CDO Resource Guide for International Students

Dear International Sagehen:

Welcome to the Career Development Office (CDO)! We hope that you will make use of the many services and programs offered through our office early and often. We understand international students may encounter unique challenges when it comes to securing internships and employment in the U.S. Our team aims to help you be well prepared for future career opportunities either in the U.S. or back home.

As your time here at Pomona passes, it is essential to define who you are, what you want from your career, learn more about American culture, and start to build and expand your connections. This resource guide is specifically designed to help you, an international student, navigate your way through some of the career development process. You will find useful information about networking, U.S. resumes and interviews, and other helpful resources.

We look forward to seeing you soon!

Sincerely,

Career Development Office Team
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JOB SEARCH TIPS FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

• **Come to the CDO early.**
  While this is great advice for any student, it’s especially crucial for students from outside of the U.S. It usually takes longer to find a job with an employer who sponsors employees requiring work visas. So the sooner you start your job or internship search, the better chance you will have! Make an appointment with a career coach via Handshake, or stop by for our daily drop-in hours.

• **Educate yourself on your visa status.**
  Become informed about your visa status and the particular regulations that relate to your situation. The more you personally know about visas, work permits, deadlines, academic requirements, etc., the better decisions you’ll be able to make and the more empowered you’ll feel. To get started, reach out to your Pomona International Student Advisor Marilyn White (Marilyn.white@pomona.edu) who is your visa, CPT/OPT expert on campus. She can meet with you one-on-one to advise on your particular needs and situation.

• **Strengthen communication skills.**
  Communication skills play a crucial role in your job and internship search as well as in your future work. Use every possible opportunity to strengthen your skills and practice communicating your academic background and qualifications. Some great ways to do this are through on-campus jobs, being active in clubs and student organizations, and coming to CDO programs and workshops to practice communicating your career-related strengths.

• **Network, network and network!**
  Networking is an integral part of any job or internship search. It is also a great way to practice your communication skills. Start with your peers at Pomona college and other Claremont colleges, as well as faculty, staff and alumni. Connect with international alumni via Sagepost47 who have secured positions in the U.S. and ask for their advice. The CDO also offers a variety of networking workshops and events to help you practice. To see the list of upcoming events, log in to Handshake.

• **Think about your unique assets.**
  Your international status may present some hurdles in your job or internship search, but don’t forget about the unique assets it brings to you as well. Your language skills, cross-cultural experience, knowledge of international business practices, and your global perspective are all extremely valuable in today’s workplace. Think about how you may present your unique assets to potential employers.

• **Engage with the CDO.**
  Remember, we are always here for you, even after your graduation. Please visit the CDO website and Handshake for resources and come to meet with us for advising.
The U.S. resume is a concise, attractive marketing tool. It summarizes your jobs, skills, accomplishments and relevant academic background. Your resume is your major job search tool and should always be kept up-to-date. General resume and cover letter tips are available online at the CDO website and in the CDO Resource Guide. In addition, we recommend coming to the CDO for 15-minute drop-ins, or making a 30-minute appointment with our career advisors for a thorough resume review.

Here are some resume tips for international students:

- The length of the resume is limited to 1-2 pages maximum. The shorter and more concise your resume is, the better.
- Include your language skills on the resume. For example: Native speaker of Mandarin and proficient in Spanish.
- If including your GPA, make sure to also provide it in a 4.0 scale so U.S. recruiters understand the conversion.
- Include a local/current address on your resume. If applying for positions in your country of origin, feel free to also include your permanent address if it is near the job.
- Include your international/cross-cultural experience throughout your resume. Examples can include your use of language skills for professional projects, how your knowledge of international business practices contributed to a team, or how your unique global perspective helped shape an initiative.
- Your resume should not include your age, marital status, race, religion, or visa status.
- You should not have your photograph on the resume.

**INTERVIEWING**

Interviewing is a skill that is developed over time and requires preparation and lots of practice. It is your chance to have a conversation with the recruiter, learn more about their company, and decide if the position itself is a good fit for you. Most importantly, it is a great opportunity to convince the employer that you are the ideal candidate for the role.

**LEGAL AND ILLEGAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

**An employer MAY ask:**
Are you legally authorized to work in the United States?
Will you now or in the future require sponsorship for an employment visa?
Which languages do you read, speak or write? (provided that foreign language skills are job related)

**An employer SHOULD NOT ask:**
What is your visa type, nationality, place of birth? Or, of which country are you a citizen?
Are you married? Do you have children? How old are you?

