

National Insurance numbers

In the first instance, check www.hmrc.gov.uk/ni which covers all you might need to know about NI numbers, and also www.gov.uk/apply-national-insurance-number for specific information on applying for a National Insurance number.

For those in the UK at the age of 16, a National Insurance number should be allocated automatically.

For those for whom this is not the case you need to apply for your National Insurance number by phone (0800 141 2075) if you are intending to work immediately, or ring the helpline on 0300 200 3500 if applying for the purposes of obtaining a Student Loan.

If you are living outside the UK you can only apply for a NI number once you are in the UK. You must have proof that you have the right to work or study in the UK to be eligible to have a National Insurance number. Proof for British or EU citizens would be your passport and for others it would be a visa showing you have the right to enter and work in the UK.

In case you need to have an 'Evidence of identity' interview it would be prudent to allow up to 3 months for the whole process, from initial application to receipt of NI number.

Needing a NI number when you already have a Child Benefit number

Follow instructions on the website to apply for your National Insurance number. For those who already have a Child Benefit number it is likely that a National Insurance number will have been allocated but will remain inactive until you make your application. It is **less** likely that those with a Child Benefit number will need to have an 'Evidence of identity' interview. You will receive a letter **by post** which includes your NI number – a plastic card is no longer issued – this is simply to confirm your NI number and cannot be used as a proof of identity. This letter is all you will receive and you will need to use it to provide your NI number to the Student Finance Company or to an employer. Please keep it somewhere safe.

Applying to university without a NI number and no Child Benefit number

Explain the situation to the Student Finance Company when you apply for a Student Loan. They should contact the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP). The DWP will contact the student to arrange an interview. On the basis of the interview with the DWP a NI number will be provided for the applicant.

Advice from NI registration (Feb 2011): If there is any confusion with the Student Finance Company contact them (the Student Finance Company) again and ask to speak to a manager. According to NI registration it **IS** the responsibility of the Student Finance Company to contact DWP as above in the case of a student applying for a student loan without a NI number.

NI number helpline: 0300 200 3500

Outside UK: +44 191 203 7010