

International Student Tax Requirements for 2021

Who must file tax forms for 2020 tax season?

Even if you did not earn any income, if you were physically in the US on F or J status anytime between January 1 –December 31, 2020, you're obligated to file a Form 8843 with the IRS (the Internal Revenue Service, or 'IRS', are the US tax authorities).

Meanwhile, if you earned more than \$0 of taxable US source income, you may need to file a federal tax return with the IRS. Depending on your individual circumstances, you may also need to file a state tax return(s).

Tax Filing Deadline:

April 15, 2021 is the last day for residents and non-residents who earned US income to file Federal tax returns for the 2020 tax year.

Who is considered Resident or Non-resident for Federal Tax Purposes:

Generally, most international students and scholars who are on **F, J, M or Q visas** are considered **non-residents for tax purposes**. International undergraduate students on J-1 and F-1 visas are automatically considered non-resident for their first five calendar years in the US, while scholars/researchers on J visas are automatically considered non-residents for two out of the last six calendar years in the US. If you've been in the US for longer than the five or two year periods, the [Substantial Presence Test](#) will determine your tax residency.

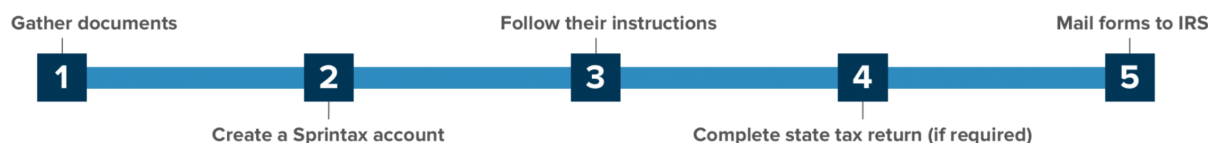
How to File:

We have teamed up with [Sprintax](#) to provide you with an easy-to-use tax preparation software designed for non-resident students and scholars in the US. **University of Western States staff are not qualified or allowed to provide individual tax advice.**

After you login to [Sprintax](#), you will be asked a series of questions about the time you have spent in the US over recent years. [Sprintax](#) will then determine your tax status. If it determines that you are a "non-resident alien" (NRA) for federal tax purposes, you can continue to use the software to respond to a series of guided questions. [Sprintax](#) will then complete and generate the tax forms you need to send to the tax authorities.

However, if [Sprintax](#) determines that you are a resident alien for federal tax purposes, you won't be able to continue using the software.

Step-by-Step Guide on How to File Your Non-resident Tax Forms (F and J)



Steps to File Your Non-Resident Tax Forms (F and J)

1) Gather the documents you may need for [Sprintax](#)

Document	Description
✓ Passport	
✓ Visa/Immigration information, including form I-20 (F status) or form DS-2019 (J status)	
✓ Social Security or Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (if you have one)	This is not needed if you had no income and the 8843 is the only form you have to file.
✓* W-2	This form reports your wage earnings if you worked. If you had more than one employer you should get a W-2 from each employer. It is issued by the end of January for the previous year. Make sure all employers from last year have an up-to-date address for you.
✓* 1042-S	<p>This form is used to report:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. stipend, scholarship, fellowship income and travel grants (not tuition reduction or exemption) 2. income covered by a tax treaty 3. payment for other types of services (eg by the semester as a note-taker) <p>If you received this type of income, the 1042-S will be mailed to you by March 15 by the payer.</p> <p>Note: Only non-resident aliens receive this form. If your tax status changes to a resident alien you will not get a 1042-S. Login to Sprintax to check your tax status if you're not sure.</p>
✓ US entry and exit dates for current and past visits to the US	In addition to passport stamps, you can review or print your US travel history here

Document	Description
✓* 1099	This form reports miscellaneous income. Can be interest on bank accounts, stocks, bonds, dividends, earning through freelance employment
✗ 1098-T	This form is NOT needed and can NOT be used for a non-resident tax return because NRAs are not eligible to claim education expense tax credits.

2) Create a Sprintax Account:

You will receive an email from the international student office providing you with a link to [Sprintax](#) to set up your account as well as your unique code to use on [Sprintax](#). **This unique code will cover the costs of the federal tax return and 8843 at no cost to you.** Open your new [Sprintax](#) account by creating a UserID and password or if you have an existing account on [Sprintax](#) you can login using your existing credentials.

3) Follow the [Sprintax](#) instructions

If you did not earn any US Income: [Sprintax](#) will generate a completed Form 8843 for you and each of your dependents (if you have any).

If you did earn US Income: [Sprintax](#) will generate your "tax return documents", including either a 1040NR-EZ or a longer form 1040NR, depending on your circumstances.

4) (With U.S. income only) If required, complete your state tax return

After you finish your federal return, [Sprintax](#) will inform you if you need to complete a state tax return. If so, you will have the option to use [Sprintax](#) for an additional fee. However, it is your choice to use them or to do the state tax return on your own.

5) Read the instructions for filing/ mailing your returns

Remember to read the instructions that [Sprintax](#) provides.

You will be required to download, print and sign your federal tax return and mail it to the IRS. If you have a state filing requirement, you must also mail this to the tax authorities.

Finally, if you only need to file Form 8843, this will also need to be mailed to the IRS.

Need [Sprintax](#) Support?

If you need help while using [Sprintax](#), you can contact their support team using the options below

Email - hello@sprintax.com

24/7 Live Chat Help

[Refer to their FAQs](#)



[Sprintax](#) Educational Tax Videos and Blog:

You also have access to the [Sprintax YouTube account](#) where there are a number of educational videos on non-resident taxes. These will provide further clarity on non-resident tax and how to use Sprintax. Sprintax also offer a range of useful content on their [blog](#) to help you file your return.

DISCLAIMER: International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) and the school are NOT permitted to assist any student/scholar with any IRS tax form preparation or tax related questions. The information provided is intended for your benefit. Any questions or concerns should be directed to [Sprintax](#), a certified tax preparer or a local IRS field office.