

Job Search for International Students

Many NIU international students want to work in the United States after they graduate. According to U.S. immigration law, international students with F-1 visas are eligible to work full-time for one year after they graduate as part of their "practical training." After their practical training, international students must be sponsored by an employer in order to continue working in the United States. Many international students have difficulty securing postgraduate employment. The reasons include:

Hiring Complexities: After international students complete practical **training, employers must sponsor them to obtain an H1-B visa, which allows them to work in the U.S. for one to six additional years. Hiring an international student is more complicated and less familiar to many employers than hiring an American. The process involves:**

1. Hiring a lawyer
2. Obtaining approval from the Department of Labor
3. Petitioning the government for an H1-B Visa
4. Absorbing some fees

Perceived Lack of Commitment to the Job: Some employers are reluctant to hire international students because they fear international students will eventually want to return to their home countries. Employers do not want to invest time and money in training new hires only to have them leave in a year's time.

Communication: Strong communication skills are critical for prospective employees. Employers are often concerned with international students' ability to communicate effectively with their clients and/or internal personnel.

Animosity: Some Americans, including some employers, feel that by living and working in the U.S., international students are taking jobs away from Americans. And, no matter how unfounded, since "9-11" some employers are concerned that some international students may represent a "terrorist threat."

Job Search Issues

Occupations in Need of International Students: According to the most recent edition of *Recruiting Trends*, high-tech firms need to hire technically skilled, non-immigrant foreign workers. Former President Bill Clinton and Congressional lawmakers enacted the American Competitiveness in the Twenty First Century Act, which increased the cap on H-1B visas to 195,000 per year for the next three years. That number was reduced in 2003 to 65,000. Due to changes in the U.S. economic climate in 2001, the high demand for college graduates with technical expertise has declined, but remains the primary avenue for employment in the U.S.

According to the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, from October 1999 to February 2000, H-1B petitions were approved in the following areas: Systems Analysis and Programming (47.4%) Electrical/Electronics Engineering (5.4%), College and University Education (4.1%), and Accountants and Related Occupations (3.7%). These statistics suggest that international students who wish to work in the United States would be wise to study technical subjects in order to increase their chance of employment.

How to Find Job Openings: NIU students can register with **Victor eRecruiting**, the NIU on-line job search database and career management program. In the Personal Information section, students must indicate their "Work Authorization Status." Many companies that recruit NIU students will not interview those that indicate "Student (F1) Visa." Thus, those students will not have the opportunity to participate in on-campus interviews with those companies. As is the case with U.S. Citizens and Permanent Residents, we recommend students do not rely solely on Victor eRecruiting when conducting their job searches. Job search recommendations appear on the following pages.

NIU students can also meet with employers and submit resumes at CPPC's Fall and Spring **Job Fairs**. As with Victor eRecruiting, the majority of companies will not interview students who hold an F1 visa.

Job Searching in the United States: In some countries, people find jobs primarily through the government or family members. In the United States, self-reliance is more the rule, and it is important for everyone, including international students, to use a wide variety of resources to identify jobs. About 20% of the jobs that exist in the United States are advertised in newspapers, trade magazines, or on the Internet. The other 80% of job openings are in the "hidden" job market and are never advertised. These positions are filled by word of mouth. For this reason, it is important to contact as many people as possible to find out about job openings. This technique is called **networking**. Contacts include friends, classmates, neighbors, family members, professors, alumni, and community members. Establish contact with organizations that serve your ethnic community: business owners from your home country, your consulate, embassy, social organizations, professional societies, and advocacy groups. Get to know people already welcoming to you as a member of a common ethnic group and make them the base of your relationship building and networking.

