

Suggestions for International Students Seeking Employment in the United States



The Career Center
GSU 309
768-4287
www.hartford.edu/career

The International Center
GSU 327
768-4873
www.hartford.edu/Support/international.html

1. Work experiences for international students fall into two basic categories:

- **Internships or “Cooperative Education” assignments that relate directly to your program of study while you are a student; these may be either paid or unpaid positions.** Normally, academic credit is granted by your school or college, and your work is evaluated jointly by your supervisor and an academic advisor. These experiences may be undertaken *while in an F-1 student visa status* (this is called “curricular practical training”), and the regulations are fairly simple and straightforward. Normally, you must have completed two semesters of full-time academic work on campus *before* you are eligible to work off-campus as an intern.
- **Professional, paid positions which commence *after* graduation.** Most graduates will be eligible for up to twelve months of “post-completion practical training” as part of their F-1 student status, during which they may work in a field related to their previous area of study. At any point during this period, or even prior to graduation, a student on F-1 status may seek the assistance of a specific employer in petitioning for an H-1B “Temporary Employee” visa. This visa is valid for three years and may be renewed for an additional two. ***Employment after graduation is often difficult to obtain, since it requires a major commitment of time and money by the employer. Your success depends upon your ability to convince an employer that your skills and knowledge are worthy of the organization’s investment.***

2. To obtain *any* job, it is important to start the process *early*.

- As soon as you have determined the type of employment you are seeking, meet with the International Student Advisor, Mr. Richard Lazzerini, in Gengras Student Union, Room 330, to discuss your eligibility and the visa options that may apply in your circumstance.

3. In the U.S., *you* are responsible for finding the job. The University’s Career Center can provide assistance in this process.

- *Make an appointment to speak with a Career Counselor at the Career Center.* If you are interested in an internship while pursuing your degree, you must begin the process *at least three months before the term in which you wish to work off campus* by making an appointment with the experiential education staff at Career Services. If your goal is to find post-graduation employment, it is especially important to make an appointment with a Career Counselor *at least six months prior to graduation.*



4. This may come as a surprise: *YOU will be the primary source of information on visa matters for employers whom you may contact.* Most employers know relatively little about the regulations governing the employment of students on

F-1 visas and professionals on H-1B visas. Many employers are afraid of breaking the law but do not understand the process by which you may be legally employed in the United States. *It is essential that you know as much about this process as you can before you begin interviewing with employers.*

- 5. It is important to look for employment in sectors of the economy that represent rapid growth and/or a high level of need for your background and skills.**



Many enterprises that have traditionally relied upon “local” applicants (insurance companies, commercial banks, defense contractors, to name a few) have been slow to recognize the true value of the skills that international students bring with them in the new global marketplace. Many of these firms still have policies that make it difficult for a hiring manager to “sponsor” a recent graduate for an H-1B Temporary Worker visa.

Rapidly growing “new economy” employers have been obliged to recognize the importance of employees with international experience for two important reasons:

- Their survival is dependent upon employees with skills in dealing with the global marketplace;
- Their rapid rate of growth makes it impossible for them to rely exclusively upon U.S. citizens to staff their operations; consequently, they tend to be more supportive of the efforts of international students to seek careers and internships through available methods. These “new economy” employers tend to “cluster” in certain technologies and geographic areas. Good advice from a career counselor can assist you in using your time and resources well. Initially, you may wish to think about organizations whose products and services include the following:

E-Commerce and New Media
Telecommunications
Information Systems
Advanced Materials

Biomedical Technology
Software Development
Venture Capital for High-Tech
Photonics

Geographic regions that possess especially high numbers of these organizations include “Silicon Valley” (the region around San Jose, California), Boston, the “Research Triangle” area of North Carolina (Raleigh-Durham), Washington state, Colorado, Texas, and Minneapolis, Minnesota. New York City remains a center for financing such ventures, and certain regions of Connecticut (such as Danbury and the Shelton-New Haven area) are rapidly emerging as technology centers.

