Many international students in the United States are on an F-1 or J-1 non-immigrant student visa status which offers work authorization benefits during and after their academic programs. This guide will provide an overview of these work authorization options and illustrate that there is minimal paperwork for the employer. Resources for long-term employment visa options are also addressed.

For F-1 International Students:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Employment</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Employer Role</th>
<th>Student Role</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Cost and Processing Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internship and Co-op: Curricular Practical Training (CPT)</td>
<td>Off-campus work authorization for F-1 students who are currently pursuing a full-time degree program and have completed one academic year as an undergraduate and sometimes less as a graduate student.</td>
<td>Provide student with an offer of employment. Employer complies with I-9 guidelines in asking student to provide evidence of identity and authorization to work. Student can provide his/her passport, I-94, and a copy of his/her I-20, authorized for CPT at specific company for specific time period, from the student for I-9 purposes. Communicate with student’s program if issues arise while on the internship or co-op, as you would any student completing an internship or co-op.</td>
<td>Follow university/college protocol for ensuring eligibility, obtaining employment, and obtaining CPT approval, whether for an internship or co-op, or other short-term CPT-eligible employment. Submit complete CPT application to International Student Office on campus and receive CPT notation on I-20 prior to beginning employment, whether paid or unpaid.</td>
<td>Employment authorization is given on a semester-by-semester basis or according to specific school’s calendar. (Some schools use a semester/some 6 months). CPT may be extended or renewed with advance approval if eligible. Generally, students are limited to part-time (20 hrs or less per week) during the Fall/Spring semester and full-time work during the summer; some graduate students, as well as undergraduate and graduate students completing co-op, may be eligible for full-time CPT.</td>
<td>No cost to employer. Student pays cost of any applicable academic unit(s). The processing and approval time for CPT varies at each institution, ranging from 3-10 business days.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Employment</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Employer Role</td>
<td>Student Role</td>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>Cost and Processing Time</td>
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<td>--------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment after Graduation: Optional Practical Training (OPT). Some students may also be able to obtain Pre-Completion OPT during their academic program depending on lead time by employer.</td>
<td>- Post-Completion OPT: Employment authorization for F-1 students who have completed all coursework for their academic program. - Employment must be related to student’s major field of study and can be paid or unpaid. - United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) issues an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) card with specific dates of employment authorized as proof of work authorization.</td>
<td>Ask for authorization to work per I-9 guidelines. Students can provide evidence of identity and authorization to work by showing their EAD and providing a copy for I-9 purposes.</td>
<td>- Verify eligibility for OPT with the International Student Office and academic/co-op program as necessary. - Submit complete and timely OPT application to your university or college’s International Student Office for endorsement prior to being submitting application to USCIS in order to obtain approval prior to beginning employment. - Ensure work is related to field of study. - Report employment to international student office as well as any home address changes.</td>
<td>- Typically issued for up to 12 months. - Some students may be eligible for 17-month STEM extension to allow them to work on OPT for 29 months (see below) - Students cannot work until EAD is received and start date has arrived.</td>
<td>- No cost to employer. - Student pays a nominal filing fee to USCIS to obtain OPT and EAD. - The USCIS processing time for OPT can take up to 3 months; students are encouraged to apply as early as 90 days prior to graduation but can also apply after graduation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STEM OPT Extension</td>
<td>- 17-month Extension of OPT for students holding Science, Technology, Engineering or Math degrees. - Employer must be enrolled in the USCIS E-Verify Program - USCIS issues an extended EAD card.</td>
<td>Ask for authorization to work per I-9 guidelines. Students can provide evidence of identity and authorization to work by showing their expired EAD, I-20 with STEM authorization, and copy of receipt Notice for STEM OPT. Authorization to work based on pending STEM application lasts for 180 days from expiration of OPT. At the end of 180 days, Employer should ask Student to re-verify I-9 per I-9 guidelines.</td>
<td>- Verify eligibility for STEM extension with International Student Office. There is an approved list of majors/degrees which qualify. - Contact International Student Office on your campus and follow their protocol to apply for extension to USCIS prior to the end date of 12-month OPT. - Report employment to international student office, as well as any home address changes.</td>
<td>An additional 17 months to the initial 12-months of OPT is authorized to total 29 months.</td>
<td>- Student pays a nominal filing fee to USCIS to obtain extended EAD card. - If application has been filed with USCIS in a timely manner, students may work for up to 180 days after the end of the 12-month OPT EAD while extension request is in process.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### For J-1 International Students:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Employment</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Employer Role</th>
<th>Student Role</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Cost and Processing Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre- and Post-Completion</td>
<td>Employment authorization for J-1 students who are currently pursuing or have</td>
<td>Request documentation confirming identity and</td>
<td>● Verify eligibility for AT.</td>
<td>● Generally, students are eligible for <strong>up to 18</strong> months of work authorization.</td>
<td>● No cost to the employer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment: Academic</td>
<td>recently completed a study of program in U.S.</td>
<td>authorization to work as per requirements for I-9.</td>
<td>● Submit application to International Student Office in a timely manner.</td>
<td>● Actual duration is determined by the student’s length of study.</td>
<td>● Processing and approval time for AT varies at each institution, ranging from 3-10 business days.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training (AT)</td>
<td>Employment must be related to student’s field of study and can be paid or</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>unpaid.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Authorized through the DS-2019 by the International Student Office.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### For Longer- Term Temporary Worker Visas:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Employment</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Employer Role</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Cost and Processing Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H-1B</td>
<td>Employer-sponsored visa that permits temporary employment in “specialty</td>
<td>The employer, with a qualified immigration</td>
<td>H-1B visas are initially granted for three years, but can be renewed for a total of six years.</td>
<td>Costs will include attorney and USCIS application fees. Estimated cost is $4000+, depending on size of employer and region of the U.S. USCIS provides an option to pay an extra fee of $1,225 and obtain “premium processing” of an H-1B petition, which guarantees adjudication within two weeks of filing. Total processing time (including preparation &amp; application) may take 2 to 6 months; renewals, extensions, &amp; change of employer may be shorter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>occupations.”</td>
<td>attorney, is responsible for preparing and filing a timely petition.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>For most private employers, H-1B applications should be submitted on April 1</td>
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<tr>
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<td>for “cap” subject applications.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Certain employers are not subject to the “cap.”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Approved applications are effective October 1.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exceptions to the timeline and cap requirement may be granted to some non-</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>profit, research and educational institutions.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employment may be authorized to bridge “cap gap” between OPT and the H-1B.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>TN</td>
<td>NAFTA Professionals for citizens of Canada and Mexico</td>
<td>Employer issues offer letter. Occupation must be</td>
<td>3 year and renewable each year; may be renewed indefinitely provided Individual maintains proper nonimmigrant intent.</td>
<td>Individual, not employer, bears the cost of the TN visa.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>eligible for TN visa.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
E-3 Specialty Occupation Visa for Australians

