from the UK Government around the time of their 16th birthday.

If you do not have a NI number, you will need to apply for one

Applying for a NI number

Before applying, if you have a biometric residence permit check if you already have a National Insurance number printed on the back of your biometric residence. Remember, you can start work before you receive your National Insurance number if you can prove you have the right to work in the UK.

You can apply via <https://www.gov.uk/apply-national-insurance-number/how-to-apply> or call the National Insurance number application line (calls are free) between 8am and 6pm, Monday to Friday.

0800 141 2075

If you are hard of hearing, or have speech difficulties, please use the textphone number: 0800 141 2438.

You'll receive the application form in the post, with an accompanying letter. You'll need to return the form once completed, with proof of your identity and of your right to work or study in the UK. The letter that comes with the application form will tell you which documents you can use to provide this proof.

After your application has been submitted and processed, the outcome will be advised to you in writing. If your application is successful, you will receive confirmation of your NI number.

It can take up to **4 weeks** to get your National Insurance number.

You can [call the application helpline](#) if:

- you applied more than 4 weeks ago
- you have moved house since you applied
- your personal details have changed since you applied

If you have an application reference number, have it ready when you call. You will find it at the top of the confirmation email you were sent after you applied.

