JOB SEARCH STRATEGIES FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

The information in this guide is focused on assisting international students with the career development process, including the internship and job search process in the U.S. and beyond.

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1. Starting Early

University Career Center is here to help you with your career preparation. From personalized career advising to career fairs and everything in-between, the UCC exists to help get you started in your career. Partner with us as you explore majors and careers, identify experiential learning opportunities, prepare your resume and cover letter, and practice your interviewing skills.

We look forward to working with you from start to finish to develop the skills and experiences needed to achieve the career of your dreams. Appointments can be booked through our career services platform, Handshake. Whether you’re a current student or alumni, you are able to log into or create and Handshake account in order to book an appointment.
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2. Learning about U.S. Visa Regulations and Work Authorization

Being familiar with up-to-date U.S. visa regulations is important. Many international students may have F-1 or J-1 visa status, and each of these visas has different on-campus, off-campus, and post-graduation requirements. You are strongly encouraged to visit the International Student Service Office (ISSO), which provides immigration information and support to UT Dallas students through workshops and individual student advising.

Employment opportunities for F-1 and J-1 international students are restricted. A few key things to be aware of:

- Never accept or engage in paid or unpaid off-campus employment, internships, fellowships, or other training without prior authorization from the UT Dallas International Student Services Office (ISSO). Learn more about work authorizations, including Curricular Practical Training (CPT), Optional Practical Training (OPT), and Academic Training (AT) on the International Student Success website.
- Understand your visa status and what types of employment authorizations are available to you in order to clearly communicate your work eligibility to the employer.

3. Working On-Campus

The University of Texas at Dallas employs more than 2,000 students annually to assist with daily operations, planning, and other activities for the benefit of the institution and the local community. It is our privilege to help our students gain transferrable skills, earn supplemental income, and experience working in professional environments through meaningful on and off-campus employment opportunities.

- Apply for Jobs using Handshake

All jobs, including student employment positions, are posted within Handshake. You will log into Handshake using your NetID and Password. From there, you can search for all available jobs. Using the filters, you can narrow your search to just show on-campus jobs to exclusively search for open positions on campus.
4. Internship Search

According to the National Associate of Colleges & Employers (NACE), an internship is a form of experiential learning that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skills development in a professional setting.

If your visa permits, obtain an internship to gain some experience in your chosen career field. This experience will come in handy when looking for a full-time job. International students may engage in experiential learning opportunities, such as internships, during any academic term as long as the experience has been approved as relevant to their degree program.

Searching for and obtaining an appropriate internship is highly valuable to the overall career development process. We encourage students to start the internship search early to help identify career interests and goals. Our office provides multiple resources to help guide students through the internship search process.

5. Networking

As an international student who may have fewer contacts in the U.S., it is important to build and maintain networks that can support your job search. Networking is based on making meaningful connections that are mutually beneficial, which can be achieved through clearly communicating some combination of your interests, skills, goals, and experiences. In the U.S., it is very common to contact someone who is currently working in your area of interest and speak with them to ask for advice. UT Dallas alumni are also great resources for career advice and informational interviews. This directness in communication is valued in the U.S. You can utilize the LinkedIn Alumni feature to find and connect with UT Dallas alumni.

Schedule an appointment with a career consultant to review your profile and ask any questions you might have.
By building your network, you can gain access to the hidden job market, and this is important because research shows that 60-80% of positions are not listed publicly. LinkedIn is a valuable resource for your job or internship search, especially for growing and maintaining your network.

**According to Indeed, following these networking tips can increase your confidence:**

- Talk to new people at networking events.
- Attend new events.
- Be confident.
- Stay connected.
- Help others in your network.
- Find new connections online.
- Create authentic relationships.
- Bring a memorable business card.
- Help others in your network.
- Revisit older connections.
- Form your own networking group.

**6. Building Skills**

In addition to related technical or functional experience and knowledge, employers look for communication, leadership, and interpersonal skills acquired in a variety of settings. These can be developed through involvement in student organizations, student employment, enrolling in courses with group projects, volunteer experiences, internships, or developing friendships with students of different backgrounds.

