

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT WORKSHOP

Bruin Actuarial Society



Why is it hard for international students to find an internship?

- Companies are reluctant to hire international students
 - They will need to sponsor international students for H1-B visas to work full time in the future
 - Significant cost and time expense
 - No certainty that your H1-B will be approved (lottery system)
- They are more willing to hire local students if international students don't exceptionally stand out !

What should you do now?

1. **DON'T GIVE UP!** Be patient! It's just a matter of time.
2. Improve yourself and show companies you are worth the money and effort
 - a. Resume (GPA, leadership roles, experiences, technical skills)
 - b. Career fair (communication skills, personality)
 - c. Interview (communication skills, professionalism)
3. Do research on visa regulations and plan ahead while recruiting
4. Make Plan B! Find other (overseas) opportunities
5. Seek for more help and resources

Agenda

- Soft Skills (Verbal, Written)
- Work Authorization (CPT, OPT)
- Overseas opportunities
- Help & Resources

SOFT SKILLS

RESUME / CAREER FAIR / INTERVIEW

Soft Skills Diagnosis

- Verbal
 - Confidence & Body language
 - Content of your dialogue
- Written
 - Grammar, vocabulary, syntax
 - Professional communication ex: email

Difference between international & U.S. Interviews

International	U.S.
Personal relationships may be more important than time. Being late may not be a problem.	Be punctual. Arrive 5 to 10 minutes prior to appointment.
Eye contact, especially with persons of higher status, may be disrespectful.	Eye contact is expected and shows confidence.
Citing accomplishments and skills might be considered boastful, self serving, or too individualistic.	Open discussion of accomplishments and skills shows confidence.
Researching the organization in advance may show too much initiative and independence.	Researching the organization and demonstrating that knowledge is expected. Shows initiative and interest.

Soft skills: Verbal (interview & career fair)

- **Research and prepare well beforehand.** Familiarize yourself with words and phrases that might come up to avoid some confusion.
- **Speak slowly and clearly.** English might not be your first language, but it's okay. As long as they are able to communicate with you, the language barrier shouldn't be a problem.
- **Don't be too afraid to talk about your past achievements.** Your interviewers will not know how great you are for the position unless you tell them first.
- **Be yourself and share your experience.** Being an international student can be an advantage, as it shows your ability to adapt to a new environment.

Soft skills: Verbal (interview & career fair)

- Make eye contact and smile.
- Give a firm handshake.
- Pay attention to your listener's body language.
 - Adapt the volume of your voice.
 - Adapt the length of your answers.
- Pay attention to what they say or ask.
- Engage others by asking questions. Don't interrupt the conversation.
- Strike a balance between formal & casual while networking.
- More Info > Interview Workshop! (slides posted on website)

What you **SHOULDN'T** ask during interviews/career fair

Do you sponsor international students?

(the most bothersome questions for firm reps at the career fair...)

Why?

- You are asking “what can the company do for me”, instead of “what can I do for the company”.
- If they say no, the conversation will be very awkward for both parties
- If they say yes, you risk alienating these firms by showing you are only interested in them because they sponsor

Why else? What should I do ?

- Two Types of Companies :
 - They specifically say they **won't** sponsor. (company policy)
 - Don't waste your time on the application.
 - They **didn't** specifically say they won't sponsor.
 - They don't have a clear policy. Don't ask them if they sponsor or not (reasons from last slide) and just assume they will sponsor. Try your best to impress them.
- Many companies are not black-and-white. They will sponsor international students who are exceptionally more qualified than domestic candidates.

Ways to rephrase the question

- If you **MUST** ask, save it for later conversation.
- Do you **encourage** international students to apply for the positions at this firm?
- Is the company open to sponsoring exceptionally qualified candidates for the [entry-level] job?
- What advice do you have for international students looking a place at your company?

How to find out if firms sponsor or not?

- We all want to save some time for companies that sponsor. To avoid any awkwardness while talking to firm reps, doing research is very important. (BAS is not responsible for providing a list of firms that sponsor or not.)
- Handshake (Work Authorization)
- Ask international friends who applied before.
- Google.
- Talk to BAS officers (Sylvia Chang)

Soft skills: Written, Email Etiquette

- Keep your message clear & concise. Avoid lengthy sentences.
- Check your spelling, punctuation, and grammar. Although emails are not essays, but you should try to minimize the grammar mistakes.
 - Spell-checker ex: Grammarly
 - Auto spelling & grammar function in Microsoft Word.
- Keep it professional. Refrain from using multiple colors or dazzling font types.
 - Follow the formatting requirements while writing an essay.