The employer, with a qualified immigration attorney, is responsible for preparing support letter and obtaining Labor Condition Application from Department of Labor.

E-3 visas are generally issued in 2-year increments; may be renewed indefinitely provided Individual maintains proper nonimmigrant intent.

Individual presents Employer support letter, LCA and academic credentials to U.S. Consular Officer. No USCIS action required.

Additional Longer-Term Temporary Worker Visas:

L-1: Intra-company Transferee
H-1B1: Free Trade Agreement (FTA) Professional - Chile, Singapore
H-2A: Temporary Agricultural Worker
H-2B: Temporary Non-agricultural Worker

O: Individual with Extraordinary Ability or Achievement
P-2/3: Artist or Entertainer (Individual or Group)
Q-1: Participant in an International Cultural Exchange Program
H-3: Trainee or Special Education visitor

For more details on H, L, O, P and Q temporary worker visas visit U.S. Department of State website.

HELPFUL RESOURCES:

United States Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS) www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis
Department of Homeland Security (DHS) www.dhs.gov/index.shtm
American Immigration Lawyers Association’s Immigration Lawyer Search: www.ailalawyer.org/

This guide was created by the National Career Development Association (NCDA) International Student Work Group (ISWG) and edited by Prasant D. Desai, Esq. with Iandoli Desai & Cronin P.C. This is meant to be a general guide and is not a substitute for the advice of an immigration attorney or a student’s specific International Student Office. The information above does not apply to spouses of students on F-1 or J-1 visas or students in visa categories not indicated above.

For additional information on ISWG, please contact iswg@ncda.org.
Questions about an international candidate’s ability to work in the U.S. should be directed to an immigration attorney.
RESOURCES FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Transitional Resources

  
  
  Description: Thirteen international students from various countries write on their experiences at Dartmouth College and share their perspective on U.S. college culture and life based on their experience.

- Foreign-born.com; Link: [http://www.foreignborn.com/study_in_us/10-work_thru_school.htm](http://www.foreignborn.com/study_in_us/10-work_thru_school.htm)
  
  Description: Web resource that walks students through moving to and living in the United States, providing insight into cultural norms, educational requirements, visa logistics and additional resources to support transition and adjustment.

- International Student; Link: [www.internationalstudent.com/resources/](http://www.internationalstudent.com/resources/)
  
  Description: Compilation of a number of helpful resources. We know that you already have enough fees to worry about with your education; this is why the majority of resources are offered are free!

  
  Link on Amazon.com: [www.amazon.com/Succeeding-International-Student-Chicago-Academic/dp/0226484793/ref=pd_sim_sbs_b](http://www.amazon.com/Succeeding-International-Student-Chicago-Academic/dp/0226484793/ref=pd_sim_sbs_b)
  
  Description: Designed to help students navigate the myriad issues they will encounter—from picking a program to landing a campus job. Based on Lipson’s work with international students as well as extensive interviews with faculty and advisers, it includes practical suggestions for learning English, participating in class, and meeting with instructors. In addition it explains the rules of academic honesty as they are understood in U.S. and Canadian universities.

