Job Search Strategies for international students

University of Minnesota
Agenda

• Work authorization: AT, CPT, OPT
  – How/when to apply, basic procedures

• The U.S. job search process
  – Identifying potential employers
  – Cultural expectations
  – How to talk about work authorization

• Questions & Answers
Work authorization: J1 students

You must apply before you start working!

• J-1 students: Academic Training (AT)
  – Before and/or after degree completion date
  – Related to your field of study
  – Limited to a total of 18 months or the period of time spent as a student (whichever is shorter).
  – Postdocs eligible for total 36 months of “postdoctoral training”.
  – Must have a job offer.
Work authorization: F1 students

You must apply before you start working!

• F-1 students
  – **Curricular Practical Training (CPT)**
    • **Before** degree completion date
    • Tied to an academic course (internship, directed study, etc.)
  – **Optional Practical Training (OPT)**
    • **After** degree completion date
    • Application through USCIS
Work authorization: F1 students

• CPT
  – Apply **after** you receive a job offer.
  – Takes **7 business days** to process application in ISSS.
  – **Course registration** (unless internship is a program requirement).

• OPT
  – Job offer is **not** necessary to apply.
  – USCIS application window: 90 days before and 60 days after degree completion date.
  – Takes **7 business days** to process in ISSS and up to **3 months** at USCIS.
  – Up to 12 months employment; only 90 days unemployment.
  – 17-month extension is available for **STEM degree holders**.
Work Authorization: ISSS workshops

• Completion of the CPT/OPT online workshop is **required**
  – z.umn.edu/cpt
  – z.umn.edu/opt

• Visa workshops are offered by ISSS every semester. Check the ISSS Weekly Update for the workshop schedule.
  – **H-1B Visa Workshop**
    • http://www.isss.umn.edu/career/
  – **Employment-Based Visas & Permanent Residency**
    • April 8th, 4-6pm. http://z.umn.edu/ebvprsp15
Identify Potential Employers

• When looking for jobs, consider:
  – International companies
    • They often desire individuals with languages skills, respect for diversity, and a knowledge of overseas economies.
  – Companies that have previously sponsored H-1B visas
    • They are familiar with and have successfully completed the hiring process before.
  – Medium and small companies
    • Although they are not large companies, they may have openings for international students and should not be discounted.
U.S. Job Search: Cultural Expectations

• Networking! Networking! Networking!
  – A lot of jobs are not publicized
  – Employers get to know you as a person

• Self promotion
  – Be confident!
  – Communicate your strengths, experiences, career goals, and how they relate to the positions
  – Examples of individual accomplishments and skills

• Do your homework!
  – Research the organization and position

• Direct communication
  – Don’t assume employers read your resume
Your visa status

• When do you think it is a good idea to bring up your visa status?
  – Job fair?
  – Cover letter / Resume?
  – Informational interview?
  – Formal interview?
  – After a job offer?

• How to talk about work authorization
Strengths as an International Applicant

- International perspective/Cultural sensitivity
- Language
- Desire to work/Enthusiasm
- Diversity
- Adaptability & Resilience
- Independence
- Problem solving
- Communication skills

Use examples to express your strengths and skills
Resources

• ISSS Career Services: http://www.isss.umn.edu/career/
• UMN Career Services: http://www.career.umn.edu/
• Career & Internship Services (St. Paul): http://www.careerhelp.umn.edu/
• UMN Graduate School: https://www.grad.umn.edu/current-students-academic-professional-development/career

Take advantage of these free, on-campus resources often!
Questions?

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