



Career Resources for International Students

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Additional Guide to Interviewing Skills for International Students

Interview Preparation

While researching the company, in addition to the company website, here are some useful websites for you to find more information:

- Vault: <http://www.vault.com>
- Wet feet: <http://www.wetfeet.com>
- Hoover's online: <http://www.hoovers.com>

You may also want to know if the company has hired international students before. Below is the link you can search the history of the company in terms of international hiring. <http://www.workforcesecurity.doleta.gov/foreign/h-1b.asp>

Networking

Networking is **essential** for the international student seeking employment.

Places/people for networking:

- Current/former employers
- Colleagues/classmates/professors
- Conferences/job fairs
- Professional/student organizations
- Websites/listservs/newsgroups
- American or international employees from a potential employer

When you're looking for a job, tell everyone in your network, and ask them if they know of any openings

Networking is the **most successful** strategy for the American job seeker

Actual Interview

How to talk about my work values?

- Work value sheet (see attachment): It gives you vocabulary to talk about your work values.
- Talk about your values and how they fit with the mission of the company or the job description of the position

How to talk about my strength?

- This is not a time for you to be humble!
- Present your strengths in an organized way. You are encouraged to use “First, Second, and then...” order to help you and the interviewer stay focused.
- Whenever you talk about your strengths, you want to elaborate them with relevant experiences/examples.

Possible strengths of international students

- Fluency in different languages
- Knowledge of other cultures and connections around the world
- Globalized worldview due to international experience
- Ability to adapt and adjust to a whole new culture effectively
- For some of you, you may come from a culture that emphasizes team work more than American culture. That is a great asset that most companies are looking for

How to talk about my weakness?

- Never say you don't have weaknesses
- Be honest about your weaknesses but talk about them in a constructive way (e.g., emphasize on how you make efforts to overcome the weakness)
- Integrate your weaknesses with your strengths. For example, if you are a creative but disorganized person, you want to highlight your capability of finding creative ways to help you organize or emphasize your efforts to become more organized in work (e.g., use a planner).

Most Common Questions for International Students

- How long do you think you will stay in the U.S.?
- How are your communication skills?
- How are you more qualified than an American candidate?
- Where are you from?

When to talk about your visa status?

- Never withhold your visa status from an employer
- It's recommended that you tell them during *the first or second interview* after you feel you have “sold yourself” well and they are interested in you. If you do not tell the employer upfront about your visa status, this may convey dishonesty and that your visa status is problematic!

But..... If the company tells you that they would like to hire you but has **concerns about your visa status**, you are encouraged to do the following responses:

- If you are a F-1 student and haven't done your OPT or CPT yet let that potential employer know that this is a possibility for you!

- **CPT (Curriculum Practical Training):** CPT allows you to take academic internship off-campus. Take advantage of CPT to do internships so that employers can get to know your abilities work experience. In a survey of international MBA

students, 53% received a job offer from the company where they had an internship!

- **OPT** (Optional Practical Training): OPT is off-campus employment that is related to the international student's major field of study and is a 12-month benefit of the F-1 Visa status.

It can be a great way to get your foot in the door of the company. Within the OPT period, the employer does not need to worry about the visa issue or pay extra money to hire you. However, during your OPT, you are encouraged to start negotiating with the employer about the possibility of applying for H1-B visa for you after you finish the OPT.

Talk about H1-B visa and sponsorship

Below are some tips of how to talk about “sponsorship” with potential employers:

- Learn about the process of H1B visa yourself!
- Don't use the word sponsorship as this may scare off employers. Use “Renewable visa” or “Petition” will be more appropriate!
- Educate the employer on H1B visa if they do not know much about it!
- If they are hesitant because of the paperwork and fees, there are immigration lawyers that specialize in this! If the employers are not willing to hire them, offer that you will hire one yourself. If you have the money, offer to pay the H1B visa fee.

Tips for phone interview

Phone interviews can be challenging for international students, especially if English is not your first language. Here are some tips:

- Dress and behave like you are going to a real interview—wear a suit, fix your hair/makeup, shave
- Consider putting a mirror in front of you, and smile when you talk—the interviewer will hear the difference in your voice
- Conduct the interview in a quiet place
- Have all papers you need to reference ready and organized (you don't want to search through a stack of papers!)
- Practice with a friend by first sitting back to back, then on a phone—practice, practice, practice!
- Consider purchasing a phone headset, so you can hear better, can access papers more easily, and your hand won't get tired from holding up the phone!
- Don't use a cell phone (static, dropped calls)



Interviewing Skills: Top Ten Questions

Tell me about yourself.

