International Student Job and Internship Search Tips

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT
As an international student, there are a few important things that you may want to think about as you search for internships and full-time employment. Making time to gain experience in addition to your studies is VERY important. You can start on campus through involvement in student groups, doing research with professors, volunteering, on campus jobs, or internships.

Before you begin your job or internship search make sure you get information on work permission regulations and immigration requirements. This information can be found at ISSS, located in 190 Hubert H. Humphrey Center (612-626-7100, isss@tc.umn.edu, or www.isss.umn.edu). Allot at least four months to get petition for internship approval approved. In general, you cannot work for the U.S. federal government, U.S. state and local government entities, or for private employers who receive government contracts. Some of the best employment opportunities in the U.S. are with international companies and global organizations. Below are some of the ways international students get experience:

Student Employment: International students can work up to 20 hours a week on campus without a change in visa status. Working on campus can be a great opportunity to build experience and skills. Use the website employment.umn.edu to search for student jobs on campus.

Internship/Field Experience: A field experience or internship is an individualized, experiential learning opportunity where students apply their knowledge and skills in a non-classroom setting. Several field experience sites will sponsor international students as field experience interns. For more information about field experiences, please visit: http://www.sph.umn.edu/current/fe/.

Research/Teaching Assistantship: These awards are typically in the form of graduate teaching or research assistantships, which carry a salary, full tuition benefit, and the option to participate in a health insurance plan for which the University covers 95 percent of the premium. About 10 to 15 graduate assistantships are awarded to new students each year and are extremely competitive. For tips on finding graduate assistantships, please visit: http://www.sph.umn.edu/careers/tipsheets/assistantships/.

WORK AUTHORIZATION
Before working in any position off campus it is important to get work authorization. Below are descriptions of different types of authorizations, visit International Student Scholar Services (ISSS) for CPT and OPT information and/or if you have any questions about work authorization. To find out more about CPT and OPT go to their website to watch the online workshops and for dates and times of in-person workshops: http://www.isss.umn.edu/career/.

Curricular Practical Training (CPT): CPT is work authorization which allows a student to work in a job directly related to the student's major area of study before degree completion. The internship must be for credit and part of your academic program. CPT authorization is provided by ISSS and can be granted within 7 business days of application submission.

Optional Practical Training (OPT): OPT is work authorization which allows a student to work in a job directly related to the student’s major area of study either before or after degree completion. The far majority of students use OPT to work after degree completion. OPT authorization is provided by USCIS and is usually granted within 2-3 months after the student submits an application.

H1B Visa: The H1B Visa is the official and primary USA work visa available to international professionals. The Process to obtain an H1B Visa is to first find an H1B Sponsorship Job with a US Sponsoring Company (employer) and then to have your employer file a H1B Visa Application with the US Immigration Bureau on your behalf. It is the employer’s choice to sponsor or not.

Career Services – School of Public Health, University of Minnesota
http://www.sph.umn.edu/careers/csc/index.asp
The University of Minnesota is an equal opportunity educator and employer.
HOW TO MARKET YOURSELF
When it comes to marketing yourself to employers, here are a few benefits of hiring International Students:

- Diverse cultural background and the ability to speak more languages are especially appealing to companies that are planning to globalization their business.
- Living and studying abroad enables international students to demonstrate a number of skills such as tenacity, responsible risk taking, decision making, and resourcefulness.
- Be able to communicate how you have overcome some of the challenges you have faced; as these types of skills can be directly linked to the skills desired for the position you are seeking.

WHEN TO DISCUSS VISA STATUS WITH AN EMPLOYER
If the position is short term and you are using OPT, it is not much of an issue for the employer. If they ask, by all means inform them of your status. Often an employer will ask verbally or on an application if you are eligible to work in the U.S. If the employer requests the information you should inform them of your visa status. For example, “visa allows 12 months of work.” If they do not ask and you are seeking long-term employment, you want to bring it up before an offer of employment is made, possibly during second/third round interviews. Be sure the employer is aware so they can make a decision on whether or not they want to sponsor your visa petition.

JOB SEARCH RESOURCES

- **Going Global**: Going Global is a great resource for international students looking for information or work opportunities in the United States, check out the H-1B database, the employer directory, and city guides. To access Going Global, login to [http://goldpass.umn.edu/](http://goldpass.umn.edu/), the U of M’s database of jobs and internships.

- **Directories**: "The Directory of American Firms Operating in Foreign Countries" and "The Directory of Foreign Firms Operating in the United States" can be found in the Wilson Library Reference Room along with many others to help you research organizations.