6. The best overall methods of finding a job or internship are “networking” and direct contact.



- While your Career Center receives thousands of job listings each year and maintains a listing of a fixed number of internships, *these represent a tiny proportion of what is available*. Approximately eighty percent of the jobs that are available to college graduates exist within organizations that employ *fewer than fifty people*. Such organizations will very seldom possess a Human Resources department and almost never come to a college campus to recruit. They *will rely upon YOU to find them*, and the use of directories and websites is critical.
 - Your skills in research, writing, and verbal contact are essential to finding a job in *any* organization. It is important to learn *whom* to contact within an organization. “Networking” is the art of gathering information through people. Often, you can learn much about an organization’s needs and structure by talking with people who can help. An initial contact might come from a website, a friend, a professor, or a member of the University’s Career Advising Network (available in the Career Center). Direct contact through a resume and accompanying cover letter will become necessary when you learn of a specific job or opportunity for which you wish to be considered.
 - If you cannot identify what kind of job you are seeking, your inquiry will probably be ignored.
- 7. Effective use of available resources is essential to your success.** *Only an employer can offer you a job*. However, your Career Center is one important source of help. Its services are listed in some detail in the *Career Services Manual*, available free of charge at the Career Center, Gengras 309. Among the most valuable resources are the following:
- Listings of full-time professional positions and internships (www.hartford.edu/career)

- Listings of on- and off-campus part-time and summer jobs
- Career counseling and job search assistance relating to both professional opportunities and internships
- A Career Library of employer directories and occupational information
- A Career Advising Network of professionals with whom you may meet to obtain advice on your choice of occupation or your job search
- On-campus recruitment opportunities for eligible students and an annual Career Information Fair
- “Mock Interview” opportunities to practice your employment interviewing skills (on camera, if you wish) with a career counselor.
- Scheduled and “custom” workshops on career and job-search topics
- Walk-In hours available for brief questions and assistance on matters relating to your job search (quick resume reviews, etc.): Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.

Obviously, these resources represent *part of the picture!* It is important that you gain access to those employing organizations that never seek to maintain an on-going relationship with a University, especially the emerging companies in the “New Economy.”

The best single way to begin the process of optimally using the services of Career Services *and* to get a “head-start” on your own research **is to make an appointment with a Career Counselor!** Call Career Services at extension 4287 or drop by Gengras Student Union, Room 309.

8. Selective use of Web-based directories and employment databases can enhance your effectiveness in finding the right position.



Next to personal networking, the use of either printed or on-line directories, followed by a visit to an organization’s website, may be the most effective way to find a job.

- Career counselors and faculty can often provide good ideas regarding these important resources. For example, the Career Center possesses “Job Bank” employer directories for most major regions in the U.S., as well as industrial and technology guides to many states. There are a wide variety of specialized directories that relate to the fields of entertainment, consulting, public relations, and many other areas.
- The following Internet resources will most likely be invaluable:

Employer Metadirectories:

www.careersearch.net/hartford (contact Career Services, ext. 4287, for password!)
www.corporateinformation.com
home.sprintmail.com/~debflanagan/high.html

Meta-Search Engines:

www.google.com
www.alltheweb.com
www.yahoo.com

Job Search Databases:

uhaweb.hartford.edu/career/studentsearch.html
<http://uhaweb.hartford.edu/career/NaceWebLink.htm>
http://uhaweb.hartford.edu/career/monster_login.html
www.ajb.org
www.monster.com
www.careerbuilder.com
www.wetfeet.com

Directory of Connecticut High-Tech Companies:

CT.Org

University of Hartford Career Services Website:

www.hartford.edu/career (contains *links* to lots of sites & resources!)

University of Hartford International Center Website:

www.hartford.edu/Support/international.html

9. Be aware of significant cultural differences that affect the way business is conducted in the United States.

Most customs and practices, of course, are essentially the same as in the rest of the world. Americans *do*, however, display a need for informality and equal treatment that can come as a surprise. Remember that this continent was most recently settled by waves of immigrants seeking equal rights and treatment. You will find that differences in behavior

and expectations based upon social class, gender, level of education, or ethnic origin, while common in other countries, are often regarded by Americans as insulting.

Here's the "bottom line:" You will increase your success in finding a job—and in obtaining needed help from faculty, staff, and advisors—by treating *everyone* with professionalism and personal respect. It is a common observation that the person with the most power in an organization may be the CEO's secretary: but the truth of this can often be demonstrated in the job search. *Always be respectful and kind to people.*

- 10. Remember to maintain your optimism about this process.** There are some sources of discouragement built-in to the job search. You will experience rejection. Don't take the frustrations personally—they "go with the territory." If you start early, do your research, use resources and time well, and remain sensitive to the needs of others, you have a good chance of success!

