

**U.S. FEDERAL INCOME TAX FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AND SCHOLARS
GENERAL INFORMATION FOR FILING A TAX RETURN
IN 2017 (FOR TAX YEAR 2016)**

WHO MUST FILE?

Most Tax Nonresidents who have received income (such as salary or scholarship) from sources in the U.S. during the calendar year **2016** are required to file a U.S. Federal Income Tax Return in 2017. **(If your only U.S. income in 2016 was salary which was less than \$4050, you are probably NOT required to file a Tax Return but if the IRS owes you a refund, you must file a Tax Return to get it). In addition, almost every person with F-1, F-2, J-1 or J-2 status who is a Tax Nonresident is required to file a Form 8843, even if no income was received in 2016. Note: This requirement applies to dependents - even children - as well as students and scholars.** Persons exempt from income tax based on a tax treaty must still file a tax return, unless the salary was less than \$4050 (and if your 2016 income was more than \$155,650, see 1040NR Instructions).

WHEN?

In most cases, your 2016 income tax return must be postmarked by 12:00 midnight on **Tuesday, April 18, 2017**. If you were a Tax Nonresident and if you had no employment income in 2016, you must file by 12:00 midnight, **Thursday, June 15, 2017**.

WHAT FORMS?

You should first determine whether you were a **Resident** or **Nonresident for Tax Purposes** in **2016**, as described in your orientation program. F-1 and J-1 students (and their F-2/J-2 dependents) are usually considered Tax Nonresidents for 4-5 years; J-1 scholars (and J-2 dependents) are usually considered Tax Nonresidents for 1-2 years; H-1B employees should use the "substantial presence test" described in IRS Publication 519 (you were probably a "Resident" or a "Dual Resident" if you held H-1B status for more than 6 months in 2015. If less than 6 months, see Pub 519). Others should see separate CIE handouts, IRS Pub. 519 to determine resident status. The GLACIER TAX PREP (GTP) software program will also calculate your tax residency. [Note: If you are married to a Tax Resident, you may choose to be a Tax Resident.] [See separate information on Tax Residency on CIE website.]

Tax Residents: Consult 1040 Instructions, IRS Publications, the IRS website, or the resources listed below to see if you must file a Tax Return. Residents with no 2015 income at all do not need to file a Return or other tax form. [Remember: Tax Residents must count and report all worldwide income.] Single tax residents with income less than \$10,350 may not need to file a return, unless requesting a refund. If required to file a Return, use **Form 1040, 1040A or 1040EZ**. If you were a **Tax Resident** but are claiming tax treaty benefits, include a Form 8833 plus Page 2 of 1040NR-EZ*. Resident **students** who would prefer to file as Nonresidents may request this option from IRS, with a letter attached to your tax return and a description of your stronger ties to another country. [Note: Most Tax Residents pay less tax than Nonresidents.] If you would normally be a Resident but spent less than 183 days in the U.S. in 2016, would prefer to file as a Non-resident, and feel that you can prove a "Closer Connection" with your home country than with the U.S., then you must file a Form 8840 (read form instructions). **Tax Residents with income of \$64,000 or less can use free tax return software, available at www.irs.gov. *See separate handout if you are a resident using a tax treaty.**

Tax Nonresidents (with U.S. income): You must probably file **Form 1040NR or 1040NR-EZ**. (Do not count interest received from a bank; also, if your only U.S. income in 2016 was a salary which totaled \$4050 or less, then you are not required to file a tax return. If your only income was a **scholarship** which covered tuition and fees ONLY, this is not taxable and you do not have to file a tax return. If your room and board were paid by scholarship, you DO have to file a tax return. **[Almost] All Tax Nonresidents with F-1, F-2, J-1, or J-2 status in 2016 must also file Form 8843, even if they had no U.S. income.** This includes children. A separate handout and the **GTP software** will help you figure out whether you need 1040NR-EZ or the longer 1040NR.

NOTE: All tax forms, publications & instructions are available on IRS website at www.irs.gov. Also check at the IRS Office in Knoxville for forms. Tax Non-residents who use the GLACIER TAX PREP (GTP) program will have forms printed by the program.

Forms **W-2 and/or 1042-S (May be both forms, but usually not both) (or Form 1099)** from each employer or scholarship agency must be included with your tax return. If you have not received one of these forms from every employer or other entity that gave you money in 2015, contact them to ask for the form(s). If you were employed by UT in 2016, contact the Payroll Office in P115 Andy Holt Tower (865-974-5251), go to website at <http://payroll.tennessee.edu/> or e-mail ltavasso@tennessee.edu to get your W-2 or 1042-S. If you had a scholarship that covered only tuition and fees, you will not receive a 1042-S for this amount. If you were covered by employee health insurance, your employer should also give you a new form 1095-C which is required for Tax Residents.

WHERE?

✓ Tax Nonresidents, Dual Residents, and Residents claiming tax treaty benefits, with no check enclosed should mail all forms to:

Dept of the Treasury,
Internal Revenue Service
Austin, TX 73301-0215, USA

✓ If enclosing a payment, see Form 1040-NR Instructions

✓ If you are a Tax Resident with no treaty benefits, see the back page of the 1040, 1040A or 1040EZ Instructions for the address.

