

Job Search Tips for International Students

- As an international student, you face certain challenges and restrictions regarding the U.S. job search. We suggest that you begin your search early.
- **Communication skills** are very important. Use every possible opportunity to strengthen your command of spoken and written English. Keep in mind that the Career Services Center will be happy to provide you assistance with cover letters and resumes, and all other aspects of the job search process.
- When looking for potential employment, keep in mind that **you have unique assets** to “sell” in addition to your academic training. These include: **bi-lingual abilities, adaptability, a unique cultural background, and professional experience**. Your reception will be the most positive if you focus on employers that have a strong need for all these strengths.
- **Networking** is even more important for the international student than for a U.S. citizen. By networking we simply mean systematically making personal, written, or telephone contacts with relatives, friends, and alumni in the United States and back home who may be able to help you in the search. Each person whom you contact becomes a participant in your search. Fellow students from abroad who have gained some experience with the U.S. job market may be able to help you with your search for a position.
- Ordinarily it is best to concentrate on employers that have ties (offices, plants, subsidiaries, marketing teams, sales forces) to your country of origin. These companies often will have an interest in you to work for them in this country, or to return to your home country after initial training in the United States. Two useful directories for identifying such companies are: *Directory of American Firms Operating in Foreign Countries* and *Directory of Foreign Firms Operating in the US*. Both directories are available in the Miller Center and the Career Services Center.
- In most cases, you will be eligible for **12 months of practical training** related to your studies, but you may find that some employers will be reluctant to hire international students because of their visa restrictions.
- One of the most invaluable sources you have here in the U.S. is your embassy. Often foreign embassies maintain lists of contacts for employment. Call them!
- Honesty about your visa status in all employer contacts is the best policy. Please make your “permission to work” status clear in every letter, resume, or direct contact with a company representative. Discuss any concerns you have with an international student advisor.

Adapted from “Advice for International Students”, Hofstra University Career Center

Important! All international students need **legal permission** to work *before* starting employment! Before you accept a job offer, and before you start work, you must have work authorization. Please meet with an international student advisor for information and advice.

Cultural Barriers to the Job Search

U.S. EMPLOYER EXPECTATIONS	CONFLICTING VALUES OF ANOTHER CULTURE
SELF-PROMOTION	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assertiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aggressiveness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidence in openly discussing goals, personal qualities and accomplishments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unless presented as part of group activity, citing accomplishments and skills is viewed as boastful, self-serving and too individualistic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow-up with employers (telephone inquiries regarding application status, thank-you notes) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asking employer directly about status of application is rude
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate dress/grooming/hygiene 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appearance is not as important as technical expertise
COMMUNICATION	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open and direct responses to questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directness is disrespectful
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eye contact with interviewer and relaxed posture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eye contact, especially with persons of higher status (e.g. employer, interviewer) is disrespectful
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate space and other non-verbal behaviors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Body language of respect
SELF-DISCLOSURE	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal descriptions of experience, hobbies, strengths and weaknesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal questions about likes/dislikes, etc. are considered an invasion of privacy and are discussed only with close friends and family
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answers to questions related to personality (e.g. leadership style, problem-solving abilities) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Items unrelated to work are unimportant
CAREER SELF-AWARENESS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrating knowledge of self, career goals and how they relate to the job 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jobs are sometimes available through government or family
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for own career development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions about role in a company indicates potential disloyalty
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion of long-range plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Company assigns work responsibilities; individual must be flexible to accept whatever is available
FINDING EMPLOYMENT	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of wide variety of resources for identifying jobs, friends, family contacts, professional journals and associations, career services, faculty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dependency relationships in job search are fostered; one resource (e.g. academic advisor, employment agent) will find appropriate job
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many jobs are found through government or family
INTERVIEW PROCESS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerned with image and professional style 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal hygiene has an effect on professional and social relationships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Congenial interviewing environment that encourages openness, some joking, exchange of information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sitting with person of higher status requires deference; job applicant is polite and does not ask questions or provide information that may indicate lack of respect for interviewer
TIME ORIENTATION	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrive 5-10 minutes before interview appointment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal relationships are more important than time; anywhere from 15 min – 2 hr. late from agreed meeting time is not insulting
INDIVIDUAL EQUALITY	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Egalitarian attitude regarding wealth, social status 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show deference to people of greater wealth, older, higher social status
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender does not affect interview relationship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Males are expected to assume dominance in interactions with females
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age is not a factor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Younger persons defer to older ones

