US Job-Search Tips and Work Authorization for International Students and Postdocs

Career Offices: Undergraduates
- **Arts & Sciences**: 172 Goldwin Smith
- **Agriculture and Life Sciences**: 140 Roberts
- **Architecture, Art & Planning**: 103 Barnes
- **Engineering**: 201 Carpenter
- **Hotel**: 180 Statler
- **ILR**: 201 Ives
- **University-wide**: 103/210 Barnes

Presentation Goals
- Discuss common challenges and issues international students and postdocs may face in their US job search
- Provide resources and suggestions to overcome these challenges
- Outline the work authorization requirements for working in the US after graduation

Career Offices: Research Master’s and PhD students
- **Agriculture and Life Sciences**: 140 Roberts
- **Engineering**: 201 Carpenter
- **Hotel**: 180 Statler
- **ILR**: 201 Ives
- **University-wide**: 103/210 Barnes

Professional Master’s Students: Visit your program office

Career Offices: Professional Master’s Students
- Visit your program office

Career Services: What Can We Help With?

Career Services: Postdocs and Graduate Students Interested in a Postdoc
- **Christine Holmes, Director of Postdoctoral Studies**: Caldwell Hall, ch18@cornell.edu
### Common Questions

- Which employers will sponsor me?
- What job can I get as an international student or scholar?

### Considering Work Authorization: Finding Jobs and Employers

- Handshake
- Excel Spreadsheet on [CCS webpage](#)

### Ideal Situation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Which employers sponsor visas?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Find employers</td>
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### Potential Challenges

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### Potential Challenges: General Advice

- There is no easy solution—for the job or career path you’d like, you might need to work outside of the US
- Talk to people
- Set aside time for job search process
- Clarify your career goals and develop a back-up plan
- Get your resume and cover letter critiqued
Potential Challenges

Which employers sponsor visas?

Can’t find employers that sponsor visas in your field

Can’t Find Employers Sponsoring Visas

1. Widen your list of employers
   • Hoovers
2. Consider working in a different area/use wider definition of skills
3. Consider working abroad:
   • Uniworld

Can’t Find Employers Sponsoring Visas

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4. Talk to people:
   • LinkedIn/Alumni databases
   • Informational interviews

Can’t Find Employers Sponsoring Visas

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What is Informational Interviewing?

The process of conducting conversations with people for information and advice.

• A strategy to use when exploring career fields
• An effective way to build a professional network
• A way to evaluate an organization’s overall fit for you
• A way to develop an effective job search strategy
Informational Interview

- Conducted to gather information and advice
- YOU ask the questions
- YOU guide conversation
- Focus is on information; not a specific job

Job Interview

- Conducted to evaluate suitability for a job opening
- Employer asks the questions
- Employer guides conversation
- Focus is on a specific job opening and determining fit

What’s The Difference?

Informational Interview Process

1. Find someone to speak with
2. Send them an email (or phone call) requesting an informational interview
3. Develop a list of questions for the interview
4. Conduct interview, send thank-you note

Sample Email

Dear Mr. Rinat:

I am a sophomore Cornell University in the College of Arts and Sciences, and I am majoring in anthropology. I saw in your LinkedIn profile that you were also an anthropology major at Cornell and are now working as a social media analyst at Saks Fifth Avenue. Since I am interested in a career involving social media and my anthropology knowledge, I would love to hear more about your current job and how your studies at Cornell prepared you for this career path.

Would it be possible to set up a time for a 20-minute informational interview? If so, I’m available next week, Monday-Friday, between 10 am and 6:30 pm.

Thank you for considering my request.

Regards,

Xinyan Zhou
607-255-1234

Potential Challenges

Which employers sponsor visas?

Can find employers

Can’t find open job postings

Companies Sponsor But Don’t Have Job Postings

1. Talk to individuals about when jobs might be posted
   - Recruiters on handshake
   - Human resources representatives at companies
   - Alumni
   - Individuals in the field (LinkedIn)
   - Representatives at Career Fairs or information sessions
   - Career Services staff

Companies Sponsor but Don’t Have Job Postings

1. Talk to individuals about when jobs might be posted
   - Find additional companies
     - Hoovers
Potential Challenges

Which employers sponsor visas?

Can find employers

Can find jobs

Job postings want someone with more experience

Potential Challenges

Which employers sponsor visas?