NOTE: *If you need an ITIN for yourself or a dependent, contact CIE for current instructions or see separate handout.

****MAKE PHOTOCOPIES OF ALL YOUR FORMS FOR YOUR FILES BEFORE MAILING!!!!****

HOW?

We suggest the following resources to assist you with your tax returns:

- 1) **Best resource: GLACIER TAX PREP (GTP)** software is available for UTK students/scholars who were are Tax Nonresidents in 2016. GTP will complete your tax return for you and print completed forms for you to sign and mail. Any person officially associated with UTK in 2016 may use the UTK Access Code on your own computer at www.glaciertax.com. Access Codes will be sent to UTK students/scholars via e-mail. Students/scholars who have left Knoxville in 2016/2017 may e-mail international@utk.edu to obtain the Access Code. Tax Residents may not use GTP.
- 2) **VITA Assistance at the UT.** The university offers two locations of VITA assistance in spring 2017. In order to assure you visit the correct VITA site, see the tax residency handouts or use the GTP software sent out by CIE to determine residency. No appointment is necessary. Please bring all tax forms with you for efficient use of the volunteer's time.

Nonresident Alien VITA Site

Mondays: 5pm-7pm

Thursdays: 6pm-8pm

International House, 1623 Melrose Avenue

Feb 13 – Apr 14, except Spring Break

Resident VITA Site

Tuesdays: 6pm-8pm

Wednesdays: 5pm-7pm

UT College of Law, 1505 W. Cumberland Avenue

Feb 6 – Apr 14, except Spring Break

- 3) **Internal Revenue Service [IRS] local office**, 710 Locust Street, Knoxville. This office is **not** able to answer questions concerning **Nonresident** tax returns but they do assist **Tax Residents**, and **they can accept ITIN applications**. They have some IRS publications and forms, and they can help with administrative questions (such as "Where is my refund?")
- 4) **IRS (National):** Tax Forms, software for Tax residents, and other information are available on the IRS website at www.irs.gov (missing refunds can also be tracked on the IRS website) Toll-free telephone helpline: 1-800-829-1040 (If you are a **Nonresident** or have a tax treaty question, ask for a **Nonresident** specialist). Recorded information is available at 1-800-829-4477 For help with unusual problems with **past** tax returns, call the Taxpayer Advocate at 615-250-5000 (in Nashville, TN) or 877-777-4778 (toll free); Call 800-829-3676 to request forms and publications. If you are outside the U.S., call 215-516-2000 and choose option "2". (This is not a toll-free number)
- 5) **Paid tax preparers.** If you have a very complicated situation, we suggest you consider paying a tax preparer to do your tax return. For example, if you have investment income (e.g. stock dividends or capital gains), we urge you to consider using a paid tax preparer. **Make sure they have experience with Tax Nonresidents.** There will be a fee to prepare a tax return (Inquire before using their services). Although The University of Tennessee does not endorse any tax preparer, we have been told that the following office is willing to do **Nonresident** returns:

H&R Block - Premium Office

308 N. Peters Road, Suite #140 (Off Cedar Bluff Road), Knoxville, TN 37922

Phone: 865-693-1454 (You must make an appointment.)

Also see list of other resources available on the CIE website

If you find other good resources, or if you have any feedback about these resources, please let us know!

NOTE: Advisors in the Center for International Education are not able to do tax advising. Questions should be addressed to the resources listed above. E-Mailed tax inquiries will not be answered. (Sorry!)

******* See other handouts at <http://international.utk.edu/tax-information/> (Click on "Tax Handouts")**

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS AND INDIVIDUAL TAXPAYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBERS

Any person who files a tax return, must have a Social Security Number (SSN) or Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN). Also, if you are filing jointly with your **Resident** spouse or are eligible to claim exemptions for dependents (Tax Residents plus some residents of Canada, Mexico, Korea, and India), then you must have a number (SSN or ITIN) for each person listed on your return. For current instructions on obtaining an ITIN, see separate handout on CIE website. Many ITIN applications can be filed at the Knoxville IRS office. **Form 8843 may be filed without a number.**

TAX TREATIES

If there is a tax treaty between the U.S. and your country of residence, you may be exempt from part or all of your U.S. income tax.

Note: If you have U.S. Income, you must probably still file a tax return, even if you are exempt from paying taxes. See a **separate CIE handout** for a list of countries which have signed tax treaties with the U.S. For detailed information about tax treaties, see IRS Publication 901. [Read the information **VERY CAREFULLY**.] **GTP can apply your tax treaty when completing your forms.** If you are a **Resident** for Tax Purposes but are claiming treaty benefits, you should also file a resident tax return plus Form 8833 and Page 2 of Form 1040NR-EZ. (See **separate CIE handout for this**) Copies of the tax treaties are available at <https://www.irs.gov/Businesses/International-Businesses/United-States-Income-Tax-Treaties---A-to-Z>

STATE INCOME TAX

There is no state income tax in Tennessee (except for income from stock dividends or mutual funds.) If you lived/worked in another U.S. state in 2015, you may need to file a state tax return. Go to <http://www.taxadmin.org/fta/link/forms.html> to find state tax forms.

Center for International Education, The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, February 2017