

## International Student Career Resources

Whether you are studying at Florida Gulf Coast University as an F-1 or J-1 student, Career Development Services understands the need to obtain practical experience or employment, both during and after graduation. Below you will find resources and recommendations on how to begin or continue your job search. This document is not comprehensive, and we recommend that students interested in employment schedule an appointment with a Career Advisor by calling (239) 590-7946 or visiting the Career Development Services office in the Cohen Center, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor.

### Getting Started:

1. **Visit the Career Development Services website:** You can review a variety of resources such as Major and Career Guidance, Interviewing Skills, and how to write a US-based Resume and Cover Letter. For students who are unsure about their major or occupational goals after graduation, we encourage them to take our free, online career assessment called **MyPlan** and review the results with a Career Advisor.
2. **Create your profile on Eagle CareerLink:** Students can log in with their Eagle email address and password. Eagle CareerLink is your resource for jobs and internships.
3. **Research occupations and career paths:** Will your career goal require a graduate degree? How many years of experience is needed for entry-level employment? What is the average salary for the occupation you are pursuing? Which employers and jobs are more likely to hire international students and sponsor an H-1B Visa? Learn more about occupational research by speaking with a Career Advisor, or visiting websites such as [Occupational Outlook Handbook](#) and [Office of Foreign Labor Certification](#) (view statistics on employers who sponsor and which occupations are most desired).
4. **See Resources for Improving Your American English.** The most successful international students are communicators with strong verbal and non-verbal communication and interpersonal abilities. Understanding American social interaction and culture can be an important success factor in interviewing and being competitive for positions within the U.S.
5. **Join Student Clubs and Organizations** to polish your English language and practice your American social skills. Joining student clubs and organizations will provide you with the opportunity to practice English language and social behaviors. Join at least one organization which has American student members.
6. **Build a network and learn to connect.** Networking is the #1 way people find positions. Be sure to utilize your existing network and gain connections here in the U.S. Create a **LinkedIn** account and visit with a Career Advisor to review your profile.
7. **Understand and abide by the rules of your visa.** Students should work with the International Services Office to learn more about visa restrictions and whether they are authorized to participate in CPT or off-campus internship opportunities. For students who are not eligible for CPT, related on-campus work is strongly recommended. You can find information about gaining on-campus employment [here](#) and [here](#).

## Completing an Internship? Information about Curricular Practical Training (CPT) for F-1 Students

The Office of International Services has put together a thorough document on CPT information. A PDF of this document can be found [here](#). CPT is restricted to FGCU students in which a formal internship is required as part of their degree requirements. If your degree does not require an Internship, you can schedule an appointment with a Career Advisor to talk about alternative options to gain industry experience.

### WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

- F-1 students who are currently pursuing degree programs in which an Internship or Practical Training is required to graduate
- Employment must be related to student's field of study and can be paid or unpaid
- Students must have completed 1 full year of academic study at FGCU

### STUDENT'S ROLE

- Verify eligibility for CPT
- Obtain academic department approval & enroll in concurrent academic course as determined by academic department, if applicable
- Submit completed CPT application to Office of International Studies at least 3 business days prior to beginning employment

### PROOF OF AUTHORIZATION

- Work cannot begin until student obtains authorization
- CPT request form can be found [here](#)

### PROCESSING TIME

- 3 business days upon receipt of a complete CPT application to Office of International Studies

### EMPLOYER'S ROLE

- Provide student with an offer of employment
- Request a copy of the CPT I-20 from the student for I-9 purposes
- There is no cost to the employer and the CPT application is entirely the responsibility of the student

### LENGTH OF EMPLOYMENT

- Employment authorization is given on a semester by semester basis
- Generally, students are limited to part-time (20 hours or less per week) during the Fall/Spring semester and full-time work during the summer
- Some graduate students may be eligible for full-time CPT during the academic semester

## Job Search Strategies for International Students

1. **Begin Early:** It is recommended that International Students begin their job search early so that they may secure employment before their F1 Visa expires. Students are recommended to meet with a Career Advisor a semester before they graduate, and to officially begin job searching 6 months prior to graduation.
2. **Practice your Interviewing Skills:** Schedule a Mock Interview with a Career Advisor to practice your interviewing skills. This is important as well as being well-versed in cultural differences. For instance, during an American interview, it is appropriate to produce a firm handshake (both for women and men), maintain eye contact, vary one's voice, and appear friendly or personable through posture and facial expressions.
3. **Attend Career Fairs:** In the Career Development Services office, we put on many career fairs catered to a variety of majors, part time, and full time job opportunities. Be sure to check out our website or stop by our office to learn about upcoming dates and events. Speak to employers in-person about their hiring needs and whether they currently allow for OPT applicants or visa sponsorships.
4. **Search widely and apply for jobs selectively.** You will dramatically increase your success if you match your skills to the positions you are considering. We recommend that you have a strong match between your skills, experience, and abilities and the positions for which you apply. Applying for positions for which the match is not strong generally does not yield successful results.
5. **Conduct a Two Country Job Search.** Apply for positions in both the U.S. and in your home country. Create a *Plan B* (a second option post-graduation). Evaluate where your best post-graduate employment opportunity exists.
6. **Be familiar with OPT timelines and STEM Extensions:** In addition to Career Development Services, maintain contact with the Office of International Studies and familiarize yourself with OPT timelines. Most students will need to apply for OPT between 90 and 120 days before they graduate. If employment is not gained, students have 60 days to depart the United States after completion of their program.

