

# JOB SEEKING TIPS FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

*Answers to the most common job  
search and hiring questions*



**BROUGHT TO YOU BY**  
**University of Massachusetts**  
**Amherst**  
**International Programs**  
**Office**  
**and Career Services**



## **I am qualified to work in the U.S. Now what?**

Check with the UMass International Programs Office to determine your specific eligibility to work in the US and the process that you must follow for authorization. In general, if you are eligible for OPT, (students on F-1 visas usually are), then you will automatically be eligible to participate in 12 months of practical training upon the completion of your studies, once you have submitted an OPT application to the immigration service. You do not need anything from the employer in order to start working. If you are working in a STEM field after completing your initial 12 months of OPT, you can get a 24 month extension for a total of 36 months. The following questions and answers will help you to navigate the job search, interview, and hiring process.

### **Should I list my visa status or nationality on my resume?**

Your visa status/nationality should not be included on your resume. Your educational background and work history may or may not imply that you are an international student. Hiring managers will likely ask the appropriate questions during the recruitment process. You should certainly never lie about your visa status, but given the reservations employers sometimes have about hiring an international student, it is not necessarily to your advantage to draw attention to it.



However, if your name might perhaps “sound” international (non-Anglo) and you are a green card holder or U.S. citizen, you may actually want to consider including your immigration or citizenship status on your resume to indicate that you are already legally authorized to work in the U.S.



### **What questions may an employer ask?**

“Are you legally authorized to work in the United States?”

“Will you now or in the future require sponsorship for an employment visa?”

“Which languages do you read, speak or write?” (*provided that such language skills are job related*)

As long as you have OPT, YES, you are legally authorized to work and should be indicating this, especially when completing applications online.

### **As an F-1 student, how do I answer when asked about my work authorization?**

Start by explaining that you have legal authorization to work in the U.S. for 12 months on OPT (STEM students will have up to 36-months available). OPT does not require any financial commitment or obligation from the employer.

## Doesn't an employer have to prove that international students are not taking jobs from qualified Americans?

No. If you are working under an F-1, J-1 or H-1B visa, American employers are not required to provide such proof. Documentation that they did not turn down a qualified American applicant for the position is only required when an employer wishes to hire a foreign citizen on a permanent basis and sponsors them for future permanent resident status (a Green Card).



## When in the hiring process do I reveal that I'm an international student?

This is a very sensitive question which needs to be assessed on a case-by-case basis. While some employers adhere to strict policies against hiring foreign nationals, others can be persuaded. Therefore, your first goal is to get past the initial screening measures to the interview. That said, you should broach the subject before the employer has spent a significant amount of time and money trying to recruit you. It is usually recommended that students address the issue of their work status during the first or second interview, and definitely no later than the time of the job offer.

If you are unsure how to navigate a specific process, contact the UMass Amherst IPO or Career Services for guidance.

## If a company says they don't hire international students, should I even apply?

A lot of times when employers say they don't hire international students it only means that they haven't hired any international students yet, or they may mistakenly think that hiring international students (particularly on OPT) is a complicated or costly process. In order to convince these prospective employers, it is your responsibility to educate them about the process of hiring a foreign national.

Some employers will be very familiar with the process, and some will have never hired an international student. In all cases, it is your responsibility to know the hiring process and to ease the concerns of the employer about any difficulties. The more clear and confident you can be, the more likely you can put the employer at ease.



## How do I give myself the best chance of being interviewed and hired?

It is recommended that you first target organizations with a history of hiring employees on a work visa.

- Find friendly employers. One way is to use Going Global, an online resource (found on IPO and Career Services websites) that allows you to search for employers who have hired H-1B visa students in the past
- Communicate and strategize with IPO
- Research the positions and employers in which you are interested
- Become thoroughly familiar with immigration regulations and the benefits attached to your specific visa status
- Have your resume and cover letters reviewed by UMass Amherst Career Services
- Contact Career Services to schedule a practice interview and receive feedback
- Practice speaking confidently about your skills, interests and career goals
- Improve your English skills by speaking up in class, making presentations and expanding your circle of native English-speaking friends

The UMass Amherst International Programs Office, in partnership with Career Services, is always available to explain specific employment based immigration options to both prospective employers and job seeking students.