Visa Information

- United States Department of Labor
  
  Link: [www.foreignlaborcert.doleta.gov/howdoi.cfm](http://www.foreignlaborcert.doleta.gov/howdoi.cfm)
  [www.foreignlaborcert.doleta.gov/pdf/h_1b_temp_visa.pdf](http://www.foreignlaborcert.doleta.gov/pdf/h_1b_temp_visa.pdf)
  
  Description: The Department of Labor (DOL) administers more than 180 federal laws. The Wage and Hour Division also enforces the labor standards provisions of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) that apply to aliens authorized to work in the U.S. under certain nonimmigrant visa programs (H-1B, H-1B1, H-1C, H2A).

- H1 Base Website; Link: [http://www.h1base.com/](http://www.h1base.com/)
  
  Description: This site includes extensive Information about the H1B Visa process, sponsorship and job searching for international students and workers. This site combines both free and fee services. Incorporated in this site is a list of “H1B Visa Sponsorship- Top Jobs and Professions Ranking” - [http://www.h1base.com/visa/work/H1BvisaBestOccupationProfessionRanking/ref/1576/](http://www.h1base.com/visa/work/H1BvisaBestOccupationProfessionRanking/ref/1576/)
Job & Internship Search

  
  Link on Amazon.com: [www.amazon.com/Power-Ties-International-Students-Finding/dp/0557097622/ref=pd_sim_b_1](http://www.amazon.com/Power-Ties-International-Students-Finding/dp/0557097622/ref=pd_sim_b_1)

  Description: The author, former head of campus recruiting at Monster.com, and former Associate Director of Corporate Recruiting at the Boston University School of Management, shares the potent job search system he has used to help many international students find U.S. employment.

- H1visajobs.com  Link: [www.h1visajobs.com](http://www.h1visajobs.com)

  Description: Fee-based service. Series of online databases listing over 20,000 U.S. companies who have recently filed the appropriate paperwork to sponsor an international person for an H-1B visa. Useful for identifying companies to target in job search for employment on a Practical Training visa or H-1B visa.

- International Student Website
  

  Description: This database includes articles, tips, job postings, resume writing, personal statements, test preparation, country work guides, visa and immigration information, and more to support students around the globe with international study and work opportunities. This resource creates extensive connections to best practices and available jobs/internships to enhance next career step opportunities.


  Description: This 2015 H1B list, provided by www.myvisajobs.com, details Labor Condition Applications (LCA) filed by the top H1B Visa sponsors in fiscal year 2014. Lists can be sorted by work state, work city, industry, occupation and job title. This FREE online resource updates the H1B list annually.


  Description: This web resource is dedicated to identifying employment opportunities for foreign nationals wishing to live and work in the United States and Canada. The site provides a FREE listing of employers accepting H1B Visa holders, as well additional access to job listings for a fee. In addition, the site includes extensive resources around work authorizations, job searching, and industry specific information.

  

  Description: Resources for going from an F-1 to H1B, including a practical step-by-step guide on how to land the best internship, OPT assignment, or H1B work opportunity.

- TechMeAbroad  Link: [https://techmeabroad.com](https://techmeabroad.com)

  Description: This FREE online job posting resource lists available opportunities with tech startups and tech companies who will recruit from abroad.


  Description: Fee-based service. Find American firms and their locations in other countries and firms based in other countries with locations in the United States.
Education Resources

  

  *Description:* This resource includes information on 2,900 colleges, incorporating each school's “international profile.” This guide covers financial aid, “Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)” requirements, housing availability, and special services for international students. It includes step-by-step guidelines on how to prepare for and apply to colleges in the United States, find financial aid and obtain a student visa. This resource is valuable for both career counselors, as well as international students.

- **Education USA**
  
  *Link:* [https://www.educationusa.info](https://www.educationusa.info)

  *Description:* A network of hundreds of advising centers in 170 countries, where international students can find accurate, comprehensive, and current information about how to apply to accredited U.S. colleges and universities. Supported by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA), which strives to foster mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries. Education USA advisers and staff work with U.S. higher education professionals to promote international student enrollment. Also helps promote study abroad opportunities for U.S. citizens.

- **Institute for International Education**
  
  *Link:* [http://www.iie.org](http://www.iie.org)

  *Description:* The world's largest and most experienced international education and training organization. Mission is to advance international education and access to education worldwide through managing scholarships, training, exchange and leadership programs; conducting research; facilitating policy dialogue on global higher education; protecting scholarship around the world.
Resources for International Students

Transitional Resources
US cultural and employment norms may be quite different as an international student transitioning to the US. The following resources provide various information on cultural norms, educational requirements, obtaining visas, and transition information.