- **Other Resources**:
  - [http://h1b.scholarshipforusa.com/](http://h1b.scholarshipforusa.com/) (searchable database of H1B visas)
  - [www.internationalstudent.com](http://www.internationalstudent.com) (Resume posting site; job search information; employment opportunities)
  - [www.twolingos.com/jobs](http://www.twolingos.com/jobs) (Connects bilingual career professionals to employers worldwide)
  - [www.H1Visajobs.com](http://www.H1Visajobs.com) (H1 Visa jobs sponsors)

Connect with Professionals and Peers
Meeting with professionals who work in your career area of interest, especially people who once were international students can be a great way to get career advice and find information on jobs. Approximately 80% of jobs are found through networking (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics). Learn more about networking at: [http://www.sph.umn.edu/careers/tipsheets/networking/](http://www.sph.umn.edu/careers/tipsheets/networking/). Feeling overwhelmed at the thought of contacting a professional? You’re not alone! Calling a stranger and asking for advice makes most students a little nervous. To get some help simply contact SPH Student Services at (612) 626-3500 and ask for an appointment with a career counselor. We will help you prepare what to say when you call a professional, what kinds of questions to ask, and how to make the best impression. For information about Informational Interviewing, please visit: [http://www.sph.umn.edu/careers/tipsheets/infoint/](http://www.sph.umn.edu/careers/tipsheets/infoint/).
YOUR LEGAL RIGHTS
As an international student, you may have concerns about experiencing discrimination within your job search or career and how to handle this should it arise. Below you will find some resources to help you understand your rights if you encounter discrimination in a job interview or in the work place. To learn about what constitutes an illegal interview question and how to handle it if the situation happens in a job interview read the article title Handling Improper Interview Questions (www.jobweb.com/interviews.aspx?id=1343) written by career experts from the National Association of Colleges and Employers. If you experience discrimination once you are in a job, check out Dealing with Discrimination: Tips for Employees (http://employment.findlaw.com/).

EMPLOYMENT RESOURCES
Although there is no single resource available to assist international students in finding employment in the U.S., the following list may help you locate opportunities and take advantage of your practical training option.

Online resources
- Some sites require a subscription, and in many cases the subscription is NOT free.
- Some sites require students to obtain a username/password from their career office if the career office subscribes to the service. (Typically, students can also get a subscription on their own if their career center is not a member.)

Visas and regulations
- www.uscis.gov
  Information on regulations related to international students and working in the U.S.
- www.USvisanews.com/content/view/100/36/
  Information on converting F-1 visa to U.S. employment
- www.usimmigrationsupport.org/
  U.S. Immigration Support is an independent organization dedicated to helping immigrants through the United States immigration process.

General information on employment
- www.ciee.org
  Council on International Education Exchange; short-term via sponsor
- www.aipt.org
  Association for International Practical Training; for global training services; J-1 visa sponsor
- www.istudentcity.com/career
  Resume, interview, and job-seeking tips for international students
- www.imex.com/imex/about.html
  Focuses on international trade
- www.imex.com/usa/companylist.html
  Lists IMEX members who do business in the U.S.
- www.embassy.org
  Includes business directories

Career Services – School of Public Health, University of Minnesota
http://www.sph.umn.edu/careers/csc/index.asp
The University of Minnesota is an equal opportunity educator and employer.
• www.flcdatacenter.com/CaseData.aspx
  Department of Labor

• www.state.gov/careers/
  US Department of State

• www.foreignborn.com/visas_imm/start_here/3employment_visa.htm
  Employment Visa

Jobs
• www.sph.umn.edu/careers/listings/
  Full-time, Part-time and Field Experience opportunities for SPH students

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

• www.jobweb.com/
  Job listing site

• www.twolingos.com
  Connects bilingual career professionals to employers worldwide

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

• www.jobsourcencnetwork.com
  Jobs database with links to international jobs resources

• www.myvisajobs.com/
  Visa Jobs

• www.H1Visajobs.com
  H1Visa Jobs Sponsors

Online Databases of H1B Visa Sponsors/Employers
• http://goldpass.umn.edu (Going Global)
  Employment resources for International Students seeking employment in the US. Information is searchable by State, City and employers who sponsor H1-B visas.

Books
(Check your campus library for a copy)
• Directory of American Firms Operating in Foreign Countries: Vol. 3 (published by Uniworld Business Publications, 1999; check to see if it’s in your college library)


For additional job searching tips and resources, please visit: http://www.sph.umn.edu/careers/tipsheets/jobsearch/.