*For tips on answering difficult or illegal questions, we encourage you to come in for drop-ins or a 30 min appointment with our CDO staff.*
Discussing Your Visa Status in the hiring process

Be knowledgeable about the visa process in case you need to educate the employer about what is involved. If asked about your work authorization situation, you can start by explaining that you have the legal right to work in the U.S. for twelve months (after you have authorized OPT, or at least you have a confirmation with receipt number), which requires absolutely no work on their part. Then share that your work authorization can be extended for another 24 months (if applicable) and renewed for another three to six more years with an H-1B work visa. Avoid saying the word "sponsor" when talking about the H-1B application process, instead use the phrase "petition." The best way to educate the employer is to be knowledgeable about your own circumstances and what you need from them to legally work at their organization.

*If you are interested in learning more about your visa status and the hiring process, please be sure to connect with the CDO and your International Student Advisor. For additional interviewing information or to schedule a mock interview, please visit our Handshake site and make an appointment with CDO staff.*

NETWORKING

What is networking?
Networking is connecting with others to build a "database" of people who can help you explore careers or maybe even connect you with jobs/internships. These contacts can be friends, classmates, professors, a professional or alum working in a company of interest, or even a fellow passenger on a plane. It takes place in a variety of settings: one-on-one coffee chats, conferences, large networking events, professional association seminars, etc. Having these conversations may not be natural for everyone, so the more you practice the more comfortable you will become with it.

Why is networking so important?
Data shows that the majority of positions are secured through networking, which means that the larger and stronger your network, the better chance you’ll have of securing the position you want. Networking is also a great way to learn about specific opportunities, sometimes before the general public, as well as getting insider information about a company or organization that can make you and your application materials more competitive.

What does networking look like?
- Hanging out with your friends
- Talking with a professor during office hours
- Discussing your interests with a family friend
- Having dinner with an alumna/us visiting campus
- Talking with an alumna/us over the phone

Networking isn't being insincere and “schmoozing.” Instead, it is taking the time to genuinely get to know someone else, sharing your interests and ideas with them, and finding how you can help one another.
How should I network?

Initiating career-related conversations or just simply chatting with people around you can be a great way to get started. Throw yourself into campus life and activities that interest you. If there are organizations on campus related to your major, become involved as soon as possible to build networking contacts and references.

Take advantage of as many networking opportunities as you can, including those provided by professional organizations, social networking, and your college. Attend company information sessions or career fairs on campus to meet with recruiters. Networking may feel hard or unnatural for you initially. This is normal, and many people feel the same way. Get out of your comfort zone, and try. The more you practice, the more confident and natural you will feel about networking.

Make sure to develop your value statement, or “elevator pitch,” so that you will have something prepared and practiced when you meet people who are in a position to help you in your job search.

For help with networking and creating your elevator pitch, we encourage you to come in for drop-ins or a 30 minute appointment with our CDO staff.

Networking resources

- **LinkedIn** is a valuable resource for your job or internship search, especially for growing and maintaining your network. Create your profile as soon as you start looking for internships or full-time jobs so that prospective employers can find you. Attend [CDO workshops](#) to see how you can maximize LinkedIn for your career needs.

- **Sagepost 47** connects current students with alumni mentors. Students can search alumni by major, industry, or by area of interest. There is also a section specifically for international mentors.

- **Candid Career** is a fun and efficient way to explore careers! Similar in nature to YouTube, hear what Pomona College alumni and others have to say about various career fields and issues.

- **Pomona College Career Connections Group** on LinkedIn is a networking forum managed by the CDO. It aims to help students to connect with the broader Pomona College community including alumni, faculty, parents, and other friends of the college. There are many other Pomona-related groups on LinkedIn for you to explore.

- **Informational Interviewing** is a great way to network with people who work in the fields that you are interested. You can learn about their career path and what their daily work looks like. Visit the CDO website and join our workshops to learn some informational interviewing tips.

- **Sagehen Connect** is a mobile app that offers access to Pomona’s full alumni directory, which is searchable by name, class year, employer, or grad school. You can also map alumni to find contacts in specific cities and countries.

- **International Student Mentoring Program (ISMP)** is a student-led mentoring program that pairs new international students with returning international students and recent alumni. ISMP also
hosts sessions in the spring semester where upper-class international students discuss their experiences in internships and job searching.

For additional resources related to networking and informational interviewing, explore the Resources page in Handshake.

RESEARCHING ORGANIZATIONS THAT HIRE INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

The best way to find companies that are willing to hire international students is to talk to other international students and alumni, since companies who have hired international students in the past are likely to continue to do so. Establish relationships, and then grow them in a targeted manner. You can also do some research online and look for organizations that have hired international workers in the past. These are just some of the resources to help research companies, target a search, or focus your networking.

- **Going Global** [http://www.goingglobal.com](http://www.goingglobal.com)
  Going Global has approximately 500,000 records of companies that have applied for H1B visas. Look up these companies by industry, job title, state and/or city

- **My Visa Jobs** [http://www.myvisajobs.com](http://www.myvisajobs.com)
  Find the top 100 employers who offer visa sponsorship. Check out the top 100 industries that have international workers in the United States, as well as the top 100 green card sponsors.

