

# Job Searching

## For International Students

International Students know a lot about American culture. But understanding the nuances of the U.S. job search can be frustrating and complicated, especially when it's methods are counter to ones you may be accustomed to.

Let's start with the positive: International Students are unique and come with wonderful resources!

### International Students' Strengths

- ✓ Cultural diversity and a global perspective
- ✓ Insight into field/specialization
- ✓ Demonstrated ability to overcome obstacles
- ✓ Sense of adventure, willingness, adaptability
- ✓ Decision making resourcefulness, tenacity, responsible risk taking
- ✓ International experience, knowledge of another society/culture
- ✓ Language, communication and inter-cultural skills

### The Plain Hard Facts

- ✓ An opportunity to work in the U.S. is not guaranteed, nor was it promised
- ✓ It may take a long time to find a job
- ✓ Employment does not always coincide with employment authorization dates
- ✓ Not all employers are willing or able to sponsor work visas
- ✓ English language skills really do matter
- ✓ Personality really does matter
- ✓ Student must be the one to make the effort to bridge any cultural gaps
- ✓ Student may have to consider returning home or working in another country

Become aware of how your backgrounds and personal preferences might influence your job search process and interactions with others in the U.S.

### Understanding US Employers Attitudes and Expectations

	<b>US Employer Expectations</b>	<b>Possible Conflicting Values</b>
Career Self Awareness	Demonstrated knowledge of self, career goals, and how they relate to a job	Questions about role in a company indicate potential disloyalty. Company assigns work responsibilities, individual must be flexible to accept whatever job becomes available
Preparation and Organization	Obtain as much information as possible about job and organization before interview	Research about organization may indicate excessive and undesirable initiative and independence

Individual Responsibility in Finding Employment	Networking Use of wide variety of resources for identifying jobs (career services, academic mentors, friends, family, contacts, associations, etc..)	Jobs are found through government or family, dependency relationship in job searches are fostered
Effective Cover Letters and Resumes	One page error-free, concise, and attractive outline of relevant job experiences, skills, accomplishments, and academic achievements. Resumes should not contain pictures or personal information about family, marital status, religion or age.	Resumes are a detailed chronology of academic and formal work experience and not a tool for self promotion. Identifying yourself by your personal affiliations is how many people get jobs and is important in some cultural contexts.
Spelling and Grammar	Spelling and vocabulary should follow American English, not British English.	Some degrees (GCSE, A Levels, O Levels) are not understood in the U.S. system and have no American English equivalent.

## Structuring Your Job Search

Job searching will consume a lot of your time and energy. Knowing how to best use your time will help you to be successful and avoid burn-out.

### The How

- ✓ Develop relevant experience: Gain experience in your field through internships and/or co-ops, volunteering, community service
- ✓ Join social networking sites, campus groups, and professional organizations
- ✓ Create a clear plan for yourself—be organized, systematic, and persistent
- ✓ Trust your abilities—the skills in research, organization, communication, and persuasion that you developed as a student will serve you well
- ✓ Seek advice from career advisors when you have problems or questions, or if your energy or confidence drops
- ✓ Expect some disappointments, don't personalize rejection, move on

The **Number 1 Best Thing** you can do for your job search is:

- ✓ **Networking and Informational Interviewing:** Contact everyone you know and everyone they know to learn about your fields of interest and ask for advice
- ✓ Do not be shy - networking lands you the job 80% of the time
- ✓ Use some kind of tracking system whether it be computer generated or hard copy

### The When

- ✓ Start early as the average search may take 6 months or even longer
- ✓ Networking can occur all the time
- ✓ The best time to find your next job is while you currently have one

### The Where

Research specific organizations for whom you would like to work. Bookmark their web sites and check their job postings frequently.

By researching the company you:

- ✓ Demonstrate to the employer that you are a serious candidate. Your knowledge about their company helps you get an understanding of not only who you might work for but if you want to work for them
- ✓ Help customize your resume and cover letter to that particular job description and environment- which is crucial in order for the employer to see that your skills would be a good match
- ✓ Help answer questions in the interview

Use general career web sites: Bookmark five to ten job listing sites, and spend some of your remaining time checking them for new postings. ([www.umass.edu/careers](http://www.umass.edu/careers) CareerConnect)

Look in newspapers, professional journals and newsletters. Target international companies already in the U.S.

