



Job-Search Guide for International Students

INTRODUCTION

As the world becomes smaller with the globalization of markets, there are an increasing number of international students on campuses throughout the U.S. today. International students seeking employment in the U.S. have unique and different challenges. This guide has been developed to provide assistance and advice to international students regarding the job-search process.

There are two major obstacles international students may face at the outset of the job search. The first is employment restrictions imposed by U.S. immigration regulations; the second is cultural differences that may affect a student's ability to successfully present his or her qualifications to an employer. It is important for you to be aware of these difficulties and to be prepared to deal with them as best you can. To insure that you have the proper employment authorization from the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), contact the Office of International Education at 529-2512.

There are some specific strategies you can utilize as you prepare for the job search, whether you plan to remain in the U.S. or return to your home country.

SELF-ASSESSMENT

The first step in a successful job search is an honest, thorough evaluation of your values, your interests, your personal and financial needs, and your short- and long-term goals. As an international student, you should be aware that the goals you brought with you to the U.S. might have changed after residing here. You should be able to clearly articulate your career goals to an employer, and this can be achieved through a thorough self-assessment. Here are some questions to ask yourself:

- What did I hope to gain from study in the U.S.? How have these goals changed?
- What are my short- and long-term career goals?
- Am I geographically restricted for any reason?
- Are finances a consideration?
- How do my personal needs (e.g., family considerations) fit in with my goals?

Most individuals benefit from seeking assistance with the self-assessment process. This assistance is readily available, in various forms, through the Career Exploration and Testing Center in 196 Health Services Center and the Office of Career Services in Hoyt Hall.

RESUME/COVER LETTER

After you complete your self-assessment, the next step is to prepare a resume. The professional staff at the Office of Career Services can assist you in preparing a resume. An American resume is different from a resume you might prepare for employment in your home country. A resume for employment in the U.S. is an advertisement for you in terms of your abilities, accomplishments, and future capabilities. For all intents and purposes, it will be your chief marketing tool in your job-search campaign.

An effective resume will make a prospective employer want to meet you in person to further discuss your potential value to his or her organization. Above all, your resume should be honest, positive, concise, and easy to read. For more information about preparing your resume, please refer to the *Resume Preparation* guide available in the Career Resource Center within the Office of Career Services or via the Career Services Web site.

A cover letter always accompanies a resume when applying for jobs. Throughout the course of your job search, you will be in constant contact with prospective employers. You will be evaluated on your ability to present yourself as a good communicator who is capable of contributing your skills to an employing organization.

Presenting yourself effectively "on paper" is an important and ongoing process during the job search. While this is accomplished in part with a well-written resume, a variety of correspondence is also necessary in most job-search campaigns. Whether you are asking for an interview or accepting a job offer, appropriate and effective correspondence will significantly enhance the likelihood of success in your job-search efforts. For more information about cover letters, please refer to the *Cover Letters and Other Job-Search Correspondence* guide also available in our Career Resource Center or via our Web site.

IDENTIFYING POTENTIAL EMPLOYERS

After you have prepared your resume and cover letter, it is time to identify appropriate employers. Be aware that there are some employers who are interested in hiring international students whether for a practical training experience or full-time employment, and there are others who are not.

According to the Immigration Reform Control Act of 1986, employers must be willing to interview and consider for hire permanent residents, temporary

residents, refugees and individuals in the U.S. under political asylum. Any question or criterion that would exclude any of these groups is prohibited. However, employers are permitted to specify that they will not consider any individuals with a non-immigrant visa (i.e., F1 or J1) who are eligible to work only for practical training purposes. This creates a challenge for international students as they attempt to identify employers who may be interested in hiring them. How do you go about identifying employers who are willing to consider you for practical training and/or full-time employment? Here are several strategies we suggest:

Companies/Organizations that Have a Relationship with Your Home Country

Companies/organizations that have an existing relationship with your home country may be particularly interested in hiring you. There are two excellent resources available to you in our Career Resource Center that will help you identify these potential employers. They are the *Directory of American Firms Operating in Foreign Countries* and the *Directory of Foreign Firms Operating in the U.S.* You can ask our Career Resource Librarian to assist you in locating these directories.

