

## Non-Resident Alien Recertification Process Streamlined

In November, the UH Tax Department begins recertifying the Nonresident Alien (NRA) employees at the University for federal income tax treaty benefits. This is required because the NRA's IRS Form 8233 expires each December 31.

The University's recertification process has changed to better serve our NRAs. This change will first be implemented with the NRAs that are processed for 2010. New NRA employees will continue to complete the paper tax packet for their initial certification (for now) but the recertification process will be more streamlined.

For the NRA employees who received treaty benefits for 2010 (e.g. IRS Form 8233), instead of completing a paper packet each year, they will enter information into a secure website called FNIS (Foreign National Information System). FNIS was created by Windstar, the company whose computer software we use for our treaty benefit analysis.

The recertification process will work as follows:

1. The Tax Department will upload the current demographic and visa information for NRA employees into the FNIS website.
2. Each NRA employee will receive an email welcoming them to FNIS that gives instructions about how to log in and review/update information in FNIS (sample email attached).
3. The NRA employee will then log in and review their information and make any corrections/changes/updates or add new information, if necessary.
4. Once the updates are completed, the NRA employee will approve this information in FNIS and click a link that sends an automated email to the Tax Department.
5. Upon receiving this email, the Tax Department will review the information for completeness and either approve or deny it. If denied, the Tax Department will send the NRA employee an email explaining what information is missing and the steps to correct their submission. Once the information is corrected, they will reapprove their information and click the link to send the Tax Department another email.
6. Once approved, the Tax Department will send them an email with instructions on how to print their Immigration Status Data summary page, so that it can be signed and dated. The NRA employee will also be instructed about which documents they need to provide copies of to the Tax Department (passport, I-20, I-94, etc). The signed summary page and other documents can either be sent by interoffice mail, mailed through the U.S. Post Office, or hand delivered to the Tax Department (sample email attached). These security sensitive documents must NOT be sent by way of email!
7. Upon receiving the signed data sheet and copies of their documents, the Tax Department will perform an analysis using Windstar software and inform the NRA employee of any forms to be signed to receive federal income tax treaty benefits.

**Again, for the new hires, please continue the current procedure of submitting their paper tax packet for initial certification. The Tax Department plans to automate the initial certification process in near future, as well.**

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### SAMPLE EMAIL TO NRA EMPLOYEE WITH INSTRUCTIONS FOR UPDATING FNIS

Dear DONALD DUCK,

On December 31, 2010, all exemptions from withholding federal income tax granted under Internal Revenue Service ("IRS") Form 8233 expire. In order to renew your exemption for the year 2011, you are required to complete a new Form 8233, related treaty statement, and other pertinent forms.

The Internal Revenue Service requires that we apply U.S. withholding and reporting rules consistent with your U.S. tax status, resident alien or nonresident alien. Resident aliens are taxed like U.S. citizens, while nonresident aliens are taxed under different withholding and reporting rules. Your U.S. tax status depends on your U.S. immigration status and U.S. presence. Also, you may be entitled to tax exemptions depending on your U.S. tax status or an applicable tax treaty, or both. Since your immigration actions and U.S. presence may change the way you are taxed, we request that you provide us with up-to-date information each year so that we may verify your status and any applicable tax exemptions. Without this information, we cannot provide you with tax exemptions which might otherwise be applicable.

Please do the following to assist us with this analysis:

- 1) Use the website address, password, and username given below to enter the site. If this is the first time you have entered the secure Foreign National Information System (FNIS) website, you will be asked to change your password. If you have forgotten your password, contact me at [cjparamo@central.uh.edu](mailto:cjparamo@central.uh.edu).
- 2) Complete/review the questions in as much detail as possible. Please be sure to include past immigration history. You can "save with errors" if you have answered in as much detail as possible. There are many useful Help buttons to assist you if you have any questions as you move through the web pages.
- 3) Before exiting the program make a copy of the Immigration Status Data page which can be found by clicking on the View Data button on the Step 6: Confirmation page.

Once the confirmation of your data is submitted, I will review your data and either approve or deny your application.

An e-mail will be sent with further instructions.

- 4) Please be sure to read the Consent Page.
- 5) If you have additional questions, please contact [cjparamo@central.uh.edu](mailto:cjparamo@central.uh.edu) or 713-743-8987.

To log into the FNIS website, go to <https://fnis.windstar.cc/uh>

Your FNIS username is DDUCK.

Your FNIS password is the first 4 digits of your social security number followed by your PeopleSoft Employee ID number.

**PLEASE BE SURE TO CHANGE YOUR PASSWORD AS SOON AS YOU LOG INTO THE FNIS WEBSITE.**

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### SAMPLE EMAIL TO NRA EMPLOYEE AFTER TAX DEPT APPROVES FNIS UPDATES

Dear Donald Duck,

Thank you for the data that you submitted through the Foreign National Information System (FNIS) web-based program.

Please:

1. Log in to <https://fnis.windstar.cc.uh>
2. Click on Data Entry.
3. Click on View Data.
4. Print a copy of your immigration data.

Please sign this form and attach:

1. A copy of your passport
2. A copy of both sides of your I-94 form "Arrival and Departure Record" (a small white card inside your passport)
3. A copy of your U.S. Visa from your passport
4. Your I-20 or DS-2019

Please make sure these copies are clear and readable.

Please send your signed form and your attachments AS SOON AS POSSIBLE to:

Interoffice Mail-  
Carolyn Paramo  
Mail Code 0907

Mail or Hand Deliver:  
Carolyn Paramo  
University of Houston  
Tax Department  
5000 Gulf Freeway Bldg 2 Room 216  
Houston, TX 77204

(Caution: Failure to complete and return these forms may result in the loss of your 2011 exemption from withholding federal income tax at the University of Houston.)

If you have any questions, please notify me at:

cjparamo@central.uh.edu  
713-743-8987