



Career Services



International Students Helpful Guide to Working in the United States

As an international student, the goal is to find employment in the United States after graduation. It is important to get familiar with the career culture and special legal steps that are needed to gain employment post- graduation. This document is intended to provide information on the job search and interviewing process. It is for informational purposes only and it **NOT** a substitute for professional legal advice.

Outline

- First steps and what you will need before looking for employment
- Cultural Differences between a jobs search in the United State and job search in home country
- Resumes for International Students
- Job Search Strategies
- Logging into WOLFWORKS Job Database
- Interview Skills and Preparation
- Discussing Your Status with Employers
- Difference between Illegal and Legal Interview Questions
- What to wear to a Job Interview
- Get out of your comfort zone-Networking

First Steps

Prior to searching for employment it is important to ensure employment permission. Find out what type of visa you have.

F-1 classification students are allowed to work on campus up to 20 hours per week on campus ONLY. During breaks when classes are not in sessions students are able to work up to 40 hours per week.

J-1 classification students are allowed to work up to 20 hours per week on campus only. During breaks when classes are not in session, students are allowed to work up to 40 hours per week. However if a student is on a J-1 visa they **MUST** get approval from the International Services & Programs (ISP) office before accepting a job.

Curriculum Practical Training- CPT is an employment option for F-1 students. This type of employment must be an internship, cooperative education job, practicum, or any other work experience that is required for a degree or academic credit. Students **MUST** get approval from International Services & Programs (ISP) office.

Optional Practical Training- OPT is temporary employment authorization that is given to F-1 students, this is an opportunity for students to apply their classroom knowledge to practical work experience off campus. You may use some or all available twelve months of practical training. This can be used during the course of study or after completion of course studies.

Please visit the office of International Services & Programs if you need assistance and for eligibility requirements. The ISP office supports international student through advisement and activities. They are located in Row Hall, Room 229, hours of operation is Monday-Friday 8AM- 5PM or call (678) 839-4780 to schedule an appointment.

Cultural Differences Job Searching in the United States versus Home Country

(These differences do not represent any individual cultures or country)

Resume/Application

Abroad- Detailed chronology of experience, not a method of self-promotion.

U.S. - Concise, resume to reflect the individual's accomplishments, credentials, strengths and abilities.

Punctuality

Abroad- It may be okay to be late.

U.S. - Be on time. Arrive at least ten minutes early.

Talking during interview

Abroad-Employer talks more during interview.

U.S.-Candidate does most of the talking.

Eye Contact

Abroad-Eye contact may be disrespectful.

U.S. - Eye contact shows confidence and is necessary.

“Small Talk”

Abroad-Often very extensive to showcase personality and character.

U.S.-Brief at beginning of interview, followed by direct, formal interview questions.

Self-Promotion

Abroad-Citing accomplishments may be seen as arrogant or individualistic.

U.S.-Assertive, open discussion of accomplishments is expected and important.

Asking questions to the interviewer

Abroad- May be rude, intrusive, or aggressive.

U.S.-Expected, shows enthusiasm and interest.

Displaying knowledge of the company

Abroad-May show too much initiative; questioning may show disloyalty.

U.S. - Demonstrating knowledge of the organization is expected and shows initiative.

Personality related discussion

Abroad-performance. Questions about personality (leadership or problem solving style) may be considered irrelevant

U.S.-Discussion of personal hobbies and interests are admissible but not crucial. Discussion of leadership and problem solving traits are necessary.

Career Awareness

Abroad-Questions about one's role in the organization may be considered disloyal. Discussion of long-term career goals may be negative.

U.S.- Questions about role are welcomed. Discussion of long-term plans shows goal-oriented personality.

Responsibility in finding employment

Abroad-Possibility for job search taking place with little or no proactive action on part of individual.

U.S. - Job search solely individual responsibility. Use whatever means available.

Informality in Interviewing

Abroad-Politeness and formality are necessary. Handshaking and casual speech may not be permissible.

U.S.-Politeness is necessary, but some joking and informality is acceptable. Firm handshake is Necessary, Casual, friendly speech is permitted.

Follow-up

Abroad-Questioning one's application status may be rude.

U.S.-Telephone inquiry on application's status is acceptable. A written thank-you note is highly recommended and often expected.

(Resource Courtesy of)

http://career.utk.edu/CS/wpcontent/uploads/pdf/International_Student_Guide.pdf)

Resumes for International Students

- In the United States resume are used as marketing tools to highlight your strengths, skills, accomplishments, and abilities.
- The length of the resume is limited to 1-2 pages
- A photo is not included on the resume
- Do not include your visa status on your resume
- Age, race and religion are not included on your resume
- U.S. employers have strict guidelines and disregard applicants for grammatical errors and language

International Student can visit or call the Office of Career Service for assistance with resume writing, interviewing skills, and job search ideas. Career Services is located in Row Hall 3rd floor hours of operation Monday-Friday 8am-5pm or call to schedule an appointment at (678)839-6431. Also visit [Career Services](http://www.westga.edu/careerservices/) website to view sample resumes. <http://www.westga.edu/careerservices/>

Job Search Strategies

Researching industries that have an international presence can be beneficial to your job search. International students become assets to global organizations because of desirable language skills, knowledge of overseas economics and the need for diversity. Identify types of positions that have available and jobs that are of interest to you.