Resources for International Students Seeking Employment in the United States

Things to remember:

- some sites require a subscription and in many cases the subscription is NOT free
- some sites require a student to obtain a username/password from their career office if the career office is a subscriber to the service (typically students can also get a subscription on their own if their career center is not a member)

www.aipt.org/prog_index.htm - Association for International Practical Training; for global training services; J-1 visa sponsor

www.bilingual-jobs.com/ - Connects bilingual career professionals to employers worldwide

<http://careers.the-scientist.com> - Science careers job database

www.campuscareercenter.com - Job listings; information on the job search process

www.careerbuilder.com/index.htm? - General jobs database

www.careerconferences.com/ - Job fairs including an MBA Fair that foreign nationals can attend

www.careers.wsu.edu/content/SpecificPops/optionalPracticalTraining.html - Information on Optional Practical Training, lists of employer who have interviewed foreign students; also click on “International” under “Specific Populations” for links to resources

www.ciee.org/ - Council on International Education Exchange; short term visa sponsor

www.embassy.org/ - A resource of and for the Washington, D.C. foreign embassy community

www.flcdatcenter.com - Foreign Labor Certification Data Center

www.foreignmba.com - Number 1 internet community for MBA students from all around the globe

www.h1base.com - USA Immigration, Visa and Employment Center

www.h1bsponsors.com/ - Interactive web site that links h-1b job seekers and employers

www.h1visajobs.com/ - Online database of American employers for international professionals

www.imex.com/imex/about.html - Focuses on international trade

www.imex.com/usa/companylist.html - Lists IMEX members who do business in the US

<http://international.monster.com> - Career advice from Monster for working abroad

www.internationalstudent.com/ - Resume posting site; job search information; jobs

www.intlcareers.org/Orderform.html - Information on ordering the publication “Career Planning Guide for International Students”; guide offers information on career planning, resume and letter writing, interviewing, resources, immigration issues, and working in the U.S.

www.intlcareers.org/non-us.html - Article on revealing your international student status to employers

www.istudentcity.com/career/career_tips_basic.asp - Resume, interview, and job seeking tips for international students

www.jerryeden.com/ijc/index.html - International Jobs Centers including positions in the U.S.

www.jobsearch.org/ - Job database

www.jobsearch.about.com/cs/usimmigration/index.htm - General information; resume posting service; job listings

www.jobweb.com/Research/jgenlst.htm - Career Development and Job-Search Advice for New College Graduates

www.jobweb.com/Resources/Library/International/US_Employment_81_01.htm - Article "U.S. Employment: Challenges for International Students"

<http://ows.doleta.gov/foreign/about.asp> - About Foreign Labor Certification

www.stcloudstate.edu/careerservices/jobintern/moresites.asp#international - SCSU's Career Services Center information for International Students

www.stcloudstate.edu/internationalstudies - St. Cloud State University International Studies Department

www.twc.edu/INTERNSHIPS/Areas/International.htm - Internships for international students with the Washington Center

www.us.plusjobs.com/index2.shtml - Job database

www.usvisanews.com - Information on converting F-1 Visa to U.S. Employment

www.virginia.edu/~career/?handouts/intlstud.html - University of Virginia Career Services

Books (available in the Miller Center or Career Services Center):

Best Resumes and CVs for International Jobs

Careers in International Affairs

Careers in International Business

Directory of American Firms Operating in Foreign Countries

Encyclopedia of Associations: International Organizations

International Job Finder: Where the Jobs are Worldwide

International Marketing Resource Guide

Also consider attending events sponsored by:

Global MBA/Master's Employment Conference <http://www.careerconferences.com/gmba05/international.html>

National Society of Hispanic MBA's

International Career Information

Disco International Resources <http://www.discointer.com/who.html>