

JOB SEARCH STRATEGIES FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

International students are encouraged to include skills assessment in the job search process while completing academic studies. Visit the Career Services Office to find out what services are available to you. Talk with a career consultant who can help identify your skills, interests, and abilities and assist you with identifying what jobs might be appropriate. In addition, you can discuss the best strategy for translating previous overseas experience.

Internships

An internship experience in the U.S. enhances your skills and adds American work experience to your credentials. In addition,, it provides valuable networking contacts with potential employers and professionals in your field and gives you exposure to the work environment of an American or multinational company. Similar benefits accrue for students who pursue work experience in other countries or at home.

Rules of the American Job Search Process

For positions in the U.S., begin eight to ten months in advance of the date you wish to be employed. This will help you to become familiar with the American job search process and allow adequate time to research employers, develop job search skills, and conduct the search. Meet with a career consultant to discuss goals and plans for your job search. Take advantage of the workshops offered throughout the academic year to develop your job search skills and gain confidence in American-style interviewing.

Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions Office of International Student, Faculty, & Staff Services

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The staff members in the Office of International Student, Faculty, & Staff Services assist internationals in three primary capacities:

- (1) As **advisors** concerning immigration rules and regulations
- (2) As **advocates** who are sensitive to the unique needs of non-immigrants
- (3) As **liaisons** between non-immigrants and the U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Service, the U.S. Department of State, various U.S. consulates and embassies abroad, various departments/offices at JHMI, etc.

Advisors

Staff members provide advising services to internationals which relate to their particular visa status within the United States. In accordance with U.S. immigration law and the various rules and regulations contained therein, staff members assist non-immigrants with the following:

- Initial entry to the United States
- Extensions of stay
- Work authorization
- Changes of visa status
- Reinstatement to legal status
- Waiver applications
- Travel authorization/ re-entry to the U.S.
- Transfers to/from JHMI
- Accompanying dependents' issues
- Adjustment of status to U.S. Lawful Permanent Resident

This list is by no means exhaustive. In addition to these advisory functions, staff members advise and assist internationals with many other specialized and individualized issues relating to a particular non-immigrant visa status.

Advocates

Internationals often have unique needs and require a person sensitive to those needs to be their advocate. Staff members in the Office of International Student, Faculty, & Staff Services are experienced advocates who recognize the value of international educational exchange and who appreciate the many positive contributions internationals make to the Johns Hopkins community and to the United States. As advocates, staff members are well acquainted with cross-cultural adjustment problems and other related issues. As a result, their involvement with internationals at JHMI goes well beyond the area of immigration regulations.

Liaisons

Staff members are routinely called upon to act as liaisons for international students, faculty, and staff at JHMI. In their role as liaisons, staff members function as representatives on behalf of internationals. Staff members work with government agencies, university offices and departments, and a variety of other entities to seek solutions to problems faced by foreign nationals, to voice specific concerns on their behalf, and to request appropriate assistance when needed.

Hiring in the U.S.

Meet with an international student advisor in the Office of International Student, Faculty and Staff Services, to learn about regulations governing practical training and employment, and prepare to educate potential employers about visa issues and practical training. Some employers may be reluctant to hire individuals who are not permanent residents or citizens of the U.S. because:

- They have government contracts which preclude hiring non-U.S. citizens.
- They view the process of understanding and working with immigration laws and visas as too complex.
- They have a wealth of other qualified candidates from which to choose.

Be prepared to answer these questions: “Why should I invest time and resources in hiring you for only twelve months of practical training?” “What happens after practical training ends?” “Are you willing to return to your home country or relocate to another country?” Appropriate responses impact the outcome of the interview. Remember to apply for a social security number. This is a requirement if you are considering employment in the U.S.

Employer Expectations

Make sure you understand the cultural dynamics and overall expectations of working in an American organization. U.S. employers expect their employees to be hard-working, creative, problem solvers, and independent workers as well as team players. The ability to communicate well is important. In addition, employers appreciate a professional style of dress and personal interaction that is direct and assertive, not aggressive. Work with a Career Services consultant to better understand American employer expectations and attitudes, and become familiar with this type of work environment.

Start a Networking Campaign

While you may have excellent credentials and an impressive academic record, you will need to find contacts that can assist you in your job search. Do not ignore direct sources of finding a job such as internet advertisements or job fairs. Johns Hopkins alumni are key to your job search: <http://alumni.jhu.edu>. You will find that personal contacts (family, friends, faculty, classmates and alumni) can help you discover valuable opportunities and introduce you to prospective employers. Look for expatriates and tap into their cultural network. It is also helpful to seek out professional organizations such as the American Public Health Association (APHA) and the Association of Schools of Public Health (ASPH).

Use Other Job Search Strategies for U.S. and Home Country Employment

- **Campus Interview Program:** Several employers participate in our on-campus interviewing program.
- **International Student Groups or MPH Societies (J.B. Grant)**
- **Your Country’s Embassy in Washington, DC**
- **Direct Contact with Employers through Letters, Calls, Information Interviewing**

You may not get the first, second or even fifth job for which you have applied or interviewed, but do not take this as a personal rejection. To increase your competitiveness, use all you have learned in the job search process to present your capabilities effectively. In addition to your experience (internationally and in the U.S.) and your language skills, do not forget to emphasize your academic experience received through work on major projects, papers, etc. Remember, any information that signals unique or special talents will help you stand out in a prospective employer’s eyes. Don’t delay. Start the process as soon as possible. Come to the Career Services Office to speak with a career consultant.