- Foreign-born.com (Link: www.foreignborn.com)
- International Student (Link: www.internationalstudent.com/resources)
- National Association for College Admission Counseling (Link: www.nacacnet.org/studentinfo/internationalstudentresources/pages/default.aspx)
- “Crossing customs: International students write on US college life and culture” by Jay Davis and Andrew Garrod (Book)
- “Succeeding as an international student in the US and Canada” by C. Lipson & A.E. Goodman (Book)

Visa Information
As you search for jobs or internships, it is important to understand the processes to employment associated with your visa. Employers may have false assumptions about visa limitations, costs, or processes, and it is important to be able to provide accurate information to potential employers. The following resources provide visa information.

- US Department of Labor (Link: www.foreignlaborcert.doleta.gov/howdoi.cfm)
- H1 Base Website (Link: www.h1base.com/)

Job & Internship Search
A job or internship takes a combination of numerous resources and strategies. The following resources provide a variety of lists of potential sponsoring employers, occupational outlooks, and job opportunities. Utilize these resources as you build your job search strategy and create target employers list.

- List of H1B Employers (Link: www.myvisajobs.com/Reports/2015-H1B-Visa-Sponsor.aspx)
- MyVisaJobs.com (Link: www.myvisajobs.com)
- H1visajobs.com (Link: www.h1visajobs.com)
- International Student Website (Link: http://www.internationalstudent.com/jobsearch/)
- US Department of Labor (Link: www.foreignlaborcert.doleta.gov/pdf/h_1b_temp_visa.pdf)
- “Power Ties: The International Student’s Guide to Finding a Job in the United States” by Dan Beaudry (Book)
- “3 Steps to Your Job in the USA: International Student Edition” by S. Steinfield & H. Yinping (Book)

Education Resources
The following resources are helpful when exploring continuing education options, institutions, and processes.

- Education USA (Link: https://www.educationusa.info)
- Institute for International Education (Link: http://www.iie.org)
- “International Student Handbook 2013: All-new 26th Edition” by The College Board (Book)
An important goal of the NCDA International Student Work Group is to reach out to other professional organizations and regional associations where there is support for career services professionals. Connecting with such organizations, the NCDA International Student Work Group wants to explore best practices, utilize diverse resources, and encourage consultation and partnership between career services professionals and other student affairs professionals.

In this section, there are two lists of sample organizations, associations and communities that provide various programs and resources for career services professionals and international students. The first is a list of international and national organizations, and the second is a sample of regional associations and online communities. Special initiatives if mentioned by individual organizations, are highlighted below as well as other information relevant for those working with international students. We encourage career services professionals to reach out to both national and regional associations and communities to inquire about their resources and encourage best practice services for international students. Improving connections within such organizations is also an essential way to gain more insight about the employer profiles in specific regions and to help students succeed at targeted networking and job search.

Please contact NCDA’s International Student Work Group (iswg@ncda.org) if you have suggestions about other international, national and regional organizations, as well as online communities and resources, which can benefit NCDA members who work with international students.

**International and National Organizations**

- **Association of International Educators (NAFSA)**
  
  Link: [http://www.nafsa.org/](http://www.nafsa.org/)

  NAFSA is a non-profit professional organization for professionals in all areas of international education including professionals in education abroad advising and administration, international student advising, campus internationalization, admissions, outreach, overseas advising, and English as a Second Language (ESL) administration.

- **The Collegiate Employment Research Institute (CERI)**
  
  Link: [http://www.ceri.msu.edu/about/history/](http://www.ceri.msu.edu/about/history/)

  Housed at The University of Michigan, CERI engages in research focused on all areas impacting hiring trends for students in higher education and strives to support career development and other areas within higher education. See their publications on International Students and Internships, Recruiting Trends related to hiring international students educated in the U.S., and Diversity Recruiting.

- **Cooperative Education and Internship Association (CEIA)**
  
  Link: [http://www.ceiainc.org/home.asp](http://www.ceiainc.org/home.asp)

  CEIA seeks to assist professionals in cooperative education and internship programs by providing professional development. The organization was founded over 50 years ago. Their most recent national conference
included sessions ranging from on-line courses to support students seeking co-ops to social media and marketing and featured a keynote address around recruiting trends for international students as well as other sessions at the conference.

- **Institute for International Education (IIE)**
  
  Link: [http://www.iie.org/](http://www.iie.org/)
  
  As an independent not-for-profit organization, IIE is among the world's largest and most experienced international education and training organizations. It is committed to delivering program excellence to a diverse range of participants, sponsors, and donors. IIE’s mission is to advance international education and access to education worldwide. It accomplishes this by: managing scholarships, training, and exchange and leadership programs; conducting research and; facilitating policy dialogue on global higher education; protecting scholarship around the world.

- **International Careers Consortium (ICC)**
  
  Link: [http://www.intlcareers.org/](http://www.intlcareers.org/)
  
  ICC’s mission is to facilitate knowledge exchange and collaboration between International Student Advisors, Career Development Advisors, Coop/Internship Counselors, and Education Abroad Professionals by providing published materials, hosting relevant and timely conferences, sharing best practices and serving as a resource for identifying ways of increasing international career development opportunities for both domestic and international students.