Working for International Companies: The best employment prospects for international students may be with international companies. International students are great assets to global organizations desiring language skills, respect for diversity, and knowledge of overseas economies. **The Directory of American Firms Operating in Foreign Countries** is available in Founder's Library. Some information is also available in one of the three Career Services areas in the Campus Life Building such as job search books, International Employer Directories, and International Job classified ads, including:

Complete Guide to International Jobs and Careers	The International Student Handbook
International Jobs Directory	Directory of Websites for International Jobs
International Jobs	Opportunities in International Business Careers
Opportunities in Overseas Careers	Careers in International Business

Current Jobs International is a monthly listing of international jobs. To access it, visit:

1. www.graduatejobs.com
2. Click the "**subscribers**" button
3. Type in username: **nillinoisuni**
4. Type in password: **cpp60115**

Visit the NIU Major WebLinks and proceed to the "Links of Interest to All Majors" page: Here you will find dozens of on-line international job search sites, and additional links to information about international visas and employment. Examples of international job sites include:

www.niu.edu/crc/major/AdditionalLinks.htm	
Job Line International	The Electronic Embassy
Resources for International Job Opportunities	JobsDB.com Worldwide Job Opportunities
International Job Links	Student Work Exchange Links
Computer Jobs (H1-B)	International Career Resources on the Net
Worldwide Employment Office	Planet Recruit
International Career Employment Weekly	International Career Employment Center
Vacancies in International Organizations	Work Finders Network
Foreign MBA.com	World Job Mart
CompuRecruit International Jobs	Escape Artist Overseas Job Index
List of Translation Companies	Overseas Jobs.com

This site also provides links to:

- Newspaper job classified sections throughout the U.S. and overseas
- Dozens of Internet job search sites (e.g., monster, wetfeet.com, hotjobs, careerplanit, webhire)
- Professional associations, job fairs, colleges and universities, salary sites, and more

Internships: Students who lack experience in their career fields should complete one or more internships while working toward their degrees. According to one recent report, more than 53% of international survey respondents received a job offer from the sponsoring American company after they completed an

internship. Obtaining an internship is important not only in terms of resume building, but in terms of its potential to translate into a full-time job after graduation. For information, contact your academic department and the NIU **Cooperative Education/Internship Program**, 240 Campus Life Bldg., 815-753-7138, www.niu.edu/coop.

F-1 to H1-B Strategies

Approaching the Topic of H1-B Visas with Employers: Many employers are intimidated by the U.S. immigration process and are reluctant to sponsor H1-B visas, or simply have a policy against it. Do not begin an employment interview or letter with an inquiry regarding H1-B sponsorship. Discussions about H1-B sponsorship should come later, either when the employer brings it up or when the applicant is offered a position. The applicant's first task in an interview is to convince the employer of his/her suitability for the job. Only later, when an employer is close to making, or has made an offer, should the applicant raise the H1-B sponsorship issue.

Learn about the sponsorship process including hiring and paying for a lawyer. By explaining the simplicity of the sponsorship process, the applicant will increase the likelihood of getting hired.

Seek out companies that have a history of H1-B sponsorship. (See the list at the conclusion of this booklet)

On-Line Resources

- **NIU Major WebLinks** (www.niu.edu/crc/major/AdditionalLinks.htm) contains links to dozens Internet international job sites. Scroll down to the section entitled "International Job Sites."
- **U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services** (www.uscis.gov) provides information about student and work visas, application for citizenship, and immigration laws and regulations.

NIU and the Career Planning & Placement Center do not endorse the following websites, nor can we guarantee their accuracy or usefulness. We provide this information as a service to NIU students and recommend due diligence in their use.

- **International Student City (www.istudentcity.com/)** appears to be a useful site for international students to obtain information about schools, finances, and careers. It contains a "career center" that purports to post jobs with companies that will sponsor students for an H1-B visa. But please note the following information from the website:
 - (a) "We have three main types of job openings - Information Technology, Engineering, and Business. At this time, most of our job openings are in IT and Engineering, and our business job openings are mostly in IT companies, because of our partners' relationships with companies in the IT industry. We do not provide job placement services for students in the social sciences and humanities, or in academia."
 - (b) "Signing up for this service is free. A small fee (\$300) will apply - but **only** if you are placed in a job that you agree to work in. (i.e., if we found you a job, but you don't want it, you don't need to pay.)"
- **Computer Jobs.com** has a section designated as H1-B jobs: www.h1b.computerjobs.com/
- **Career Conferences of America (www.careerconferences.com/international.html)**. For the past seven years a Job Fair has been held in Florida during the month of October. Its website makes the following claim:

