

The Job Search for International Students

The following questions are commonly asked by international students at the Career Center. The suggested answers to these questions may assist you in your job search in the United States.

What fields are hiring international students with my qualifications?

- Research which occupations are more likely to hire students in your major.
- Explore different occupations within your major.
- Identify organizations that hire students with your major and/or sponsor international students.
- Research the geographical area where you want to live.
- It is important to select a major in demand in the geographical area where you want to live. Employers are more likely to hire international students when few U.S. citizens meet the qualifications for the job.

Who can help with my job search?

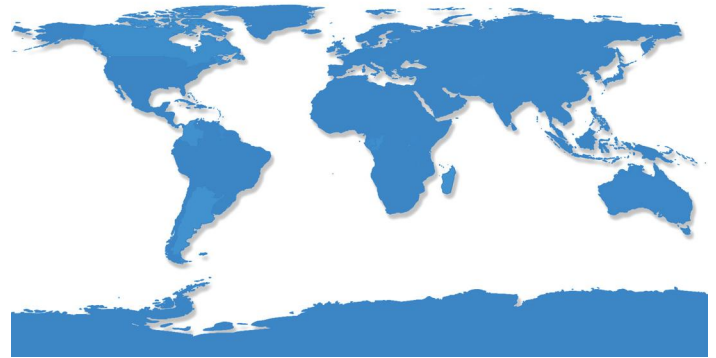
- Advisors, faculty, friends, international student advisors, career advisors and foreign alumni are all important people to consult about your job search. These people may hear of job openings or know of employers hiring international students.

How can I discuss immigration issues?

- The question of your immigration status may be addressed in the employment interview. Yet, do not bring up this issue yourself in the first interview.
- An effective approach requires preparation. Know the benefit and restrictions of your particular status, and be able to discuss optional practical training, temporary status, and permanent residence. The more knowledgeable you are about the employment options available, the more confident you will be.
- Information on employment authorization options for F-1 and J-1 students is available from the International Center, 945 Learning Way, 644-1702, ic.fsu.edu.
- Emphasize the positive. It is an advantage to many employers to have a bilingual employee and/or an employee familiar with work abroad. The fact that international students have lived and studied abroad shows tenacity and resourcefulness. Convey to the interviewer challenges faced and overcome in this process. Explain to your potential employer how hiring you offers more advantages than disadvantages.
- You might want to contact the employer's HR office prior to an interview to ask about organizational policies regarding hiring non-citizens or permanent residents. Ask if the employer will help a qualified non-citizen obtain work authorization.

Where should I concentrate my job search?

- Large, medium, and small organizations might have openings for which you may be qualified.



- Undergraduate students may have a better chance of finding jobs with smaller/medium sized employers.
- Some larger firms may have openings that cannot be filled by U.S. citizens. Graduate students, especially those with PhD's, may be of particular interest to large employers. This is due to the recognition of the need for recruiting international students because of the shortage of Americans with advanced degrees.
- Occasionally, foreign and American employers will be looking for international students for employment in the United States and abroad.
- You may want to focus your efforts on regions of the country or cities with low unemployment rates; employers may have to extend their recruiting efforts to include international students to fill jobs. Additionally, smaller communities may have opportunities because American students may wish to relocate to urban environments.
- Employer information and job search resources are in the Career Center Library, 1200 Dunlap Success Center (*Finding a Summer Job* guide, *Searching for a Job in Tallahassee* guide, etc.).

Helpful Web sites:

- www.H1Visajobs.com
- www.uniworldbp.com
- www.foreignborn.com/visas_imm/start_here/3employment_visa.htm
- www.internationalstudent.com

Am I being too limited in my job search?

- Include foreign firms operating in America, American firms operating in foreign countries, research laboratories in America, and research grants/fellowships available from our home country for additional training in America. Directories and related resources are in the Career Center Library.

Note: United States Immigration law makes it possible for a foreign student to obtain an immigration status that will permit either temporary or permanent residence and employment in the U.S. This depends on a number of factors. You will want to know the options that are available to you under your current immigration status. The information presented in this handout does not represent official policy of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) of the United States Department of Justice. This handout is intended to provide information, not legal advice. You will want to contact INS or FSU's International Center for specific immigration information. You may also want to visit the International Center's Web site ic.fsu.edu.