- **National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC)**
  
  Link: [http://www.nacacnet.org/](http://www.nacacnet.org/)
  
  NACAC is an organization of more than 14,000 professionals from around the world dedicated to serving students as they make choices about pursuing postsecondary education. NACAC believes it is important to help international students make informed decisions about an education in the U.S. and help them understand the potential impact of country work authorization and visa regulations, as well as regional career opportunities. Thus, NACAC is an important organization and believes international student education and career planning can be addressed proactively. NACAC also has publications that address the international student college admission process.

- **National Association for Colleges and Employers (NACE)**
  
  Link: [http://www.nace.org/](http://www.nace.org/)
  
  NACE connects more than 6,300 college career services professionals at nearly 2,000 colleges and universities nationwide, more than 2,700 university relations and recruiting professionals, and the business affiliates that serve this community. NACE is the leading source of information on the employment of the college educated, and forecasts hiring and trends in the job market; tracks starting salaries, recruiting and hiring practices, and student attitudes and outcomes; and identifies best practices and benchmarks. NACE provides its members with high-quality resources and research; networking and professional development opportunities; and standards, ethics, advocacy, and guidance on key issues.

- **Southwest Center for Human Relations Studies**
  
  Link: [http://www.ou.edu/outreach/swchrs](http://www.ou.edu/outreach/swchrs)
  
  The Southwest Center for Human Relations Studies sponsors the National Conference on Race and Ethnicity in American Higher Education (NCORE) each year, www.NCORE.org. This national organization is comprised of education professionals, private industry, and other sectors of society and is focused on social justice and societal transformation by creating more equality and equity for individuals across racial, ethnic, religious, and economically-diverse backgrounds and within institutions. One focus is cultural diversity and
communication across cultures with activities ranging from education, research, public service and consultation. See their intercultural resources and annual conference. The most recent conference hosted sessions ranging from Islamaphobia to research on the adjustment of African students studying in the U.S.

- Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education (NASPA)
  Link: https://www.naspa.org/
  NASPA is a leading association for the advancement, health, and sustainability of the student affairs profession. It serves a full range of professionals who provide programs, experiences, and services that cultivate student learning and success in colleges and universities. NASPA has special focus areas including ‘globalism’ that include several international initiatives. As an example, check the NASPA International Student Services Institute (https://www.naspa.org/focus-areas/globalism/NISSI).

- The World Association for Cooperative Education (WACE) and National Commission on Cooperative Education
  Link: www.WACEinc.org
  WACE is an international professional organization focused on being of service to cooperative education, experiential learning professionals, and those who work with work-integrated programs, internships, or service learning, both in education and also in industry. WACE develops events, programs, and services for the experiential learning community world-wide. See WACE’s internationally-focused conference papers, exchange program, international research symposium and international research group.

**Regional Associations and Online Communities**

- Career Counselors Consortium Northeast (CCC)
  Link: www.careercounselorsne.org

- Career Development Professionals of Indiana (CDPI)
  Link: http://www.cdpi.org/

- The Career Resource Managers Association (CRMA)
  Link: www.crmaonline.org

- Career Services Institutes (CSI)
  Link: http://www.rit.edu/emcs/oce/csi/

- Career Services Professionals for International Students in the U.S. (Group can be found on LinkedIn)

- Eastern Association of Colleges and Employers (EACE)
  Link: http://www.eace.org (See section on Diversity and Inclusion)

- International Career Development (started by Culture Adapt)
  Link: http://www.cultureadapt.com/about/

- Midwest Association of Colleges and Employers (MWACE)
  Link: http://mwace.org/

- Mountain Pacific Association for College and Employers (MPACE)
  Link: http://www.mpace.org/

- NCDA: Working with International Students (Group can be found on LinkedIn)

- Southern Association of Colleges and Employers (SoACE)
  Link: http://soace.org (See section on Diversity and Inclusion- goals, initiatives, and awards)
Employer Survey Report

Survey Team Members

- Satomi Yaji Chudasama, Survey Team Co-Lead, Princeton University
- Elizabeth Knapp, Survey Team Co-Lead, University of Houston, C.T. Bauer College of Business
- Elif Balin, International Student Work Group Lead, Pennsylvania State University
- Kim Ead, University of Vermont
- Marie Haraburda, Indiana University, Kelley School of Business
- Sutha K Kanagasingam, University of Nebraska, Lincoln
- Patty Kwok, University of San Francisco, School of Management
- Catherine Nkonge, Hazina Counseling
- Lily Zhang, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Synopsis of This Survey

As a part of the International Student Work Group, the survey team was formed to explore career development needs, interests, and challenges of international students in U.S. higher education as well as propose best practices to support this student population. Following the survey for international students and career development professionals in the past two years, this year our group designed a survey for employers in order to better understand interests, insights and trends relating to hiring international students in the U.S.

