Working during your studies and applying for a National Insurance number

UKCISA – UK Council for International Student Affairs offer guidance at the following webpage:
http://www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/Working/Can-you-work

Can I work while I study in the UK?
Check what your passport sticker (entry clearance or residence permit) or identity card says. You cannot work in the UK if your passport sticker or identity card says 'No work' or 'Work prohibited'. This means that you must not undertake any paid or unpaid employment, including work placement(s) which are part of your course.

You can work in the UK if your passport sticker or identity card says one of the following:

- Work (and any changes) must be authorised
- Able to work as authorised by the Secretary of State
- Work as in Tier 4 Rules
- Restricted Work. P/T term time. F/T vacations
- Restricted work term time
- Work limited to max 20 hrs per week during term-time

Please ensure that you comply with these restrictions that apply to you, as it is a criminal offence to breach any immigration conditions.

How many hours can I work during my studies?
If you are here on a student visa, you can normally work up to 20 hours per week during semester and full-time during holidays, unless you are in a 12 months course where holidays are limited.

http://www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/Working/How-many-hours-can-you-work

Work placement(s) as part of your course
In most cases, you must not spend more than 50% of the time on your course undertaking work placement(s) (unless working more than 50% of your course is an essential requirement by law, such as the Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE)). The placement(s) must also be an assessed part of your course which can take place at any point during your studies.

My employer says I have to pay income tax and National Insurance contributions. What are they?
If you earn more than a specified personal allowance in any tax year, you can find information on income tax rates from HM Revenue and Customs at: www.hmrc.gov.uk/rates/it.htm

Employees and employers both pay National Insurance contributions, which help to fund contributory benefits, for example, the state pension and jobseeker’s allowance. Please see http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/students/tma-working-while-being-a-student.shtml for more information. You need to apply for a National Insurance Number (see overleaf), which is used to record your National Insurance Contributions.

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Applying for a National Insurance Number

When you start work you will need a National Insurance (NI) number. You do not need this number to start work but you must apply as soon as you receive the offer of a job. You will need to make an appointment with the Jobcentre Plus by telephoning the central number 0345 600 0643.

If you are a visa holder, Head Office will send an application form within 7-10 days to your home address, you will be required to complete the application form and include photocopies of your passport and visa. You should receive your NI number within 4 weeks.

If you are an EU student, you should be given an appointment at the local Jobcentre within two weeks and you may be required to show the following documents

- your passport
- confirmation of your address (utility bill or bank statement)
- details of your job offer (letter from your employer) or proof that you are actively seeking work
- 2 letters from separate employers within the space of one month

You may be allocated a temporary NI number while your application is being processed.

When you go to the Job Centre, you will be asked to complete a form. The staff will give you a letter to show your employer, confirming that you have applied for a National Insurance Number.

If the Dundee Office are not offering appointments, you may be required to go to the Job Centre in Edinburgh.

My employer says I must prove I can work during my studies

If you have a passport sticker or identity card that does not prohibit work, you are allowed to undertake employment in compliance with the restrictions mentioned in the permission, without getting any further approval or permission. Please refer to the UKCISA website:

Your employer can also check with the UKVI that you are allowed to work. The UKVI has an employers' helpline on 0345 600 0643. Employers have a legal obligation to check that you are allowed to work in the UK, so you must be able to provide evidence of this, usually by showing them your passport.

Can my family members work while I study in the UK?

Your dependants should be allowed to work if you are given permission to be in the UK for 12 months or more to study at postgraduate level only.

If your course is at any level and your student immigration permission is under 12 months long, or if you are studying a course which is below degree level and which is not a “foundation degree”, your family members will not be allowed to work.