

International Student W-4 Guide

On wage or salary payments to non-resident alien employees, the College of Charleston must withhold U.S. income tax at the normal graduated rates that are applicable to all U.S. employees. The Internal Revenue Service treats income earned by non-resident aliens differently from income earned by U.S. citizens and permanent residents in two ways: by limiting the number of personal exemptions that can be claimed by non-resident aliens and by prohibiting non-resident aliens from claiming the standard deduction when filing U.S. income tax forms each year. The Form W-4 filed with the College of Charleston by non-resident alien employees must be completed according to the following restrictions so that the college can withhold the correct amount of Federal income tax from each paycheck:

1. The non-resident alien must check only "single" marital status on Item 3, regardless of actual marital status.
2. The non-resident alien is eligible to claim only one withholding allowance on Item 5, with the following exceptions:
 - If the nonresident alien is a resident of Canada or Mexico, the individual can claim an additional exemption for a spouse if the spouse has no gross income for US tax purposes and the spouse is not claimed as a dependent by another US taxpayer's return. The individual can claim exemptions for each dependent child who qualifies as a dependent under the normal rules for a dependent.
 - If the nonresident alien is a resident of Korea, the individual can claim an additional exemption for a spouse if the spouse has no gross income and the spouse is not claimed as a dependent by another taxpayer. It is required that the spouse has lived with the taxpayer at some time during the calendar year. The individual can claim exemptions for each dependent child who qualifies as a dependent under the normal rules for a dependent. The child is required to have lived with the taxpayer at some time during the calendar year.
 - Nonresident students who were a resident of India before visiting the United States are not covered by new NRS guidelines. The student can claim an additional exemption for a spouse if the spouse has no gross income and the spouse is not claimed as a dependent by another taxpayer. The student can claim exemption for each dependent child who meets the normal rules for a dependent and the child is a US citizen, US lawful permanent resident or a resident under the substantial presence test. A child under F-2 or J-2 is usually a nonresident.
3. If the non-resident alien is receiving wages for personal services, he or she must request that an additional tax be withheld on Item 6. See the instructions for Item 6, below, for the correct amount to be withheld.
4. The non-resident alien is specifically instructed NOT to claim "exempt" withholding status on Item 7.

Tax Treaties - Although no withholding is required if the compensation payments are exempt from income tax under a provision of a tax treaty, the non-resident alien employee is still required to complete the W-4. In addition, [Form 8233](#) must be completed to claim a treaty-based exemption from withholding, as noted in the Instructions for Item 7, below.

Instructions for Completion of Form W-4 for International Students and Scholars

International students and scholars should complete the W-4 according to these instructions. The instructions on the W-4 form itself are for U.S. citizens and permanent residents only.

1. [Download current Form W-4 from Internal Revenue Service web site](#)
2. **Box #1 - Name and Address:** Enter name and U.S. address.
3. **Box #2 - Social Security Number:** Enter Social Security number.

4. **Box #3 - Marital Status:** Check "single" for marital status, regardless of actual marital status.
5. **Item 4 - Name Change:** Check the box only if the individual's name has changed since receiving the Social Security card.
6. **Box #5 - Number of Allowances:** Claim only one withholding allowance by entering "1" on Line 5, regardless of the number of actual withholding allowances.
7. **Box #6 - Additional Amount:** Write "Nonresident Alien" or "NRA" above the dotted line.

Effective January 1, 2006, the IRS has amended the procedures for this part of the form. It is now the employer's responsibility to add a specified amount of money to a foreign national's salary for the purpose of determining the employee's income tax bracket. The employee is no longer required to make this calculation. To view a copy of the IRS notice, please refer to the following link:
http://www.irs.gov/irb/2005-46_IRB/ar10.html

8. **Box #7 - Exemption:** Non-resident aliens are not permitted to claim "exempt" on Line 7. If the individual is eligible to claim a tax exemption under an income tax treaty, Form 8233 should be completed in addition to Form W-4. Form W-4 should be completed as outlined above and will apply at the time a treaty-based exemption no longer applies.
9. **Signature:** The form should be signed and dated.