Data Collection

After all survey questions were reviewed and approved by the National Career Development Association Trustee of Higher Education, Paul Timmins, the survey was sent electronically to employer contacts across the country in the United States. Data collection lasted three weeks and concluded on May 2015. Eighty four (84) employers participated in this survey. All survey-takers responded voluntarily and anonymously; however, those respondents who wished to receive additional resources from us had an option to include their names.

Limitations

Not all industries are represented in the sample of this survey project, and some companies may be represented by more than one individual. As a major limitation, we received a smaller number of responses to our survey than we had hoped. This limitation may be due to the hesitation of university/college career centers to share the survey with their employer contacts. There were also concerns about the survey potentially being perceived as a message or request about hiring international students although that was not the intention.

Definitions of Recruiting v. Hiring in the Survey

For the purpose of this survey analysis and report, we defined recruitment as the process that includes attracting candidates, visiting college campuses (e.g., career fairs, on-campus recruitment), accepting applications, screening applications, and finding a quality candidate through interviewing. In our definition, the hiring process starts after employers decide on the right candidate and gather documentation to make a contract. Based on our experiences, the survey team has realized that many employers decide if they accept applications from international students during the recruitment process, whereas other employers make the decision during the hiring process. Employer contacts were asked to respond to the survey questions based on their knowledge and experience in the recruitment and hiring processes.

Major Findings

- The immigration process can cause challenges in recruiting international students for post-graduation positions; however, employers may be more willing to support visa filing for full-time opportunities if they have previously worked with or hired international students for internships. This finding indicates the
continued necessity and importance of encouraging and assisting international students in securing internships.

- Some employers were open to hiring international students, but had not hired actively because their understanding of work authorization, immigration regulations and visa filing options was limited.
- Some employers indicated cultural differences did not have as profound of an impact on the recruitment and selection process as immigration regulations and status. On the other hand, many employers provided constructive feedback on issues of English language proficiency, eye contact, supporting one’s arguments with strengths-based examples and story-telling, and other interviewing skills that may stem from different cultural and educational contexts and practices.
- Employers wanted to know immigration status of candidates as soon as possible even among those respondents who did not ask the question in online application forms. None of the respondents was willing to wait to have this information until the offer negotiation. It is important to note that 43.2% of employers still considered international student applicants, who indicated their work authorization status, for their positions.
- The size of the company does not seem to influence the recruiting and hiring of international students for internships and full-time positions.
- Employers operating outside of the U.S. were more willing to recruit and hire international students for internships and full-time positions; however, the locations and the number of offices outside had no impact on recruiting and hiring international students.
- East coast and west coast companies are more likely to recruit international students.
- Sixty percent (60%) of respondents have policies that prevent hiring international students for full-time positions. Those policies were not indicated as a major reason for not hiring international students for internships, however. About the same percentage of employers pointed a lack of long-term commitment from students as a reason for not hiring international students for internships and full-time positions. More employers indicated that language and cultural barriers attributed to not recruiting international students for internships whereas a fewer respondents raised those barriers as causes for not recruiting them for full-time positions. It might be surmised that students have a greater sense of knowledge and maturity regarding their career decisions as well as better cultural understanding closer to graduation.
- More than 70% of respondents worked for organizations that do not have official policies relating to hiring international students, and they do not routinely hire this population for internship positions. At the same time, nearly 67% of respondents working for organizations that do not have official policies regarding hiring international students do not routinely hire international students for full-time positions.

Implications for Best Practices

- Given the number of employers asking immigration related questions on online application forms, it is important for career development professionals to provide students with strategies regarding the appropriate time to communicate their immigration status.
- It is critical for employers to understand the work authorization process and visa types. Universities and colleges can encourage more employers to consider hiring international students for internship, full-time and project-based positions and provide appropriate resources.
- It will be helpful for international students to know that answering a question about their immigration status in application form does not automatically disqualify them in every organization; therefore, international students should remain honest about any information they provide to employers at any time.
- Career development professionals should educate international students on how to best promote (or self-brand) themselves since some employers may be willing to make exceptions and hire international students even when they might have policies that restrict hiring international candidates.
- International students need to be encouraged to research companies that have operations outside the U.S. for potential internships and/or full-time positions since they are more likely to recruit and hire international students.
Career development professionals need to help international students understand both opportunities and limitations relating to their areas of interest in the U.S. job market, and facilitate their life and career planning around an exploration of alternative options outside the U.S. even as a back-up.

Career development professionals must find effective advising and counseling interventions to support career aspirations of international students, while assisting them in making realistic plans for work in the U.S.

International students should receive training and information regarding the importance of getting involved in career development activities. Those activities might include attending career fairs, participating in employer information sessions, and seeking internships in the U.S., their country of origin, or other countries, which increase competitiveness and marketability to employers.