- **UniWorld** [https://uniworldonline.com/search](https://uniworldonline.com/search)
  Uniworld is a comprehensive directory of U.S. companies that have overseas locations and foreign companies that have firms operating in the United States who hire. This database allows you to search based on your country of interest, area of specialization and more.

- **E-Verify** [https://www.uscis.gov/e-verify](https://www.uscis.gov/e-verify)
  E-Verify is an online program run by the U.S. government that is used mostly by employers to check employee records and eligibility. Search for employers that provide work authorization and sponsorship.

- **H1 Base** [http://h1base.com](http://h1base.com)
  H1B provides useful Visa information, and it’s also a job search tool.

- **iStudent City** [http://istudentcity.com](http://istudentcity.com)
  iStudent City provides helpful tips for job searching after graduation, in addition to an online chat feature that allows students to chat with other international students.
INTERNATIONAL CAREER FAIRS AND FORUMS

- **International Alumni Job Network** [http://www.ia-jn.com/](http://www.ia-jn.com/)
  This is a job search website which can connect you with Asia Pacific’s top jobs.

- **European Career Fair** [https://ecf.fairsey.com/#!/](https://ecf.fairsey.com/#!/)
  MIT brings together native European and European-interested students and businesses at one of the largest annual career fairs.

- **Career Forum** [http://www.careerforum.net/event/?lang=E](http://www.careerforum.net/event/?lang=E)

- **Career Nation** [http://careernation.com/](http://careernation.com/)
  Career Nation connects executives and professionals from Africa and within the United States at their yearly Africa Diversity Career Expo.

*For an updated list of on-campus career fairs and local employer events, make sure to visit the [Events](https://handshake.pomona.edu/events) page in Handshake.*

EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATION AND VISA INFORMATION

For questions regarding your status, your eligibility to work, or applying for CPT/OPT, please contact Marilyn White.

Marilyn J White  
*Pomona College International Student Advisor*  
(909) 607-3719  
Marilyn.white@pomona.edu

**International Place**

International students have certain benefits and responsibilities related to working in the United States. For information regarding your visa status, eligibility to work, or applying for CPT/OPT, all students are encouraged to visit International Place at 390 E. 9th St. I-Place is the international student office of The Claremont Colleges, serving all seven of The Colleges as a center for cultural exchange and international educational programming, as well as a resource center for international students and scholars. Whether you are a visa student, hold U.S. citizenship, permanent residency, have lived abroad, or simply want to meet people from around the world, International Place is open to you. [https://iplace.claremont.edu/current-students/employment/](https://iplace.claremont.edu/current-students/employment/)

**International Student Mentor Program (ISMP)**

The International Student Mentor Program (ISMP) is a Pomona College organization that helps incoming international students adjust to life in the United States. The ISMP aims to foster a supportive community of
international students at Pomona through organizing activities, discussions, and events geared towards fulfilling international students’ unique needs. Incoming international students are given mentors who they can rely upon to answer their questions, introduce them to life at Pomona, and provide academic, emotional, and social support. ISMP mentors are returning international students who are familiar with international issues, and are enthusiastic about befriending and helping to support incoming international students. https://pomonaismp.wordpress.com/

The ISMP is open to students of all nationalities outside of the U.S., as well as to American citizens that have lived a substantial part of their lives overseas. If you are interested in taking part in the ISMP, or have any questions, please send an email to ISMP.Pomona@gmail.com.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

• The Big Challenge of American Small Talk
  https://hbr.org/2013/02/the-big-challenge-with-america

• International Students Success Stories
  https://career.berkeley.edu/IntnlStudents/SuccesIntern/SuccesIntern
  https://career.berkeley.edu/IntnlStudents/SuccesAlum/SuccesAlum
  These are some success stories from UC Berkeley international students. Hope their practical tips and advice will be helpful to your internship and job search.

• Global Mingle Party (fee-based)
  https://www.globalmingleparty.com/careerservices/
  Career training for globally ambitious professionals. Tools to help international students, future global leaders, and executives succeed in the US workplace.

GLOSSARY

Resume – a brief account of a person’s education, qualifications, and previous experience, typically sent with a job application. Used most often in U.S. job and internship recruiting.

C.V. (Curriculum Vitae) – Like a resume, a curriculum vitae (CV) provides a summary of one’s experience and skills. Typically, CVs are longer than resumes, at least two or three pages, and are used mostly in U.S. recruiting for academic jobs.

Informational Interview – is a meeting in which a potential job seeker seeks advice on their career, the industry, and the corporate culture of a potential future workplace.

Mock Interview – is an emulation of a job interview used for training purposes. The conversational exercise usually resembles a real interview as closely as possible, for the purpose of providing experience for a candidate.

Networking - the exchange of information or services among individuals, groups, or institutions; specifically, the cultivation of productive relationships for employment or business.