"The 8th Annual Global MBA/Masters Employment Conference will again feature a large number of outstanding global companies that pre-select students for private interviews for opportunities in the student's home country (or additional countries in which he/she is authorized to work) as well as U.S.-based opportunities. These companies will have over 4,000 interview opportunities for foreign nationals, dual U.S. citizens and U.S. Permanent Residents who will be completing a graduate level degree program in Business, Information Technology/Computer Science or Engineering by December 2002 or May 2003.

WARNING: There are many sites on the Internet that purport to assist international students with the job search and sponsorship process. Some make false claims, others sell forms and information that are available for free from the U.S. Citizenship and Immigrations Service website and/or from NIU's International Student and Faculty Office. Some sites give the appearance of being associated with the U.S. government with the inclusions of flags, government offices, or "official looking" logos. A website is only officially sanctioned by the U.S. government if it's URL ends with the ".gov" suffix.

Information Regarding Hiring International Students

International students who have entered the U.S. on F-1 visas may work off campus provided that:

- One year of study in the USA has been completed
- Student is in good academic standing at their host institution
- The student is determined to be eligible by an Immigration Specialist (ISFO)

Note: The Designated School Official (DSO) of the school where the student is pursuing his/her study processes all applications for off-campus work authorization.

There are several categories of off-campus work authorization. For most students' purposes, however, all the following requirements apply:

- F-1 visa holding international student has received an Employment Authorization Document (EAD), **or**
- Student has had employment authorized through curricular practical training (CPT) on their I20. (I20 is a document issued by the school to international students who have been admitted enabling them to apply for an F-1 visa.) You have to be active in a degree program for CPT. You can do for 12 months or less, really for 11 months.

Students who have received an EAD will be eligible to work off-campus between the dates printed on the EAD. The EAD may be used to verify their eligibility to work when filling out an I-9 (I-9 is an Employment Eligibility Verification document). The EAD covers students who have been approved to work off-campus through optional practical training (OPT) or severe economic hardship.

Students applying for permission to work off-campus through CPT will be asking you for a letter which details their job title, responsibilities, dates of employment and whether or not the employment is full or part-time. This is used by the student's academic department to establish whether or not there is a viable connection between the student's academic program (a credit-bearing course the student will be enrolled in during the period of employment) and the employment opportunity.

Students who have been approved to work off-campus through CPT will have their authorization noted on their I20, page 3. This will include the dates authorized for employment. For the purpose of filling out their I-9 form you will need to make a copy of pages 1 and 3 of their I20 as well as of their I94. According to the Handbook for Employers, Instructions for Completing Form I-9 (publication M-274), page 31, that is all that is needed for students authorized to work off-campus through CPT.

For paperwork and further explanation, visit NIU's International Student and Faculty Office

NIU Services for International Students

Writing Assistance is available at NIU's Writing Center in Stevenson Towers South, Lower Level: www.engl.niu.edu/writing_center/.

English Language Assistance is available at NIU's ESL (English as a Second Language) Center in Reavis Hall, Room 306, 753-6637.

Accent Reduction. Students who feel that their accents make their spoken English difficult to understand can schedule an appointment with the NIU Speech and Hearing Clinic, Lucinda Road, 753-1481.

Cooperative Education/Internship Program, (Campus Life Building, Room 240, 753-7138). Students can gain career-related experience with an internship/Curricular Practical Training (CPT). After completing one academic year of coursework, students may be eligible to participate in the Internship Program. Co-

Op Ed can assist students with resume and job search preparation, resume referrals to hundreds of positions on its website, and on-campus interviewing opportunities. Co-Op Ed hosts Fall and Spring Internship Fairs each year. Contact Co-Op Ed or visit its website: www3.niu.edu/coop/.