Career development professionals should develop programming for or coordinate with employers on educating their organizations on the benefits of hiring international students.

Survey Data

Question 1: Name of your organization (N=67)
Sixty seven participants provided names of organizations for this optional question.

Question 2: How would you describe your organization? Please choose the appropriate responses below. (N=84)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finance/Financial Services/Banking/Accounting</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Technology &amp; Telecommunications</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy &amp; Utilities</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Profit</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consulting</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Automotive</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aerospace</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defense/National Security</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resources</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing/Advertising</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others*</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Others include: Agriculture, Hospitality, Airlines/Aviation, Arts & Entertainment, International Affairs, Entrepreneurship/Startup, Media/Communications, Wholesale Trade*
What is the size of your organization (number of employees)? (N=84)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size Range</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;20</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-99</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100-249</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>250-499</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500-999</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,000-4,999</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,000-9,999</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,000-49,999</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50,000-99,999</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100,000&lt;</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Which region of the country is your office located? (N=84)

- **Northeast (CT, MA, ME, NH, NY, RI, VT)**: 34.5%
- **Southeast (AL, AR, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN)**: 2.4%
- **Mid-Atlantic (DC, DE, MD, NJ, PA, VA, WV)**: 8.3%
- **Midwest (IA, IL, IN, KS, MI, MN, MO, ND, NE, OH, SD, WI)**: 9.5%
- **Northwest (AK, CO, ID, MT, OR, UT, WA, WY)**: 11.9%
- **Southwest/West (AZ, CA, HI, NM, NV, OK, TX)**: 27.4%
- **International (Canada, South Africa)**: 3.6%
- **No Response**: 3.6%
- **Other**: 2.4%
**Question 3: Does your organization operate both in the United States and overseas?** (N=84)

![Pie chart showing the distribution of responses to the question about operating both in the United States and overseas.]

- **Yes**: 45.2%
- **No**: 54.8%

**If your organization operates outside the United States, in which countries does your company have operations?** (N=32)

Thirty two (32) companies indicated that they have operations outside the United States. Several companies did not list the specific countries, but rather stated multiple locations, and indicated the number of countries or identified a specific region i.e. Africa, Asia, Latin America, Europe.

- **Africa**: Locations in Africa, but no specific country listed
- **Americas**: Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Uruguay, Paraguay
- **Asia**: China, Hong Kong, India, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan
- **Europe**: Belgium, Bulgaria, England, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Russia, Switzerland, United Kingdom
- **Middle East**: Egypt, Israel, United Arab Emirates,
- **Oceania**: Australia, New Zealand
Question 4: Do you actively recruit international students? (N=84)

If you actively hire international students, how have you recruited? Please check all that apply. (N=29)

- Career Fairs: 72.4%
- Professional Networks: 72.4%
- International Student Office: 31.0%
- International Student Organizations: 24.1%
- Email Listserv: 24.1%
- All of the above: 13.8%

Respondents from east coast and west coast companies are more likely to recruit international students.
If you actively hire international students, in what areas or specializations does your company prefer to hire international candidates? (N=21)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Preference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business &amp; Research Analysis</td>
<td>45.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STEM</td>
<td>45.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-profit</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All areas</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Information technology and telecommunications companies tend to hire more international students.

If you do not actively hire international students, what prevents you from recruiting international students?* (N=40)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Prevalence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work visa restrictions and Immigration issues</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of resources</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of available positions</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No reason</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of qualified US workers</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not actively recruit international students</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of certification/knowledge of state regulations</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unaware of the reason</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Some respondents indicated more than one reason.
Other reasons that were listed for not hiring this population, in order of importance based on the number of respondents, included:

- organizations were seeking individuals with more experience,
- they did not have entry-level positions to fill,
- resource constraints or clients that simply were not willing to work with this population,
- organizations were interested in hiring international students, but just had never pursued intentional hiring, and
- the process of hiring international students was too complicated.

Below are some selected excerpts from employers:

- “Cost, extra rules, regulations, etc. The government just makes it too difficult to hire international students.”
- “Process is too complicated (beyond OPT).”
- “Nothing, we would be completely open to the idea, just have never pursue[d] the opportunity before. We would like to explore the possibility of hiring international students.”
- “We do hire international students as interns / co[-]ops. We have been somewhat reluctant for regular employment based on resource constraints to deal with the immigration process. I understand there is assistance (name of higher education institution) provides. We would consider in the future if we had the need for an international student and / or they were the ideal candidate.”