- Begin your search for employment early! As an international student you face certain restrictions and challenges regarding the U.S. job search
- Practice your communication skills. Learn to speak clearly and strengthen your spoken and written English
- Think about your selling points, what you are good at language, knowledge of economics in other countries, adaptability, unique cultural background, and professional experiences.
- Visit the International Services & Programs Office if you are unsure about employment and your visa status. Visit Career Services for career preparation.

You can search on the web to look for potential employment. It is important to read the job description to figure out if your skills or interest might add up to what the company is looking for.

You can always visit [WOLFWORKS](https://westgawolfworks.experience.com/experience/login) through the Office of Career Services for the latest on-campus, part-time, full time and internship opportunities.

<https://westgawolfworks.experience.com/experience/login>

Here Are Steps to Follow to Login to Wolf Works JOB DATABASE

To log in to your WOLFWORKS account

- In the black bar above, use your my.westga.edu email address as your User Name
- Use **wolfpack** as the temporary password
- Once logged in you may change your password

Create a Profile

- Upload Resume(s) onto WOLFWORKS for a Career Services Specialist to approve
- Search WOLFWORKS for Job Postings and on-campus interviewing opportunities
- Submit Resumes on WOLFWORKS to sign up for on-campus interviews, on-campus jobs, part time, full time employment, internships and much more

Interview Skills and Preparation

- Start preparing for interviews in advance. Think about how you could discuss your skills and experiences to demonstrate you are fit for the position.
- Research and study typical interview questions such as “Tell me about yourself.”
- Prior to scheduling a mock interview visit [Interview Stream](https://uwg.interviewstream.com/default.aspx) to practice interviewing and recording yourself. This is a great tool to use in preparing for interviewing.
<https://uwg.interviewstream.com/default.aspx>
- Schedule mock interviews with the Office of Career Services practice, practice and practice, this will help with communication skills.
- Enhance your communication skills by attending career services workshops.
- Practice your responses with friends, classmates and even in front of a mirror.

Discussing Your Status with Employers

It is difficult to reveal your visa status to an employer; however it is important to be honest. Many employers are intimidated by the U.S. Immigration process and sponsorship process for hiring international students. You should never start an interview or letter with an inquiry of H1B sponsorship. Wait until you are offered employment, or if an employer brings it up.

An equally important topic is to decide what you should say about your status. You must understand what your visa status is and how to best explain what is involved in the process. Many employers are not aware of the constant transitions of immigration law and may not have up to date information. It is your responsibility to know the difference between practical training extension and H1 when interviewing for employment. Speak with confidence and be clear.

Remember to highlight and reiterated your skills, abilities, language skills and experiences to the employer. Keep in mind your unique background sets you apart; use it to your advantage.

Know the Difference between Illegal and Legal Interview Questions

An Employer May NOT Ask:

- What is your visa type, nationality, place of birth? Or, which country are you a citizen?
- What is your native language? Or, what language do you most often speak?
- Questions related to marital status, number of children/dependents
- Questions about your financial status
- About service in foreign military
- Questions about your race or ethnicity

An Employer May Ask:

- Are you legally authorized to work in the United States? Or will you now or in the future require sponsorship for employment visa?
- Which language do you read, speak and write?
- About service in the United State military
- If you have been known by any other names, and what those names are.

What to Wear to a Job Interview

Men:

- Dark Suit (gray, black, Navy is best)
- Dress shirt (long or short sleeves button up collar)
- Tie
- Dark Shoes

Women:

- Dark Suit (Jacket and skirt or dress slacks)
- Dress shirt or blouse
- Closed toe comfortable shoes (dark colored)

Get out of Your Comfort Zone –NETWORKING

Network with people that you have never met you never know who you are meeting and how they might be able to help you in the future.

Networking is most valuable to an international student this helps with researching career paths and potential job leads. It is an opportunity to build valuable relationships.

A systematic approach to making personal, written, telephone contacts with relative, friends, professors, employers' alumni who may have studied in the United States. Each contact becomes a participant in assisting you in your job search.

Target fellow students who have worked in the United States, they might be able to provide insight and connect you with the right person for employment or give advice.

Follow Up

At the end of every interview it is important to always thank the employer send a personal handwritten not, email or make a phone call to the person you spoke with.

In the note you can include the date you interviewed, the position, something you discussed.

This is a great way to remind the employer of who you are and a great way to market yourself.

Reflection

Remember that when you evaluate job offers you need to ask yourself if you would be happy in this position and company.