Networking

Networking with personal and professional contacts is often the key to finding positions in the U.S. and should be a priority in your search. Develop an introduction, often called an elevator speech, which tells a potential contact your name, field of study, relevant skills, and career goals in about a minute. Practice your introduction so that you will be comfortable delivering it and then be prepared to modify it as the situation demands. Use it to introduce your career goals into discussions with professors, classmates, people you meet through internships and professional associations, at employer events, and at other networking opportunities that arise on campus. Don't let shyness or modesty get in your way. Having current professionals and recruiters on your side increases the likelihood a company will hire you. See p. 19.

Make an effort to refine your English language skills, both written and verbal, so you can be successful in your search and have rewarding experiences at Cal. Strong English language skills, non-verbal communication skills and interpersonal skills are all crucial for international students who wish to work and succeed in the U.S., and it’s never too late to start polishing those skills.

Career Fairs and Employer Information Sessions are great ways to make professional contacts with Cal alumni and employers. You can learn about opportunities at various organizations, and to allow employers to get to know you. See p. 17.

Participating in student groups can increase your connections, leadership experience, and confidence. Information on student organizations can be found on the LEAD Center website at lead.berkeley.edu/orgs

Join professional associations to boost your network and keep you current with trends in your field. Join the local chapter of a national organization (most offer a student membership rate) and participate in meetings and conferences. Get to know professional members and ask for their business cards. Reach out to these new contacts for informational interviews. See p. 7.

WORK AUTHORIZATION & IMMIGRATION STATUS

Employment Authorization for F-1 and J-1 Students
It is every international student’s responsibility to be fully informed about work authorization options in order to facilitate the hiring process for employers. Eligible F-1 international students are able to work off campus during their academic program using Curricular Practical Training (CPT) and after graduation using Optional Practical Training (OPT). Eligible J-1 international students are able to work off campus using Academic Training (AT) both during and after their academic program. All off-campus employment must be related to a student’s field of study. Visit internationaloffice.berkeley.edu for more details.

H-1B and Employment-Based Visas
In order to continue working in the U.S. after the practical training period, your employer will need to sponsor you for an employment visa. The H-1B is a common employment visa but there are other options. Berkeley International Office (BIO) offers workshops on H-1B and other employment-based visas throughout the academic year. BIO also has a list of immigration attorney referrals.

Discussing Work Authorization with an Employer
Fortunately for employers, there is little paperwork involved in hiring an international student with Practical Training work authorization. However, if your employment extends beyond the practical training period, the process becomes more complex. Employers unfamiliar with the process of sponsoring someone’s immigration status may be intimidated by the prospect. The best way to prepare for this is to learn as much as you can about the options available to you through BIO and by speaking to an immigration attorney. You can then present the information in a confident, informed way that will encourage the employer. Employers may find the “U.S. Employer’s Guide to Hiring UC Berkeley International Students” helpful on career.berkeley.edu.

There is no official time when you are required to tell an employer about your student immigration status. Most employers will ask you either in the first or second interview. Be honest about your situation, but also be informed. Ideally, the employer will understand that the skills and global perspectives you bring to the company will far outweigh extra measures needed to hire you.

Target employers with a history of hiring international employees. You can access GoinGlobal through Callisto, and myvisajobs.com. These tools list companies that have sponsored H-1B employment visas in the past. The latter also includes companies that have sponsored for U.S. Permanent Residency. Join the “UC Berkeley International Student & Alumni Network” LinkedIn group to see where Cal international students have found internships and jobs.
Internships & Externships

Internships provide career-related experience and increase your networking contacts. For more information on internship search strategies, see the Internships chapter, p. 10.

Shadowing professionals on the job for a day or two can also provide key insights about careers and expand your pool of contacts. You can arrange for this type of opportunity yourself through your network or consider the Externship Program on career.berkeley.edu.

Resume

Resumes in the U.S. may be different from CVs in your home country. U.S. resumes do not include personal information such as marital status, date of birth, or photographs. They tend to be one page long and are focused on presenting information relevant to the position. When listing overseas experience, it may be helpful to offer a brief explanation about companies or educational experiences that are unfamiliar to U.S. employers (for example, “the second largest marketing firm in China” or “the top university in Brazil”).

Interviewing

When interviewing in the U.S., you are expected to be comfortable talking about your accomplishments, to demonstrate familiarity with the company and the job description, and to confidently persuade the employer that you are the best person for the position. The U.S. style of self-promotion may seem brash or boastful, but it will be necessary to adapt to the U.S. norm in order to successfully compete for positions.

Non-verbal communication is important when interacting with employers. Practice your firm, professional handshake and eye contact in order to greet your prospective employer with confidence. This form of communication gets easier with practice. The Career Center offers Mock Interviews with professional interviewers and Career Counselors.

THE LONG DISTANCE JOB SEARCH

For an effective long distance job search, you can use many of the same resources and approaches used in a local job search. Use these suggestions to maximize your chances of a successful long distance job search:

• Create an overall strategy for relocation. Set a time frame for phases of the job search. For instance, you may determine weekly goals for the tasks of employer research, networking, and submitting applications.

• Increase your chances for success by planning ahead. If you will visit the area before you move, try to arrange networking meetings with potential employers and job contacts.

• Begin networking and making connections before you move. If you’re relocating to your hometown, reestablish contact with colleagues, employers, and relatives who may be able to help.

• Research the job market. Search online to learn about job openings, local employers, and employment trends. Contact the Chamber of Commerce and the Convention and Visitor’s Bureau to gain a sense of the local community.

• Use the city where you want to move as a term in a keyword search in Callisto.

• Find specific career advice for 25+ countries through GoinGlobal (accessible through Callisto).

• View the Job Search section of the Career Center website to find nationwide listings of jobs and internships.

• Do research on organizations coming to Cal career fairs. Many of them offer employment throughout the country.

• Seek out virtual job fairs. They let long distance applicants submit applications directly to employers. Some virtual fairs also provide a chance to chat with employers live via the web.

• Ask a friend or relative in the area if you can list their number on your resume. This helps show that you are serious about relocating.

For information on Searching for Long Distance Internships, see p. 13.

WEBSITE INFO
For more information go to career.berkeley.edu/IntlStudents/IntlStudents