Soft skills: Written, Email Etiquette

- **Subject Line:** Keep it short and meaningful.
- **Greeting:** Use professional salutation.
 - “Hello, Mr. _____” or “Dear Mr. _____”
 - Use “Hi” only later, if they reply with “Hi”
- **Content:** Introduce yourself & provide context for what you’re emailing.
- **Length:** No more than 5-7 sentences per paragraph. (Easier to read)
 - Limit the length of an email
- **Closing:** Use professional email closing and sign your name.
 - Ex: Best regards, Sincerely Yours

Assorted Tips & Reminders (for both int'l & domestic students!)

- DO NOT put a photograph on your resume.
- DO NOT ask firm reps for favorable treatment when you don't know them.
 - What questions should I prepare for before the interview?
 - Can you give me an interview?
 - Can you recommend me for a job?
- DO NOT ask firm reps if they can speak another foreign language. Sometimes they feel uncomfortable.

WORK AUTHORIZATION (FOR STUDENTS ON F-1 VISAS)

Three Ways to Work in the U.S:

- Unrestricted on-campus employment
 - Dining Halls, campus stores, coffee houses, etc.
- CPT (Curricular Practical Training)
 - Related to your academic studies ex: Summer Internship
- OPT (Optional Practical Training)
 - Post-completion ex: entry-level job
- H-1B Visa

Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

- Off-campus internship relevant to your major as a **full-time** student
- Qualifications & Restrictions:
- Must be in valid F-1 status for >1 academic year
 - Freshmen can't apply for CPT.
- Enroll in one of the **internship courses 195** (check department website)
- CPT will only be granted **ONE QUARTER** at a time
 - Ex: Summer internship --- enroll in an internship course in summer quarter
- Must obtain an official offer letter from your employer for further application

CPT Application (After you received an offer)

1. Go to Dashew Center for the CPT Request Form
2. Ask your employer for an official offer letter
3. Enroll in an internship course (requirements/enrollment procedures: check out our International Student Guide published by BAS on website)
4. Submit your completed CPT request form with an offer letter after your enrollment in an internship course
5. Receive an updated I-20 from Dashew Center (Be aware of business days! you can't work without an updated I-20)

Optional Practical Training (OPT)

- Off-campus job directly related to your major **after** graduation
- Qualifications & Restrictions:
 - Must be in valid F-1 status for >1 academic year
 - Freshmen can't apply for CPT.
 - No need for an official offer letter from your employer for application
 - Must not have had 12 months of OPT authorization for the same degree level

OPT Application (After you received an offer)

1. Complete the OPT Online Workshop + OPT App form @ DCISS website
2. Submit your completed OPT form at an OPT Hand-In Session
3. Returned to DCISS after your submission date to sign their OPT I-20.
4. Generally, your firm enrolls you into H-1B lottery during this time

Timeline:

1. Initial 12-months OPT, 3 months before graduation
2. USCIS requires 90 days to process your application (No travel allowed!)
3. OPT start date should be within the first 60 days after your graduation

OPT Extension for STEM Majors

- STEM students (including FAM) can apply for 24-months OPT STEM extension after the original 12 months.
 - $12 \text{ (initial OPT)} + 24 \text{ (extension)} = 36 \text{ months (after graduation)}$
- Notice:
 - Qualifications & restrictions for initial 12 months OPT are also applied in OPT STEM extension.
 - Still, be aware of the timeline (business days).

The Million-Dollar Questions

1. Are you legally authorized to work in the United States?

YES.

2. Do you now, or will you in the future, require employment sponsorship (e.g. H-1B visa status) to work legally in the U.S. ?

YES.

Notice: Don't lie about your visa status. They will find out at the end anyways...

OVERSEAS OPPORTUNITIES

What should I do if I didn't get an internship?

- Find an Internship/employment in you home country
 - E.g. Traditional Life Insurance companies (Cathay), consulting firms (PwC, KPMG)
- Ask your friends/parents back in your home country, or Google!
- Recruiting season is slightly later than the U.S., beginning at early March.
- Companies have different qualifications from American firms, such as: bilingual (resume), master's degree
- It is still very competitive to get an internship back in your home country, but the visa status will no longer be a burden for you at your home country.

HELP & OTHER RESOURCES

How can I get more help and information?

- Visa Policy -- Dashew Center
- Internship/Job Opportunities -- Career Center
- Resume Critique -- Undergraduate Writing Center

.... and of course BAS!

- International Student Guide published by BAS
- Make appointment with your mentor or other BAS officers! (resume critique, mock interviews, visa etc.)

Questions?