Local Chambers of Commerce

It is important to realize that there may be job opportunities for you in medium- to smaller-sized companies that have established trade relationships with various countries. Most major cities now have companies that are establishing trade relationships with foreign countries, and you can identify chambers of commerce through the *World Chamber of Commerce Directory* available in our Career Resource Center.

On-Campus Interviewing Program

As mentioned earlier, employers have the right to specify whether or not they will interview international students on an F1 or J1 visa. Although the Office of Career Services always asks employers if they are willing to interview our international students on visas, the majority respond that they are not. However, we recommend that you correspond directly with employers who recruit at Miami. We have found that although an employer may tell us that they are not interested in interviewing international students on campus, there are times employers will grant interviews to international students who take the initiative to make direct contact.

International Companies

Some of the best employment prospects for international students may be with international

companies. International students are great assets to global organizations desiring language skills, respect for diversity, and knowledge of overseas economies. The Career Resource Center and King Library each have various international employer directories and resources.

Workshops and Career Fairs

The Office of Career Services sponsors a wide variety of workshops that can help acquaint you further with the American perspective on the job-search process. In addition to workshops on resume writing, interviewing techniques, and job-search strategies, the Office of Career Services sponsors a career fair in September and an internship & career expo in February which offer you the opportunity to obtain career advice and explore career opportunities with employers representing business, industry, government and public service. You can also take advantage of our “mock interview” service to improve your interviewing skills. All you need to do is call and make an appointment.

Networking

You probably have heard something about “networking” as a job-search strategy. In the U.S., the primary way people get professional positions is through networking. Networking involves informing as many people as possible that you are looking for a job. You can begin the networking process by meeting with your foreign student advisor, professors, and friends. They may be aware of job openings for which you may be eligible or know of organizations interested in hiring international students. Remember to provide your contacts with a copy of your resume so they know what you are looking for and what experience and background you have. If they have contacts in any organizations for which you may be interested in working, ask for their permission to contact these individuals using their name. They might also have lists of international students or alumni working temporarily or permanently in the U.S. or alumni who have found employment in their home country. Don’t forget about people in your home country who may be of assistance to you.

Informational Interviews

Informational interviewing is a form of networking and is another technique that can help you establish further contacts. Informational interviewing involves talking with individuals in your field to gain first-hand career information and advice about the job-search process. The informational interview is never used to ask for a job, but rather is a means to gain helpful information and develop contacts with other individuals in your field.

For more information on informational interviewing, refer to the *Job-Search Strategies* guide available in our Career Resource Center or via our Web site.

Employment Agencies

Be wary of any employment agency that promises you the job of your dreams in an American company for which you always wanted to work. Any agency that charges you a fee to help you identify job opportunities should be avoided. There are many organizations that prey upon the vulnerability of international students — BE CAUTIOUS. Those agencies that are fee-paid, that is, the company pays the agency to find qualified individuals for jobs, are the better choice. Although there may be exceptions, normally employment agencies are of little help to inexperienced graduates seeking entry-level positions.

ADDITIONAL TIPS

Any job search, whether it be that of an American or an international student, is time-consuming and, at times, frustrating. However, by following the strategies outlined in this guide and the other publications we have suggested, your job search will be more productive. Keep an open mind and utilize all the resources available to you. Here are some additional tips:

Market Yourself Positively

It is very important for international students to turn employers' objections into positives. By virtue of living and studying abroad, international students demonstrate tenacity and resourcefulness. Tell employers about the challenges you faced in studying abroad and how you overcame them. You should also be prepared to convince employers that hiring you offers more advantages than disadvantages.

Consider an Internship

According to one recent report, more than 53 percent of international survey respondents received a job offer from the sponsoring American company after completing an internship with the company. Therefore, internships can sometimes lead to full-time employment. Since internships usually count as Optional Practical Training (OPT) time, please check with the Office of International Education before pursuing an internship to determine whether an internship is right for you. Students most often seek internships for the summer prior to graduation.

