



The Job Search for International Students

Who can help with my job search?

Like in any job search, it is important during your job search to reach out to those people that can help you. Identify everyone possible that could serve as a contact either to your field of interest or who may have a connection for you.

- Employers – People you have met through career events, professional meetings, your work experience, etc.
- Family Friends – People who know your career background and interests and may be of assistance in their profession or organization.
- Job and Internship Contacts – People you know from your own work/internship experiences.
- Faculty Contacts – Faculty members who may maintain relationships with alums or have other contacts in the business world.
- Alumni – Recent alums that you may know, alums who attend career events, etc.
- Professional Associations – Alums from your professional organizations or professionals in local professional organizations.
- Social Networking sites – Connect with professionals and alumni on LinkedIn and Facebook.

Advice for the Job Search

Market yourself positively

International students should be able to demonstrate why hiring you is more to their advantage than their disadvantage. It is important to tell employers about the challenges you have encountered studying away from home and how you overcame those situations. Studying in another country demonstrates your independence, resourcefulness and drive.

Be Flexible

The job market for international students can be a frustrating one, so that it why it is so important to be flexible in your job search. You may have to consider jobs outside your preferred location or even desired career field. You might have an interest in international business but you will probably need to consider a career in business management with an internationally focused company.

Be Patient

Finding a job can be challenging and may take some time.

Creating an Americanize Resume

- Review resume tips and examples on the UW-La Crosse Career Services website.
- Do not use personal data and immigration status.
- Emphasize your international, bi-lingual or multi-lingual language skills especially English skills on your resume. For example:

LANGUAGE SKILLS

Fluent: English (speaking, writing, reading & comprehension)

Native Fluency: Vietnamese, Laotian

Basic Speaking and Writing Skills: French and Japanese

- Proofread, proofread, proofread. Make sure your resume is free of grammatical and spelling errors as well as any awkward use of language. Have your resume critiqued by a career services advisor.
- Consider providing the employer with a better understand of organizations and schools. For example,
 - One of the top 5 universities in Saudi Arabia
 - Bulgarian owned bank with 55 branch offices specializing in services to public sector companies, governmental units and NGOs.
 - Nike (EMEA (Europe, Middle East & Africa) Regional Headquarters)
 - Largest information technology company in Southeast Asia
- If an organization requires fluency in something other than English, consider submitting a second resume written in that language.
- Consider having a back-up resume for your home country just in case you are unable to secure employment in the United States.

The Interviewing Process for International Students

Culturally the interviewing process can be very different from you home country. Below are a few tips and ideas of ways to help your prepare for your interview.

- Be assertive and open about your accomplishments and skills. If you don't tell them, they will never know.
 - Eye contact is expected and it shows the employer your confidence in your ability to do the job.
 - Be on time. Arrive 5-15 minutes prior to your interview.
 - The interviewer may do most of the talking, so it is important that you leave with new information about the job or organization.
 - If an interviewer does not talk a lot, be prepared with examples of your skills and abilities. (For example, use examples from class projects, student organizations, internships or previous jobs).
 - Employers like to hear about how you work in a team environment but what they really want to know is how you as an individual reacted within that group. Tell the interviewer what the group did but then illustrate to them what you as an individual assisted with the success of the group.
 - Researching the organization is important to the interviewing process. Make sure you demonstrate this knowledge during the interview and even your cover letter. It shows initiative and interest.
 - Do not discuss the salary until an employer initiates the conversation.
 - Some interviews may be relaxed in manner. This environment is to encourage openness and to relax a candidate.
 - Race, sex and age are legally not supposed to affect the interview process and can not be asked during the interview.
 - Ask the employer at the end of the interview don't be afraid to ask what their timeline is in making decisions and when you might expect to hear from them. This shows your interest in the position and you leave knowing the status of the process.
 - Follow up with a thank you note. You can mail or email this note.
 - If your plan is to work for a major company with an office in your home country, share that plan with the employer. They may be more interested if they know there are investing in their company by training you in the States before you move back home to work.
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How can I discuss immigration issues?