## Disclosure

Unfortunately, there are no set guidelines or “best way” to disclose your immigration status to an American employer. The best way to obtain full-time employment after college is to be familiar with the benefits and restrictions of your particular status, and familiar with OPT (Optional Practical Training) so that you may act as the “expert” when discussing terms and conditions with an employer.

**Should I include my immigration status on my resume?** The only time you would disclose your immigration status on your resume is if you are applying for a U.S. state or federal job. Government resumes are formatted differently than resumes collected for private corporations. You can meet with a Career Advisor to discuss these formatting differences. In addition, you do not need to include your photograph, country or origin, native language, or birth date on your resume.

**What is the difference between a resume and a job application?** A resume is a snapshot of your education and work experience, as it *relates to the position you are applying for*. A resume can be tailored and often eliminates some information in order to fit onto one page. A job application, however, is a legal document that requires you to include all prior work history and may include information asking for ethnicity. Often, a job application will ask two very important questions: **1) Are you legally authorized to work in the United States?** And **2) Will you now or in the future require sponsorship?** It is important to answer these questions truthfully.

**How do I answer these questions on a job application?** Most students are authorized to work for up to 12 months following graduation through OPT. Therefore, international students are encouraged to answer “Yes” to the first question (Are you legally authorized to work in the US?). However, in order to petition for an H1 Visa, your potential future employer must fill out paperwork on your behalf. Therefore, it is important to also answer “Yes” to the second question (Will you now or in the future require sponsorship?).

**Should I wait until I’m offered a position to disclose?** No. Generally, there are at least two rounds of interviews (sometimes more) before a formal job offer is made. It is important to disclose **before** the formal offer is made so that the employer does not feel misled. If the question does not come up naturally during an interview, students can practice how to bring up their immigration status through the question portion of an interview. It should be one of the last questions asked so that the employer can gain a sense of your interest, fit, and enthusiasm for their company. (Sample questions can be found in our Interviewing Guide on the Career Development Services website). Below is an example of how to bring up one’s immigration status.

**Employer:** Do you have any questions for me?

**Student:** Yes. *[asks 2-4 questions about the company, culture, etc.]* Lastly, are you familiar with Optional Practical Training or OPT?

**Employer:** I believe I’ve heard of it before. It requires us to authorize your ability to work in the United States, correct?

**Student:** Actually, OPT is provided to international students upon graduation and requires no effort or work on behalf of the employer. It provides a great way to allow students like myself to demonstrate our strong international skills in global awareness, business relations, and diversity. It lasts up to 12 months and allows me to apply my education, astute work ethic and passion into working for your company. I understand that you may be seeking a candidate that can work for longer than a year, and while that can be negotiated after I demonstrate my skill and commitment to your company, I want to reiterate my qualifications and dedication to this position and hope that my work status does not alter your hiring decision.

Some companies have strict policies about hiring foreign nationals and international students. While you may not always be able to change their mind, you can demonstrate your professionalism and knowledge of visa restrictions to ease the burden on them. For more information about interviewing and disclosure, please contact Career Development Services or the Office for International Services.

## Web Resources for International Students

- **Going Global:** Conduct a job or internship search and learn about employment trends and industry outlooks from around the globe.
- **MyVisaJobs.com:** MyVisaJobs.com quickly allows you to learn which employers have utilized H-1B visas for a three year period and also provides other excellent resources.
- **H1VisaJobs.com** Online database of American employers for international professionals
- **USCIS H-1B Cap.:** Use this to monitor the USCIS H-1B visa cap. USCIS will allow you to monitor the number of available H-1B visas and provides helpful information.
- **Dreambridge Partners:** Check out the blog and resource library to connect with other international students and professionals. Receive advice on navigating both the job search and American culture (create a free account).
- **Go Abroad** Search job listings by country and type of job, search volunteer opportunities and other helpful resources for students
- **Idealist** A global job searching and resource sharing website for organizations working in a wide range of issues for the public good.
- **International Student** A website for international students created by international students.
- **The Riley Guide** A comprehensive list of resources for international jobs, searchable by country.
- **United Nations (UN) Employment Postings** of all vacancies in various areas of the United Nations.
- **iStudentCity.com** - Feel at Home in America Excellent site - includes a free job placement service, advice on adjusting to college in the US, TOEFL tips, an "Ask the Experts" link to ask your questions about life, study and work in the US, and advice on job-hunting.
- **CIEE** - Council on International Educational Exchange Programs and information regarding: Study Abroad; Short-Term Work Exchanges; Internships; Japan Exchange and Teaching Program; English Language testing; and travel.
- **Global Vision International Field** work placements and career opportunities ideal for graduates, students and professionals looking for practical experience in local non-governmental or aid reliant organizations.
- **CampusCareerCenter** Links international companies and graduating students.
- **Uniworld** Publisher of two unique multinational business contact directories
- **H1Base.com** Helps students to obtain a U.S. work visa

- **The Electronic Embassy Listing** of foreign embassy sites which can possibly provide work-related information.
- **The European Business Directory Listing** of 150,000 European suppliers from England, Denmark, France, Italy, and Spain. This can be a helpful research tool.
- **CareerForum.net** Job fairs, internships and employer listings for Japanese/English bilinguals
- **ASPIRE Asia-Pacific Job-Link Database** Assists U.S.-educated graduates, postgraduates, and professionals from the many Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) member economies

## Questions?

Schedule an appointment with a Career Advisor!

### **Career Development Services**

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