Can find employers

Can find jobs

Found and applied for jobs with employers that sponsor

You're not getting any responses

Companies Can Sponsor But Not For Entry-Level Job Postings

1. Talk to individuals in the field
   • Would you be competitive for higher-level jobs?
   • Could you gain experience (through courses, volunteering, internships) that would improve your chances?
   • Are there training programs?

You Found Employers and Job Postings But You Haven't Heard Anything!

1. Meet with someone in your career office
   • Bring resume, cover letter, job posting, and talk about approaches

2. Do informational interviews, ask for advice

3. Submit application to a real person

Companies Can Sponsor But Not For Entry-Level Job Postings

1. Talk to individuals in the field

2. Consider working abroad, moving back to the U.S.
   • Talk to individuals in your home country
   • Do informational interviews with individuals at multinational corporations

Potential Challenges

Which employers sponsor visas?

You don’t have time or energy to do this amount of research!
You Don’t Have Enough Time
1. Decide how much time you realistically have to spend on this and set goals and a timeline
2. Know your OPT timeline
3. Talk to people (sometimes more efficient)
4. Schedule appointments with Career Office, friends, colleagues
5. Attend on-campus career events and workshops

“Maintaining Your Status”
• Enroll full time
• Update your address when you move
• Keep your documents valid: extend I-20 or DS-2019!
• Do NOT work off campus without authorization

Final Advice
• This is not a straightforward process, so you’ll need to dedicate time to your job search
• Develop a backup plan either abroad/your own country
• Learn more about the job-search process
• Visit your career office—we’re here to help you!
• Talk to the ISSO about visa regulations

F1 Off Campus Work Authorization
There are two types of “Practical Training” Work Authorization:
➢ Curricular Practical Training (CPT)
➢ Optional Practical Training (OPT)

The training/work must be in your major field of study and NOT your minor.

Work Authorization F-1 & J-1 Students
• “Maintaining” Status
• F1 Practical Training
• J-1 Academic Training
• Other Work Visas

F-1 Curricular Practical Training (CPT)
• CPT Work Authorization is most often used for internships if you are eligible.
• EASY-application is through ISSO instead of USCIS
• Can be used for PAID internships, cooperative education job, a practicum, or any other work experience

If the job is UNPAID you don’t need work authorization!
F-1 Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

Eligibility Requirements

http://isso.cornell.edu/students/working-us/f1-internships-cpt

- Must be enrolled for at least one full academic year
- Work must be REQUIRED for your degree
- You must receive credit in a course

F-1 CPT Application Procedures

- Must have job offer in order to apply
- Go to ISSO web site view video and download CPT app: http://isso.cornell.edu/students/working-us/f1-internships-cpt
- Complete application — have academic advisor sign off on it, and bring completed application to the ISSO at least two weeks before you start working. Application can be submitted via email isso@cornell.edu.
- MUST get work authorization prior to working!! Will require new CPT I-20, passport and I-94 card to complete I-9 Employment Eligibility Form with employer

F-1 Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

Eligibility Requirements

- Work must be required for the degree (for example, hotel students are required to have 800 hours of work experience)
- Must receive academic credit in a course (such as NMI510; ILR599; Law673 or independent study)
- The work will form an integral part of the research for the graduate student’s thesis or dissertation

F-1 CPT Work Authorization

- ISSO Advisor will issue you a new I-20 with work authorization on page 3

F-1 Optional Practical Training (OPT)

If you are not eligible for CPT, an alternative would be to apply for “pre-completion” OPT.
F-1 Optional Practical Training (OPT)

- Eligible for OPT after being enrolled full time for one academic year
- Practical training must be in your field/major
- May be used before you graduate or after graduation
- 12 months total per degree level

(After graduation, students in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) fields may be eligible for additional 24 months)

F-1 Optional Practical Training (OPT)

- Time used before graduation is deducted from the 12 months
- Should have specific dates of employment, as you do not want to request more time than you need for the work

F-1 Optional Practical Training (OPT)

- Apply early. It could take 3 months to receive your Employment Authorization Card (EAD/OPT Card)
- You cannot apply more than 120 days before the start date you choose
- Must submit application to USCIS within 30 days of issue date of new I-20 from ISSO

F-1 Optional Practical Training (OPT)

- You cannot begin work until you have the OPT card in hand and have arrived at the start date on the card
- OPT card is required to complete the I-9 Employment Eligibility Verification form with employer

J1 Work Authorization

- “Academic Training”
  - For practical training in your field
  - Either in summer vacation or after graduation

- Download or pick up application at ISSO

- Come to the ISSO with application and job offer letter.