- The question of your immigration status may be address in an employment interview. Yet, don't bring it up yourself in a first interview.
- Know the benefits and restrictions of your particular status (J1, H1, F1 & etc) and be able to discuss practical training, residency and temporary status. The more knowledgeable you are about the employment options available, the more confident you will feel.
- Information on employment authorization is available in the Office of International Education, 116 Graff Main Hall.
- Emphasize your ability to speak bilingually and comfort in working/living abroad. In this international world, organizations are looking for strong employees to work on a global scale.

Starting my job search

- Utilize **Eagle Opportunities** on the Career Services website. Your login name is your student ID# and your password is the last 4 digits of your student ID#.
 - Explore internship and job opportunities.
 - **Goinglobal** - Visit the Additional Resources link to access (jobs & internships worldwide)
 - Goinglobal has created 40+ US City Guides (plus some Canadian cities) to help with your job search. In each city link is a list of some of the companies that have hired H-1B visa holders.
 - The Goinglobal's H1B Plus database contains approximately 500,000 records of companies that applied for H1B visas in the prior year.
 - **Vault** – A great database for industry overviews, profiles of different careers, and additional career advice. Also is a searchable internship database with a search option for international students.
- **Additional Job Search Websites** - Links to a wide variety of job search sites
- **Company Websites** – WI & MN
- **Idealist.org** – Over 29,000 nonprofit and community organizations in 153 countries, which you can search by name, location or job type.
- **Available in Career Services ONLY:** Directory of Foreign Firms Operating in the United States & Directory of US Firms Operating in Foreign Countries.
- **Internationalstudent.com** – Started by a group of international students with the goal of helping other students dealing with American immigration and education system.
- **LinkedIn.com & Facebook.com** – Consider developing a network of professionals through online connections including email and social networking sites (i.e. LinkedIn and even Facebook). It does have more of a social aspect to it but it's a way to connect with colleagues, UW-L alumni, or just keep your friends up-to-date on your employment/intern status.

How can UW-La Crosse Office of International Education (OIE) help you?

- Information on employment authorization options for F-1 & J-1 students.
- If you are interested in any type of work experience either prior to or after graduation, you will need to contact the Office of International Education regarding Immigration and Naturalization Service policies and procedures.
- Work experience that will be paid **and** off campus must be authorized/requested through OIE **before** you begin working for an organization. Failure to do so may result in loss of student status.

How can UW-La Crosse Career Services help you?

- Schedule an individual appointment with a career advisor by calling (608) 785-8514, then press "0" to schedule an appointment.

- Utilize Eagle Opportunities on the Career Services website. Your login name is your student ID# and your password is the last 4 digits of your student ID#.
 - Explore internship and job opportunities.
 - Visit the Additional Resources link to view Goinglobal (jobs & internships worldwide) & Perfect Interview (online mock interview system).
- Participate in a mock interview with a staff member.
- Visit the Career Resource Library in Career Services.
- Attend career events/fairs to explore career opportunities and talk with recruiters. A major career fair is held both fall & spring semesters.

Challenges in the international student job search

- **Hiring Complexities:** Many employers may be unfamiliar with the process of hiring an international student. This is as new to them as it is to you. After an optional one year practical training, employers may sponsor you to obtain an H1-B visa to continue working in the United States. They may believe that is it too complicated and expensive. As a result, some companies may hire you for the optional one year practical training with the understanding that they may not be able to sponsor you.
- **Lack of Commitment:** Some employer fear international employees will return to their home country after only a year or two and therefore are reluctant to invest time and resources into training them.
- **Communication:** Employers may be concerned with the international employee's ability to communicate effectively in both verbal and written English.

Adapted from:

The Job Search for International Students, Florida State University Career Center

International Students and the Job Search, University Career Services, University of Virginia

Job Search for International Students, Case Western Reserve University