Please Note: All International Students participating in an internship/Curricular Practical Training are required to obtain approval and authorization by the NIU ISFO Office before starting to work. Contact ISFP at <http://www3.niu.edu/coop/> for an appointment and further instructions pertaining to these regulations.

International Student and Faculty Office (Williston Hall, 4th Floor, 753-1346, www.niu.edu/isfo/): The International Student and Faculty Office currently advises about 1000 international (foreign) students and faculty from approximately 109 countries. It provides information about NIU programs to prospective international students, admits international undergraduate students, and works with the Graduate School in the admission of international graduate students. A full orientation program is offered with additional advising on registration, financial, and immigration requirements. Regular monitoring of student progress and linkage with faculty assist in a student's adjustment to the university and cultural change. The office also provides some assistance in securing housing and advises foreign student organizations with their activities and programs. In addition, the office staff assists international faculty members at NIU with their visa and immigration requirements and responsibilities and prepares documentation to assist them in receiving visas or in changing status. It also maintains contact with federal personnel to assist in the timely adjudication of documents and effective implementation of the frequent modifications to federal law.

All Curricular Practical Training whether through a Cooperative Agreement or other agency, requires Authorization through the USCIS SEVIS system. It is necessary to make an appointment at the ISFO to determine eligibility for the CPT experience and to complete the necessary paperwork well in advance of a proposed starting date. Each CPT semester and/or vacation period request requires a separate Authorization filing. Please call the ISFO at 815-753-1346 for an appointment and further information.

Concluding Advice for International Students

Market Yourself Positively: It is very important for international students to turn employers' objections into positives. By virtue of living and studying abroad, international students demonstrate tenacity and resourcefulness. It is important for them to tell employers about the challenges they faced in studying abroad and how they overcame them. International students should be prepared to tell employers how hiring them offers more advantages than disadvantages.

Be Flexible, Patient and Persistent: International students may need to expand their job search by considering jobs outside their desired career. For example, an Information Technology major who would like to do web development may also want to search for jobs in other areas of information technology. Similarly, you may need to broaden your search geographically – from the Midwest to the entire United States, or from the United States to other countries. Although finding employment as an international student can be challenging, it is not impossible.

Job Search Assistance is available at the Career Planning & Placement Center, 220 Campus Life Building. For assistance with employer research, job search, interviewing, and resume writing, schedule with a counselor at 815-753-1641. Visit CPPC's **webpage** at: www.niu.edu/cppc for a description of CPPC resource materials and services.

The following employers have attended the Global MBA/Master's Employment Conference, an interviewing event for Foreign Nationals, Dual U.S. Citizens & U.S. Permanent Residents (www.careerconferences.com)

Abbott Laboratories
Accenture
ACNielsen BASES
Advanta Corporation
Aetna International
Altria Group, Inc.
Ambev

American International Group
American Management
Systems
Applied Materials
ARAMCO Services
Ashland Chemical Company
AT&T

Banco Pactual
BASF Corporation
BD and Company
BearingPoint, Inc.
Bloomberg
Booz, Allen & Hamilton
Boston Scientific

Bristol-Myers Squibb Company
Campbell Soup Company
Capital One
Cargill
CEMEX
ChevronTexaco Corp.

