



# THE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS **CAREER CENTER**

## GUIDANCE FOR INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS STUDENTS SEEKING JOBS OR INTERNSHIPS

The search process for internships and employment in the U.S. tends to be confusing and challenging to international students. This information is designed to provide concise advice and resources specifically for students in F-1 status. In addition, contact [your Career Coach](#) in the School of Business early and often to discuss your career goals and the [Office of International Student and Scholar Services](#) (OISSS) for information about your specific situation.

### **On-Campus Employment**

Getting an on-campus job is a great place to start gaining work experience in the U.S. You can find PSU positions on [Handshake](#), a national job and internship portal. Log into Handshake using your PSU email address, complete a profile, and use filters to find on-campus positions. (Jobs > All Filters > On-Campus >).

On-campus jobs are competitive, so have a quality resume and cover letter. Resume styles and cover letters vary among countries, so it is important to have your Career Coach help you create or revise a resume and cover letter for the U.S. hiring market. Click [HERE](#) to find the Career Coach who works with your undergraduate major or graduate program.

Once you are offered a position, follow [the process for getting on-campus work authorization](#). It is important to be aware of the processing timeframes for needed documents as described by the OISSS and to plan accordingly about a start date of employment. For more information about on-campus employment for international students, click [HERE](#).

### **Finding and Obtaining Internships or Jobs**

#### **Internships and Curricular Practical Training (CPT)**

Whether you are an undergraduate or graduate student, internships are an ideal way to build professional skills and learn about business practices in the U.S. Be sure to meet with the OISSS staff about [Curricular Practical Training \(CPT\)](#), the work authorization for students pursuing internships.



**You must:**

- have an internship offer that is related to your course of study, has been approved by your academic advisor or program director and the OISSS, and have written authorization for CPT before you can report to your internship
- have completed three consecutive terms of study before your internship starts
- be in F-1 status
- be a full-time enrolled student
- earn academic credit for your internship. (Contact Nancy Young ([nancy.e.young@pdx.edu](mailto:nancy.e.young@pdx.edu)) for more information if you are an MSF student. All other International students can go [HERE](#) for more information about earning credit.)
- [HERE](#) is the link to learn more about CPT and how to apply.

**Post-Graduation Jobs and Optional Practical Training (OPT)**

Many international students come to the U.S. with the goal of pursuing professional positions in this country after graduation. Optional Practical Training (OPT) is authorization to work as a professional in your field of study following graduation. OPT is valid for 12 months for most graduates unless you are in a STEM-designated major. (The OISSS can clarify if your major is STEM-designated.) Students with STEM-designated majors may be eligible to work in the U.S. for up to three years.

**You must:**

- not start your job until the work authorization (OPT) has been approved (You can apply for OPT before having a job offer)
- be in F-1 status
- have completed one academic year of full-time study and subsequently maintained F-1 status before completing your degree
- [HERE](#) is the link to learn more about OPT and how to apply.

**How to Become a Strong Candidate for an Internship or Job**

Finding and landing an internship or job is difficult for almost any student or new graduate. It can be even more challenging for international students. The rules are most likely different than those in your home country regarding what recruiters and hiring managers are looking for and how they would like your application materials presented. It's important to work with your [Career Coach](#) on these items:

- **Elevator Pitch** (how to briefly introduce yourself at career fairs and other networking situations - what is your unique value proposition?)
- **Resume and Cover Letter** (if these documents are not compelling and articulate, you will not make it to the interview stage)
- **LinkedIn Profile** (our digital and visual world requires students to have a strong, key-word optimized profile)
- **Search Strategies** (how to be proactive and reactive in the job search)
- **Networking Advice** (how to make and maintain professional connections)
- **Interviewing** (preparation is the key to successfully interviewing and getting an offer)

**Pro-Tips**

- The [SB Career Center website](#) has a wide assortment of resources for you, with informational handouts with examples and short "how-to" videos.

- Get on [Handshake](#) and make a profile - recruiters may reach out to you with opportunities and invitations to information sessions.
- Find international talent-friendly employers and regularly search their websites for opportunities:
  - Look to see who has hired PSU international students in recent years [HERE](#).
  - Search top H-1B sponsors by industry, occupation, or job title at [myvisajobs.com](#)
  - Search H-1B sponsors by company name, job title, or city at [H-1B Grader](#)
  - [F1 Hire](#) - a free web browser extension for OPT/CPT/H-1B job seekers that connects to Handshake, LinkedIn, Glassdoor, Indeed, and Google Career
  - [LinkedIn H-1B Sponsor Checker Google Chrome Extension](#)
- Don't know where to go to meet local professionals? Come to [SB Career Center events and career fairs](#) and meet recruiters and hiring managers without leaving campus.
- Sign up for the [Mentor Program](#) and be paired with a local professional who will provide advice and encouragement for nine months. You could even request a former international student who could share their process and approach to working in the U.S.
- Connect with PSU alumni and other "friends" of the University through the [PSU Works](#) platform.

## **A Word About Communication**

Employers are consistently looking for students with strong communication skills. This means both verbal and written communication skills. If you need to strengthen your communication skills before you start applying to internships and jobs, contact OISSS and see what resources are available to you.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

What do I say when an employer asks me the following:

- **Are you legally authorized to work in the U.S.?**
  - Yes, I have legal authorization to work in the U.S. for 12 (or potentially up to 36 months if a STEM major) and this does not require employer sponsorship.
- **Will you now or in the future require sponsorship for employment?**
  - If you (the employer) would like to extend my employment, you will need to apply for H-1B status on my behalf which allows up to six years of employment authorization.

## **When and how should I tell a prospective employer that I am an international student?**

- You do not need to draw attention to your F-1 status before an employer asks, given the reservations some employers may have about hiring international employees. It is recommended that you address your work authorization in the second interview once you have had an opportunity to present your skills and qualifications to the employer.
- You need to communicate with an employer about your F-1 status clearly and confidently.
- You must have accurate knowledge of [CPT](#) and [OPT](#) to show your employer they do not need to invest any resources in those benefits on your behalf.
- You must have accurate knowledge of [H-1B](#) to help employers understand when their responsibilities for sponsoring your immigration status will begin.

## **Should I list my F-1 status and/or work authorization on my resume?**

- No, you are not required to disclose it. However, if you were asked, you should never lie about your F-1 status.