**Question 5: Does your organization routinely hire international students for internship positions? (N=76)**

![Pie chart showing 36.8% Yes and 63.2% No]

The data indicates that even employers within the same industries have mixed practices of hiring international students for internship positions. Seventy eight (78) percent of employers who said they routinely hire international students for internships also indicated that they routinely hire international students for full-time positions. It can be surmised from this finding that the likelihood of employers considering to participate in the work visa filing process for a full-time position may increase when they have had the opportunity to work with international students in internships. This finding indicates that the continued necessity to encourage and support international students in securing internships.
If your organization routinely hires international students for internships, what degree level(s) do you hire most often? Please choose all that apply. (N=27)

Why do you hire those specific degree level(s) you indicated above? (N=14)

Responses for this question can be grouped into three themes: desire for the higher level of subject expertise, conversion to full-time hires, and other desirable traits. Examples of each theme include:

- **Desire for higher level subject expertise:**
  - “Opportunities in research and development would be relevant for graduate degrees.”
  - “Graduate students perform better in interviews because of their knowledge---and experience.”
  - “Level of education required for internship”
• Conversion to full-time hires:
  - “We hope to convert them to full-time hires.”
  - “One of our main goals of our internship program is to convert to full-time employment. Hiring interns at a specific level ensures we are targeting students who are soon graduating and ready to enter the workforce.”
• Other desirable traits:
  - “Need a certain level of skill and maturity.”

If your organization does not routinely hire international students for internships, what is the major obstacle for recruiting/hiring international students? Please choose all that apply.
(N=28)

- Lack of knowledge on work authorization: 50.0%
- Long term commitment: 50.0%
- Limited access to international students: 39.3%
- Lack of interest from international students: 17.9%
- Language barrier: 17.9%
- Cultural differences: 14.3%

• Fifty percent of respondents indicated that they did not hire international students due to a lack of knowledge on work authorization; therefore, if institutions of higher education helped educate their employer population, there may be an increase in hiring.
• Another 50% indicated they were worried about the long-term commitment of students. This could be circumvented by educating students that they need to invest time in the beginning of their career. Students need to realize that internships might become full-time job opportunities and employers prefer to invest in intern candidates who have longer term commitments to work in the U.S. and at a specific industry/company.
• Thirty-nine percent stated that they did not routinely hire due to limited access to the international student population. Institutions of higher should actively encourage engagement during career related events.
Question 6: Does your organization routinely hire international students for full-time positions? (N=71)

- No 63.4%
- Yes 36.6%

If your organization routinely hires international students for full-time positions, what degree level(s) do you hire most often? Please choose all that apply. (N=25)

- Graduate degree: 88.0%
- Undergraduate degree: 76.0%
- Associate degree: 12.0%
- Specialty certificate programs: 4.0%
**Why do you hire the specific degree level(s) above for full-time positions? (N=10)**

- Most of the engineering groups require higher education/knowledge/experience
- More likely a match for the job requirements
- Computer Science students needed for software engineering roles
- For their educational training
- Problem solving, analytical skills and program management
- Timing works well to help fill summer hiring needs with recent college graduates.

**If your organization does not hire international students for full-time positions, what is the major obstacle for recruiting/hiring international students? Please choose all that apply. (N=35)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Obstacle</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work authorization policies</td>
<td>60.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The long term commitment</td>
<td>51.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited access to international students</td>
<td>25.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Interest from international students</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language barrier</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural differences</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Question 7: Does your company have a policy about hiring international employees and/or work visa support? (N=65)**

- No 36.9%
- Yes 41.5%
- I do not know 21.5%
- 70% of organizations that have policies about hiring international employees and/or work visa support have operations outside the U.S.
- 85% of those organizations with the policies have been in operation for more than 20 years.
- Of the organizations with the policies, 44.4% of them do not routinely hire international students for internships while 55.6% of them do not routinely hire these students for full-time positions.
- Among the organizations that do not have such policies, 70.8% of them do not routinely hire international students for internships while 66.7% does not routinely hire international students for full-time positions.

**Question 8:** Has your organization made any exceptions about hiring an international student based on certain hiring needs? (N=65)

- Of the organizations that made exceptions about hiring an international students based on certain hiring needs, 60% of them have policies on hiring international employees and/or work visa support.
- 66.7% of organizations that have made such exceptions have been in operation for more than 50 years.
- Both organizations with overseas operations and those without have made such exceptions.

**Question 9:** How frequently in each year do you interact with international students at college recruiting events such as career fairs, information sessions, presentations, and others? (N=65)

- Less than once 32.3%
- 1-2 Times 13.9%
- 3-5 Times 15.4%
- 6-9 Times 6.2%
- 10+ Times 32.3%
Question 10: What are some major differences that you have observed between international and non-international students in the interview process? (N=36)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Difference between international and non-international students that favor international students</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professionalism/Career-oriented</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantitative/problem-solving skills</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work ethic</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewing skills</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language skills</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong>*</td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Difference between international and non-international students that do not favor international students</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack English language skills (verbal and written)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack interviewing skills</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of interest in organization</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigration restrictions</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No understanding of US workplace cultural expectations</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication skills</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong>*</td>
<td><strong>27</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Differences between individual</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of university attended</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NA/None</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong>*</td>
<td><strong>9</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Some respondents indicated more than one response so the total number of responses is greater than total number of respondents.