**Review what skills employers seek on a candidate’s resume.**
## Cultural Difference in the Job Search

Below are common cultural norms when job searching in the United States as well as variations that may exist in other cultures. Being aware of these differences can better help you understand and navigate the job search process both in the United States and abroad.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common US employer Expectations</th>
<th>Common Values in other cultures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-Promotion Expected</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Talk openly about skills</td>
<td>- Sharing specific skills, strengths and accomplishments might be seen as boastful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Share examples of past excellent performance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Body Language</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Firm handshake shows confidence</td>
<td>- Light/limp handshake may be more common</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Direct eye contact is expected and is seen to show honesty and confidence</td>
<td>- Handshakes/touching may be inappropriate between men and women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Direct eye contact may be seen as disrespectful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Informality and Self Disclosure</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Questions regarding likes, dislikes, and hobbies are not unusual</td>
<td>- Questions about likes, dislikes, or hobbies might be seen as an invasion of privacy/inappropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Interviews may be conversational and include humor or joking</td>
<td>- Interviews are more formal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Resumes</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Resumes are typically 1-2 pages and tailored to the specific job and or field</td>
<td>• Resumes are often called Curriculum Vitae (CV) and often include a more comprehensive overview of all experience and education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Date of birth, marital status, gender, and photos would never be included</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Follow Up</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Firm handshake shows confidence</td>
<td>• Asking an employer about the status of a job application would be seen as rude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Following up after interviews via thank you notes and calls or emails to determine the status of an application is considered appropriately assertive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: These values do not represent one particular culture, but those that may be true across a variety of cultures around the globe.

Source.

## 8. Revealing your immigration status to US employers

- When in the hiring process do I need to reveal my immigration status?

  This is a very sensitive question that needs to be assessed on a case-by-case basis. There is no right or perfect time for international students to reveal that they are international students. Students approach this topic differently: some prefer to disclose their status in the job applications, while others wait until the interview phase.
While some employers have strict policies against hiring international students, others can be more flexible. Therefore, your first goal is to get past the initial screening to the interview. It is usually recommended that students address the issue of their work status during the first or second interview and no later than the time of the job offer.

When asked, it is essential to respond honestly about your immigration status and work authorization eligibility and 2) ensure the topic is discussed before accepting an offer.

9. **Have a Plan B**

Expand your pool of opportunities by applying for positions abroad. Explore where your education and experiences are in demand and be open to options you previously hadn’t considered! Check out [GoinGlobal](https://utdallas.joinhandshake.com/articles/19378).

GoinGlobal career and employment resources include more than 10,000 pages of constantly updated content on job search sources, work permit/visa regulations, resume writing guidelines, employment trends, salary ranges, networking groups cultural/interviewing advice… and much more!

10. **Resources for International Students**

Resumes and Cover Letters

The resume and cover letter are the most basic components of every application you submit. The primary purpose of a resume is to help you to get an interview. It is important to remember that not all resumes are the same, and your resume should be customized and targeted to the position, calling attention to the most relevant accomplishments from your education and professional experience.

In addition to regular workshops covering best practices for developing resumes and cover letters, our team has developed a robust Resume Guide. The guide includes tips, tricks, and examples from across a variety of disciplines.

[Resume Guide](https://career.utdallas.edu/appointments)

[Cover Letter Guide](https://career.utdallas.edu/appointments)

If you’re in need of more tailored assistance, we have additional one-on-one services. You can [book an appointment](https://career.utdallas.edu/appointments) with your career consultant through Handshake.
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Interviewing

After you have submitted your resume, cover letter, and any other application materials, an employer who finds you favorable will contact you for an interview. Interviews can be nerve-wracking and can be more difficult if you are conducting them in a non-native language. Career Consultants are available to assist you with preparing for interviews with mock interviews.

Market yourself by using your unique strengths and strong selling points. International Students offer employers the following strengths, attributes, and skills that may set you apart from your competition:

- Multilingualism and experience living in other countries
- Adaptability in adjusting to challenges
- Strong motivation
- Ability to make independent decisions

Interview Guide

Research companies that traditionally hire international students:

| Myvisajobs.com | This site provides information on H-1B Visa and Green Card sponsorship trends by employers, industry, job title and occupations in its top 100 sponsors reports. |
| SEVP Data Library | This resource provides information on companies who have previously participated in CPT. |
| H-1B Employer Data Hub | This site offers a database of employers petitioning for H-1B employees. It allows you to search for H-1B sponsors by year (back to 2009), employer name, location, as well as calculate approval and denial rates. Complete data for individual fiscal years is available to download. |

For more information about H-1Bs and other visas, go to USCIS. For specific information on the application process, review USCIS’s Temporary Worker page. USCIS also has a helpful guide on changing nonimmigrant classification.
Final Tip: Stay Positive and Be Persistent

Job hunting can be exhausting and demoralizing. You might feel that you are working yourself to the bone, with no noticeable results. The important thing now is not to give up and keep a positive attitude and confidence in your abilities.

University Career Center is here to help you with your career preparation.