This question you want to let the interviewer 4 or 5 main points about yourself. Try not to talk too long about this, and end with how those main points led you to that company.

What is your most significant accomplishment?

This is an opportunity to make a great impression! Be sure to review your experience and select a significant accomplishment that is meaningful to you. Telling a two-minute story including details and personal involvement can paint an impressive picture of your accomplishment. Discuss any sacrifices you had to make to achieve this accomplishment and why it was important to the company.

Why do you believe you are qualified for the position?

Focus! Pick two or three main factors about the job and your corresponding characteristics that are most relevant. Provide specific examples from your experience that illustrate why you are qualified. It helps to select a technical skill, a specific management skill (organizing, staffing, planning), and a personal success attribute to mention.

Have you ever accomplished something you did not think you could?

This question addresses your goal orientation, work ethic, personal commitment and integrity. Provide a good example that illustrates a time when you overcame numerous difficulties to succeed. Prove you are not a quitter and that you will "get going when the going gets tough."

Describe a time where your performance went above and beyond expectations.

Use an example; i.e., handling an irate customer or a time where an associate needed assistance with an urgent project that may or may not have had anything to do with your responsibilities. Be sure to demonstrate a "whatever it takes" attitude.

What do you like/dislike most about your current position?

This question helps identify your compatibility with the open position. If you enjoy challenges, pressure situations, and opportunity, or dislike bureaucracy and frustrating situations, you may want to share that in your response.

What are your career goals? Where do you see yourself 5 years from now?10?

Many people don't know exactly where they will be in 5 or 10 years and it's fine to

express that you may not have an exact position in mind. What you should convey, however, is how much additional responsibility you want to take on or whether or not a clear career path is important to you. You should be able to elaborate on how you will be an asset to the company in the future.

What are your most significant strengths?

Know your four or five key strengths. Be able to discuss each with a specific example. Select those attributes that are most compatible with the job opening. If you choose "management" or "interpersonal skills" as strengths be prepared to describe the specific characteristics of management (planning, organizing, results, staffing, etc.) or how your relationship skills have proven critical to your success.

What are your most significant weaknesses?

This is an opportunity to discuss skills that you are working towards improving. You can use specific examples to show how you've improved over time or, better still, how a weakness can be turned into strength. For example, how concentration on the details results in higher quality work, even though it may require more time.

Why do you want to work here?

Make sure to do some research on the company and the position so that you can answer this question with confidence. Do you like the opportunity for growth or feel that the industry is appealing? Will the position allow you to contribute immediately and also learn more about your area of interest?

** Adapted from St. Norberts College and MU Career Center



Visa Related Information for International Students

H1-B Visa Resources

Various H1B visa web links that can give you more information

US Department of Labor

<http://www.dol.gov>

Overview of H1-B visas

<http://www.workforcesecurity.doleta.gov/foreign/h-1b.asp>

H1-B FAQs

<http://uscis.gov/graphics/howdoi/h1b.htm>

Look up companies that have applied for H1-B visas by name, state, or employment field (includes job titles and salary info):

<http://archive.flcdatabase.com/casesearch.asp>

Reports on H1-B Visa workers:

<http://uscis.gov/graphics/shared/services/employerinfo/h1b.htm>

Above includes reports on:

Characteristics of Specialty Occupation Workers (H1-B)

Leading Employers of Specialty Occupation Workers

Article, “When to Reveal Your Work Status”:

<http://www.bc.edu/offices/careers/resourcesfor/intlstudents/when/>

Various companies/websites that deal with visa issues:

<http://www.h1bsponsors.com/>

<http://www.h1visajobs.com/>

<http://www.visalaw.com/>

<http://www.h1base.com/>

<http://www.h1bvisalaw.com/>

<http://www.foreignmba.com>

www.VisaNow.com

CPT/OPT FAQs from MU’s International Center

OPT information: <http://international.missouri.edu/iss/students/opt/faq.html>

CPT information: <http://international.missouri.edu/iss/students/cpt/faq.html>

American Immigration Lawyers Association

Website of immigration lawyers around the nation: <http://www.aila.org>
Also visit ISCS or the International Center for a list of Kansas City/St. Louis lawyers

CPT/OPT FAQs from MU's International Center

OPT information: <http://international.missouri.edu/iss/students/opt/faq.html>

CPT information: <http://international.missouri.edu/iss/students/cpt/faq.html>

Other Career Links

MU's new campus job database: <http://www.hiremizzougrads.com/>

MU Career Center: <http://career.missouri.edu>

Job Hunting Tips for International Students:

http://www.ubalt.edu/careercenter/careerlink/00_fall/feature_intl_resume.html

Men's Warehouse: <http://www.menswarehouse.com>