Chubb Group of Insurance Cos.	GE Asia	Lutron Electronics Co., Inc.	R.R. Donnelley & Sons
CIGNA Corporation	GE Capital	M&T Bank Corporation	Rain Bird Corporation
Citigroup	GE Japan	Mars, Incorporated	Rolls Royce
The Clorox Company	General Mills, Inc.	MasterCard International	Salomon Smith Barney Inc.
The Coca-Cola Company	General Motors Corp.	Merck & Co., Inc.	Sao Paulo Alpargatas S/A
Colgate-Palmolive	Gerdau S.A.	MetLife	Schering-Plough Corp.
Corning Inc.	Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co.	Metromedia International	Schlumberger
CSC Index	HEB Grocery Company	Group	Sun Microsystems
DaimlerChrysler	Hershey International	Microsoft	Symbol Technologies
Dell Computer Corporation	Hewlett-Packard	Monsanto Company	TACA Airlines
Deloitte Consulting	Honda R&D Americas, Inc.	The MONY Group	TAMSA
Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu	Hughes International Corp.	Morgan Stanley	Textron
Delta Airlines	IBM	Motorola, Inc.	The Timberland Company
E&J Gallo Winery	ICN Pharmaceuticals	Multibras S.A.	The Timken Company
Eaton Corporation	Ingersoll-Rand Company	NCH Corporation	Towers Perrin
Eli Lilly & Company	Intel	NCR Corporation	Tupperware International
Energizer	J.P. Morgan Chase & Co.	Newell Rubbermaid Inc.	UBS Warburg
Enterprise Rent-A-Car	Johnson & Johnson	Nike, Inc.	Unilever
Ernst & Young LLP	International	Nomura Research Institute	United Airlines
Exxon Mobil Company	Johnson Controls, Inc.	Nortel Networks	The Vanguard Group
FedEx Corporation	Koch Industries	Northwest Airlines	Visa International
Fidelity	KPMG International	PepsiCo International	Watson Wyatt Worldwide
Ford Motor Company	Lexmark International	Pfizer, Inc.	Western Union International
Franklin Templeton Group	L'Oreal	PricewaterhouseCoopers	Westinghouse Electric Co.
	Lucent Technologies	Procter & Gamble	Whirlpool Corporation

The companies and agencies listed below have interviewed F1 students at NIU in the past. Although their hiring policies and needs may have changed, it may be worthwhile for international students to visit their websites to determine their current hiring policies and needs.

Allstate	http://www.allstate.com
Blackman Kallick Bartelstein, LLP	http://www.bkadvice.com
BP Petroleum	http://www.bp.com
Cap Gemini Ernst & Young	http://www.us.cgeyc.com
Chicago Mercantile Exchange	http://www.cme.com
Clifton Gunderson LLP	http://www.cliftoncpa.com
Coleman, Epstein, Berlin & Co.	http://www.cebcpa.com
Deloitte & Touche LLP	http://www.dttus.com
Electronic Knowledge Interchange	http://www.eki-consulting.com
Employment Service: Johnson Personnel Co	http://www.johnsonpersonnel.com
Employment Service: Pacific Advisory Service	http://www.paschgo.com
Ernst & Young	http://www.ey.com
Frost, Ruttenberg & Rothblatt	http://www.frrpc.com
Fuji Photo Film, USA	http://www.fujifilm.com
Grant Thornton, LLP	http://www.grantthornton.com
Heitman Financial, LLC	http://www.heitman.com
Household International	http://www.household.com
Information Resources, Inc.	http://www.infores.com
Klayman & Korman	http://www.klaymankorman.com
Merrill Lynch Business Financial Services	http://www.ml.com
Michael Silver & Co.	http://www.Ms.co.net
Nidec-Shimpo America Corp	http://www.shimpoamerica.com
Nissan Forklift Corporation, North America	http://www.nissanforklift.com
Rockford Power Train	http://www.rockfordpowertrain.com
Ryan & Juraska, CPAs	http://RNJPCR@AOL.COM
SBC Communications (formerly Ameritech)	http://www.sbc.com
Selden Fox, Ltd.	http://www.seldenfox.com
Sherwin-Williams	http://sherwin-williams.com
Sikich, Gardner & Company	http://www.sikich.com
The National Bank & Trust Company	http://www.natabco.com
UDL Laboratories, Inc	http://www.udllabs.com
Vanguard School	http://www.vanguardschool.org
Vapor Corporation	http://www.vapordoors.com
Walgreens	http://www.walgreens.com
Williams Young, LLC	http://www.williamsyoung.com