Join social networking sites, consider posting your resume and contributing to chat sessions

Attend career fairs, conferences, professional development seminars

Talk to people within the company if you have any connections (you will after networking)

It is appropriate to contact employers directly

### **The What**

The application process varies from organization to organization. It is imperative that you follow their instructions specifically and do exactly as they have requested.

- ✓ If you are not sure if a company or organization will hire an international student, contact their human resources office and ask before you waste time filling out long applications

### **What You Bring**

Top Qualifications Employers Look for [www.jobweb.com](http://www.jobweb.com)

- ✓ Communication skills (verbal and written)
- ✓ Honesty/integrity
- ✓ Interpersonal skills (relates well to others)
- ✓ Strong work ethic
- ✓ Teamwork
- ✓ Analytical skills
- ✓ Motivation/initiative
- ✓ Flexibility. Adaptability
- ✓ Computer skills
- ✓ Detail oriented

### **What Employers May Have Against You**

- ✓ Hiring complexities- not as common, lot of paperwork, may seem complicated, don't expect the employer to understand the regulations of hiring you- you have to understand the rules and be able to present them in a clear and concise way
- ✓ Perceived lack of commitment- afraid of losing you to your home country quickly
- ✓ Communication skills, cultural knowledge English language may not be adequate
- ✓ Does the international candidate "fit into" the work culture?

Reference and additional info can be found at:

<http://www.internationalcenter.umich.edu/events/handouts/US%20job%20search2010.pdf>

### **Why Most People Get Jobs**

- ✓ They work at a company or organization in some capacity (as volunteers, in part-time jobs) and are hired from within
- ✓ They talk to everyone in an effort to make connections (networking)
- ✓ They work as interns or co-ops and leverage the positions into jobs

## **Why Employers Hire**

- ✓ They hire in-house, tapping current employees, volunteers, and interns
- ✓ They network through current employees, colleagues, and professional organizations
- ✓ They post openings on their own web sites
- ✓ They post through professional organizations
- ✓ They post through advertisements or job listing web sites (many organizations never reach this point)

## **The Employer's View on Filling Job Vacancies**

Small and medium sized companies and organizations do not have the resources to train new employees. Employers look to hire people they know. They do not like sifting through hundreds of resumes and cover letters to find "ideal candidates." Therefore, keep in mind the top ways companies go about hiring individuals:

1. Promote from within
2. Take recommendations from current employees
3. Hire from intern pool
4. Hire people they like, so if anything else, be likeable!

## **Additional Resources:**

**Center for New Americans** (<http://www.cnam.org/>) Community based education and resource center for immigrants and refugees in western Mass.

**eduPASS** (<http://www.edupass.org/>) This guide contains up-to-date information about everything an international student needs to know about studying and living in the USA.

**International Student** (<http://www.internationalstudent.com/>) Help for international students that want to study in the USA, US students that want to study abroad, and anyone interested in international education.

**iStudent City** (<http://www.istudentcity.com/>) Information on American culture, work, immigration etc...Includes on-line chats with other international students as well as helpful hints for job searching after graduation.

**Institute of International Education** (<https://www.iie.org/opendoors>) IIE has a long history of providing emergency assistance to scholars and students in danger around the world. Through the Scholar Rescue Fund®, the Emergency Student Fund, and other efforts, IIE provides support and safe haven to persecuted scholars and students facing emergencies and crises, such as illness or natural disasters.

**Education USA** (<https://www.educationusa.info/>) Provides resources for non-US citizens interested in studying in the US, as well as information on scholarships and Fellowships.

**JobLine International** (<http://www.jobline.net/euusa1.htm>) Jobs in international companies in the U.S. and Canada.

**New York Public Library Directory of Foreign Firms operation in the U.S.**  
<http://www.nypl.org/collections/articles-databases/directory-foreign-firms-operating-united-states>

**The Department of Labor** (<http://www.foreignlaborcert.doleta.gov/hiring.cfm>) issues labor certifications for permanent and temporary employment.

**Higher Ed Jobs** (<http://www.higheredjobs.com/career/international.cfm>) Resources for International Job Seekers including several websites for credential evaluation.

**The Campus Career Coach.com** (<http://thecampuscareercoach.com/2012/10/17/how-can-an-international-student-find-a-job-in-the-us/>)

**Immigration/Visas Websites:**

**United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)**

(<http://www.ice.gov/sevis/students/>) How students can navigate U.S. Immigration systems.

**U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services** (<http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis> and <http://www.uscis.gov/working-united-states/working-us>)