What challenges will I face as an international student while searching for a job?

- **Hiring Complexities:** After international students complete the optional one year of practical training, employers must sponsor them to obtain an H1-B visa to continue working. Hiring an international students is a more complex and often less familiar process to many U.S. employers than hiring Americans.
- **Commitment:** Some employers fear international employees will return to their home country after the employer has invested time and money, hiring, training, and possibly sponsoring the international student. Show that you may be sponsored for a career with the company. Demonstrate how you are an asset to the company's overseas locations and operations.
- **Animosity:** Some Americans feel that by hiring an international student they are taking jobs away from United States citizens. Due to recent events and the resulting increased feelings of national pride this sentiment may be more pronounced right now. Be able to demonstrate how your skills and knowledge will be an asset to the company. Also, research diversity and its benefits in the workplace.

What should I consider with regard to my communication skills?

- Strong communication skills are essential for prospective employees. Employers are sometimes concerned international students will not effectively communicate with customers and other personnel.
- Demonstrate that you are proficient in speaking and writing proper English.
- Emphasize that you are bi-lingual or multi-lingual, a big bonus for many multi-national companies.

What should I consider in preparing my resume and employment letters?

- Write a professional resume (Use the Career Center's *Writing a Resume* guide)
- Do not include personal data and immigration status.
- Employment letters should be no more than one page, typed and professional in appearance.
- The purpose of a resume is to review your academic and professional accomplishments to get an interview. You may want to have different versions of your resume so you can market yourself to an American or multinational employer. This will help you emphasize certain skills and experience to a specific audience.
- You may wish to meet with a career advisor in the Career Center to review you resume and employment letters.

Participate in workshops, attend career fairs, and visit the Career Center?

- The information and resources provided by the Career Center are the best source of obtaining job search information. You can meet with a career advisor to discuss interviews, review resumes and letters, and learn about the American recruiting/interviewing system.

- Workshops are another way to learn how to prepare for the job search; the Career Center provides a listing of workshops and programs that are offered throughout the year at career.fsu.edu.
- Career fairs are an excellent way to market your special talents by meeting face-to-face with prospective employers. The Career Center sponsors several expos throughout the year; more information can be found on our web site.
- Also look for announcements relating to private career fairs that target only international students. Information can be found in the Career Exposition Information notebook in the Career Center Library, kept on the Ready Reference shelves.
- The Center for Intensive English Studies (www.fsu.edu/~cies/) also offers programs to help international students with written and spoken English language skills. The Center is located on 918 Traditions Way, 644-4797.

Would participating in cooperative education, internship, and career-related summer employment, and/or practical training be helpful?

- The practical work experience you gain by working with an American employer could prove helpful when you seek post-graduate career opportunities.
- It is important to be as specialized and skilled as possible. You are likely to have more success attracting employers and working through the immigration system if you have documented skills and special talents. See information about the FSU Career Portfolio at portfolio.fsu.edu.
- If you are interested in any type of work experience either prior to or after graduation, you will want to contact the International Student Center regarding Immigration and Naturalization Service policies and procedures. The International Center is located at 945 Learning Way, 644-1702, ic.fsu.edu.
- The Career Center can provide information about potential work experience opportunities. This office is located at the Dunlap Success Center at 100 S. Woodward Avenue.

What else is available to me at the Career Center?

- Individualized assistance from a career advisor
- Dozens of workshops each semester.
- Mock interviews
- 3,000 + item resource library
- Co-op and internship opportunities
- Career expos for all majors, science and engineering majors, education majors, health professions and others
- The online Career Portfolio

Adapted from:

- *Foreign Student's Guide to Obtaining Employment & Green Card in the United States; Find a job in the United States.*
- *International Students Employment Guide*, University of Cincinnati Career Development Center
- *International Students & the Job Search*, University of Miami
- *Employment for International Students*, Northern Illinois University Career Planning and Placement Center

