Agenda

- Introduction
- Soft Skills (Verbal, Written)
- Work Authorization
- Overseas Opportunities
- Help and Resources
Introduction
Obstacles for International Students

- Companies are reluctant to hire international students because:
  - They will need to sponsor them for H1-B visas for full time employment
  - Significant cost and time
  - No guarantee that H1-B visa 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?

- **Don’t give up!** Be patient; it’s just a matter of time!
- Improve yourself by working on:
  - Resume (GPA, experiences, technical skills, leadership)
  - Interviewing skills (communication, professionalism, personality)
- Research visa regulations and plan ahead while recruiting
- Make a Plan B! Find other (overseas) opportunities
- Seek more help and resources
Soft Skills
Soft Skills Diagnosis

- Verbal
  - Confidence and body language
  - Content of your dialogue and responses

- Written
  - Grammar, word choices, syntax
  - Professional communication (e.g. emails, phone calls)
## International vs U.S. Interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>International</th>
<th>U.S.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ok to be late if you know the interviewer(s) through connections</td>
<td>Be punctual. Arrive 5 to 10 minutes prior to the interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eye contact, especially with persons of high status, may be disrespectful</td>
<td>Eye contact is expected, as it shows confidence and engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citing accomplishments and skills may come off as boastful, self serving, or too individualistic</td>
<td>Open discussion of accomplishments and skills show confidence and communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researching firm beforehand may show too much independence</td>
<td>Researching firm and demonstrating that knowledge is expected. It shows initiative and interest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Verbal Soft Skills

- **Research and prepare well.** Familiarize yourself with words and phrases that might come up to avoid confusion.

- **Speak slowly and clearly.** Don’t worry too much that English isn’t your first language. As long as they can communicate with you, the language barrier should not be a problem.

- **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.
Verbal Soft Skills

- Enthusiastic greetings!
  - Smile!
  - Show excitement and positivity
- Pay attention to the facial expression of your listener
  - Adapt the speed of your voice
  - Adapt the length of your answer
- Pay attention to what they say and ask
- Engage others by asking questions. Don’t interrupt the conversation
  - If you do interrupt, you can say “Sorry, go ahead”
- Strike a balance between formal and casual when networking
The Worst Question to Ask

- Do you sponsor international students?
  - You are asking what the company can do for you, instead of sharing what you can do for the company
  - If they say no, the conversation is awkward on both sides
  - If they say yes, you risk alienating these firms by showing you are only interested in them because they sponsor
Alternative Solution

- 2 types of companies
  - They specifically say they won't sponsor (company policy)
    - Move on and don’t waste time on the application
  - They did not say they won’t sponsor
    - A little more flexible. Don’t ask if they sponsor and assume they will. Try your best to impress them
- Many companies are not black-and-white. They will sponsor international students that are more qualified than local candidates
Alternative Solution

- If you must ask, save it for the end
- Some ways to rephrase the question:
  - Do you encourage international students to apply?
  - Is the company open to sponsoring exceptionally qualified candidates for [entry-level] positions?
  - What advice do you have for international students seeking a position at your company?
How to Find Out if Firms Sponsor

- Do your research! Available resources include:
  - Handshake
  - Google
  - Ask international friends who applied before

- Note: BAS is **not responsible** for providing a list of firms that sponsor
Written Soft Skills

- Keep your message clear and concise. Avoid lengthy sentences
- Check your spelling, punctuation, and grammar
  - Spell-Checker
  - Auto spelling and grammar function in Microsoft Word
- Keep it professional
  - Don’t use multiple colors and dazzling font types
  - Follow the formatting requirements for writing essays
Emails Tips and Etiquette

- **Subject Line:** Keep it short and meaningful
- **Greeting:** Use a professional salutation
  - “Dear Mr./Ms. _____”
  - Use “Hi” only later if they reply with “Hi”
- **Content:** Introduce yourself and provide context for why you're emailing
- **Length:** No more than 5-7 sentences per paragraph
  - Easier to read
- **Closing:** Use professional closing and sign your name
  - E.g. Best regards, sincerely, etc
Reminders (For Everyone)

- **Do not** put a photograph on your resume
- **Do not** ask the firm reps for favorable treatment
  - 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
  - It can make them feel uncomfortable
Work Authorization
Ways to Work in the U.S.

- Unrestricted on-campus employment
  - Campus stores, coffee houses, etc
- CPT (Curricular Practical Training)
  - Related to your academic studies (e.g. summer internship)
- OPT (Optional Practical Training)
  - Post-completion (e.g. entry-level job)
- H-1B Visa
Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

- Off-campus internship relevant to you major as a **full-time** student
- Qualifications and restrictions
  - Must be in valid F-1 status for more than 1 academic year
  - Enroll in one of the **internship courses 195** (check department website)
  - CPT will only be granted **one quarter** at a time
    - E.g. Summer internship : enroll in internship course summer quarter
  - Must obtain an official letter from your employer for further application
CPT Application (After Receiving an Offer)

1. Ask your employer for an official offer letter
2. Go to the Dashew Center for the CPT Request Form
3. Enroll in an internship course
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 the Dashew Center
   1. Be aware of business days! You can’t work without an updated I-20
Optional Practical Training (OPT)

- Off-campus directly related to your major after graduation
- No need for an official offer letter from your employer for application
- Otherwise, same requirements as CPT
OPT Application (After Receiving an Offer)

1. Complete the OPT Online Workshop and OPT App from the DCISS website
2. Submit your completed OPT form at an OPT Hand-in Session
3. Return 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
OPT Timeline

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

- Visit the link [here](#) for more information on OPT for F-1 students!
OPT Extension for STEM Majors

- STEM students (including FAM) can apply for a 24-month OPT STEM extension after the original 12 months.

- Warning:
  - Qualifications and restrictions for the initial 12-month OPT are also applied in OPT STEM extension.
  - Still, be aware of the timeline (business days!)
The Million Dollar Questions

- Are you legally authorized to work in the United States?
  - YES

- Do you now, or will you in the future, require employment sponsorship to work legally in the U.S.?
  - YES

- Do you have unrestricted unlimited authorization to work in the U.S.?
  - NO

**Warning:** Don’t lie about your visa status. They will find out at the end and will rescind the offer.
Overseas Opportunities
What if I Don’t Get an Offer This Year?

- Look for an internship/employment in your home country
- Ask your friends/parents back in your home country, or Google
- Recruiting season is *slightly later* than the U.S., beginning in early March
- Companies have different qualifications than American firms
- It is still very competitive to get an internship back in your home country, but the visa status will no longer be a burden
Help and Other Resources
Other Resources

- Visa policy - Dashew Center
- Internship/Job Opportunities - Career Center
- Resume Critique - Undergraduate Writing Center
- And BAS!!
  - International Student Guide published by BAS ([Here is the link](#))
  - Make an appointment with your mentor or other BAS officers (resume critique, mock interviews, visa etc)
Thank you for coming! Questions?