Explore Occupations in Need of International Students

According to a study conducted by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE

Research: Job Outlook 2006), employers who plan to hire international students focus on graduates with degrees in electrical engineering, computer science, chemistry, chemical engineering, and business administration/management. Of the employers who participated in the NACE study, manufacturers expressed the highest interest in hiring international students (28.1%), followed closely by service-sector employers (21.4%) and government/nonprofit employers (16%). These statistics suggest that international students who wish to work several years in the United States would be wise to study technical subjects in order to increase their chance for employment.

Possible sources about occupations, employers, and companies with a history of H1-B sponsorship include ForeignMBA.com and H1VisaJobs.com.

Carefully Approach the Topic of H1-B Visas with Employers

Many employers are intimidated by the U.S. immigration process and are reluctant to sponsor H1-B visas, or simply have a policy against it. Do not begin an employment interview or letter with an inquiry regarding H1-B sponsorship. Discussions about H1-B sponsorship should come later, either when the employer brings it up or when you are offered the position. Your first task in an interview is to convince the employer of your suitability for the job. Only later, when the employer is close to making, or has made an offer, should you raise the H1-B sponsorship issue.

Be Flexible

You may need to expand your job search by considering jobs outside your desired career field. For example, an Information Technology major who would like work in Web development may want to search for jobs in Web development as well as other areas of information technology.

NEED HELP?

If you would like individual assistance, do not hesitate to schedule an appointment with a Career Advisor at the Office of Career Services by calling 529-3831. Office hours are from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

For additional information about the Office of Career Services and other pertinent Web sites, please refer to our Web site at www.muohio.edu/careers/ For assistance in using the Web site, check with the Career Resource Librarian in 205 Hoyt Hall.

Miami University
OFFICE OF CAREER SERVICES
241 Hoyt Hall
Oxford, OH 45056

**RESOURCES AVAILABLE IN THE CAREER RESOURCE CENTER
FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

The Big Guide to Living and Working Overseas, Jean-Marc Hachey, ISSI, Inc.
Careers for Foreign Language Aficionados, VGM Career Books.
Careers in Foreign Languages, B. Camenson, VGM Career Books.
Careers in International Business, VGM Career Books.
Current Jobs International, A bi-weekly job vacancy listing.
Directory of American Firms Operating in Foreign Countries, World Trade Academy Press.
Directory of Foreign Firms Operating in the United States, World Trade Academy Press.
Directory of International Internships, Career Services and Placement, Michigan State University.
The Global Resumes and CV Guide, John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
Great Jobs for Foreign Language Majors, VGM Career Books.
Guide to Internet Job Searching, M. Dikel and F. Roehm, VGM Career Horizons.
How to Get a Job in Europe, C. Matherly and R. Sanborn, Planning/Communications.
International Job Finder: Where the Jobs are Worldwide, Planning/Communications.
International Jobs: Where They Are, How to Get Them, Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.
Internships in International Affairs, Career Education Institutes.
The ISS Directory of International Schools, International Schools Service.
Kiss, Bow, or Shake Hands, Terri Morrison & Wayne A. Conway, Adams Media
Opportunities in Foreign Language Careers, Wilga M. Rivers, McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc.
Opportunities in Overseas Careers, Blythe Camenson, McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc.
Study Abroad, Peterson's.
Teaching English Abroad: Talk Your Way Around the World, S. Griffith, Peterson's Guides, Inc.
Vault Career Guide to International Careers, Vault Inc.
Washington Information Directory, Congressional Quarterly, Inc.
Work Abroad: The Complete Guide to Finding a Job Overseas, Transitions Abroad.
Work Your Way Around the World, Peterson's.
World Chamber of Commerce Directory, Worldwide Chamber of Commerce Directory, Inc.

Videotapes - For International Students: *The Employment Interview American Style*.

King Library

Check King Library's Instructional Materials Center (IMC) for current newspapers received from around the world. There are many more resources available at King Library, too numerous to list here, which would also be helpful to international students pursuing employment. Visit the Library's homepage at www.lib.muohio.edu under "Research by Subject." Click on "Business" and select from the alphabetical list.

Career Services Web site: Be sure to access our Web site for additional resources and job-listing information at www.muohio.edu/careers/students/internetsites/international.shtml