

A woman with long, curly brown hair is smiling and holding a silver laptop. She is wearing a rust-colored t-shirt and grey pants. The background is a warm, out-of-focus interior with a window showing a sunset or sunrise.

sprintax
returns

Tax content
for schools

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Who needs to file tax forms?

If you were in the U.S. on a J visa at any time between January 1 and December 31 of the tax year, you are required to submit at least one form—Form 8843—to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), even if you did not earn any income.

Additionally, if you earned income as a nonresident J visa holder, you are legally obligated to file a federal tax return with the IRS. Failure to do so would violate IRS regulations and could affect your ability to return to the US on future visas. Depending on your circumstances, you may also be required to file state tax returns

When is the tax filing deadline?

The tax deadline for both nonresidents who earned US income to file federal tax returns for is 15 April 2026.

It is very important that you file by this date, as filing late may lead to fines and penalties as well as future visa issues.

Resident or nonresident for federal tax purposes?

Generally, most international students & scholars who are on F, J, M or Q visas are considered nonresidents for tax purposes. International students on J-1 & F-1 visas are automatically considered nonresident for their first five calendar years in the US, whilst Scholars/Researchers on J visas are automatically considered nonresidents 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 a **U.S. tax return**

Sprintax is a resource available for nonresidents that provides online federal and state tax preparation software for nonresidents in the U.S.

Once you login to Sprintax, you will be asked a series of questions about the time you have spent in the United States and your immigration status, looking back over a period of years. With this information, Sprintax will then determine your tax status.



If it determines that you are a “nonresident alien” (NRA) for federal tax purposes, you can continue to use it to respond to a series of guided questions. Sprintax will complete and generate the forms you need to send to the IRS (Internal Revenue Service). If it determines 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 **nonresident tax forms (F and J)**



Step 1

Gather documents



Step 2

Create a Sprintax account



Step 3

Follow their instructions



Step 4

Complete state tax return (if required)



Step 5

Mail returns or eFile your federal return if you qualify



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	This form is used to report: 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) If you received this type of income, the 1042-S will be mailed to you by 15 March by the payer. <i>Note: Only Nonresident 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.</i>
✓ 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.
✓ 1099	This form reports miscellaneous income. Can be interest on bank accounts, stocks, bonds, dividends, earning through freelance employment.
✓ 1098-T	<i>This form is NOT needed and can NOT be used for a nonresident tax return because NRAs are not eligible to claim education expense tax credits.</i>



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 User ID 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 U.S. 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 form 1040NR, depending on your circumstances.



4. 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. Choose the service level that you wish to use

This filing season you may be able to e-file your Federal tax return directly to the IRS through Sprintax if you are eligible to do so.

If not, remember to read the mailing instructions that Sprintax provides. If you have dependents, each one must mail their 8843 in a separate envelope.

You will still need to print, sign and mail your state tax return if applicable.



Sprintax support

Sprintax has an extensive knowledge base that covers many of the frequently asked questions received from nonresidents.

Here, you will find webinars, FAQs, articles, and more that cover all you need to know about your taxes and how Sprintax works.

Sprintax educational tax videos and blog

You also have access to the **Sprintax YouTube account** where there are a number of educational videos on nonresident taxes.

These will provide further clarity on nonresident 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 & 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.

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