F-1 OPT Application

Procedures: Apply Early

- Pick up application from ISSO or download from our ISSO web site: isso.cornell.edu
- Submit request for I-20 online or bring completed application to the ISSO. We will create a new I-20 and you will send your application to USCIS along with fee
J-1 Academic Training

- ISSO issues you work authorization letter for “Academic Training”
- Total time available is 18 months
- Additional 18 months may be possible for postdoctoral research positions

H-1B Temporary Worker Visa

- H1B questions?
- H1B Basics:
  - 6 years
  - Employer specific
  - Portable
  - Dual intent
- U.S. Permanent Residence

Other Visa Categories

Come to the workshop: “Visas After Graduation”

- E Treaty trader/investors
- H Temporary Worker
- J Exchange Visitor
- L Intra-company Transferees
- O Persons of Extraordinary Ability
- TN NAFTA professionals (Mexico and Canada)

H-1B Application Procedures

- File Labor Condition Application (LCA) -- Employer must pay higher of prevailing or actual wage; no adverse work conditions for US workers
- File H-1B petition (Form I-129)
- Overall processing time frame:
  - 3-4 months normally
  - Premium processing possibility: 2 weeks

TN Visa

North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)  
For Canadians and Mexicans

Requires at least a baccalaureate (bachelor’s) degree or appropriate credentials demonstrating status as a professional (see list of professional occupations).

- Visa issued for a maximum of three years at a time depending on the job offer dates, and is renewable indefinitely

Canadian citizen applies at a port of entry with the following:
- Evidence of Canadian citizenship
- Demonstration of professional qualifications (diplomas, degrees, transcripts). These must show that the educational requirements for the above professional occupation have been met.
- Letter or contract from hiring company that includes a description of the professional-level activity in which the visitor will be engaged, a full description of the nature of the job duties that the visitor will be performing, the anticipated length of stay, and the salary
- $50 fee.
- The visitor must be otherwise admissible under U.S. immigration law.

H-1B Advantages

- Duration:
  - 6 year maximum
  - 1 year stay outside U.S. refreshes 6 yrs
  - Additional H extensions if green card started by end of 5th year
- Time to work toward green card
- No advertising or test of the U.S. labor market
- H-1B portability when change employers
H-1B Disadvantages

- Tied to one employer
- Not flexible like F-1 OPT
- Paperwork, cost, and delay
- October 1st start date + cap race
- "Self-sponsorship" can be difficult
- Must work to maintain status
- Fees:
  - $825 – cap-exempt
  - $2,325 – cap-subject
  - $1,125 – expedite
  - $3,000 – legal fee

Visas After Graduation

March 1st
Goldwin Smith Hall, Hollis E. Cornell Auditorium Room 132, 7:00-9:00 pm
Presented by the Miller Mayer law firm and ISIO Staff.

What is the H-1B "cap"?

- 65,000 per fiscal year
- Of 65,000, 6,800 carved out for Chile and Singapore
- Separate 20,000 for graduates with U.S. master’s degree or higher
- Race for H cap visa
  - Quota year: October 1 to September 30
  - Apply Earliest: April 1 (6 months before)
- Past years’ H-1B quota filled very quickly, sometimes within days of
  the April first deadline
  - If needed, USCIS conducts "lottery" to select cases to be
    considered for H-1B approval

H-1B Cap Exemptions

- Lower filing fees/apply any time
- College/university employees
- Related or affiliated nonprofit entities
  (i.e. university teaching hospitals)
- Nonprofit research organizations
- Government research organizations
- Prior cap H-1B holders
- J-1 shortage area waivered doctors

Interviewing Skills for International Students and Postdocs

Thursday, February 2
5:15 pm
233 Plant Science Building

International Students & Scholars Office (ISSO)
B-50 Caldwell Hall

Hours: Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri: 9:00-4:30;
Wed: 1:00-4:30

On the web: www.isso.cornell.edu

By email: isso@cornell.edu