

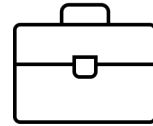
INTERNATIONAL STUDENT WORKSHOP

October 23, 2025

AGENDA



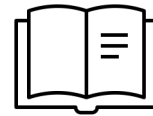
Introduction



International Opportunities



Soft Skills



General Terminology



Work Authorization



Help & Resources



01

INTRODUCTION



INTRODUCTION

- Most international students who are neither US Citizens nor Permanent Residents are on an **F-1 visa**
- Some actuarial employers in the U.S. hire and sponsor F-1 students, especially those who demonstrate strong skills and progress on actuarial exams
- Understanding your visa options, recruitment timeline, and employer expectations will help you plan internships and full-time jobs more effectively

Disclaimer: The information shared in this workshop is based on publicly available resources and is intended for general informational purposes only. It should not be considered legal advice. For case-specific questions, please contact the UCLA Dashew Center for International Students and Scholars or an immigration attorney.



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
 - H1-B visa lottery system
- They are more willing to hire local students if international students don't exceptionally stand out

Cap Fiscal Year	Total Registrations	Eligible Registrations*	Eligible Registrations for Beneficiaries with No Other Eligible Registrations	Eligible Registrations for Beneficiaries with Multiple Eligible Registrations	Selected Registrations
2021	274,237	269,424	241,299	28,125	124,415
2022	308,613	301,447	211,304	90,143	131,924
2023	483,927	474,421	309,241	165,180	127,600
2024	780,884	758,994	350,103	408,891	188,400
2025	479,953	470,342	423,028	47,314	135,137
2026	358,737	343,981	336,153	7,828	120,141

<https://www.uscis.gov/working-in-the-united-states/temporary-workers/h-1b-specialty-occupations/h-1b-electronic-registration-process>



WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

- **Don't give up!** Keep looking for open opportunities
- 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



02

SOFT SKILLS



SOFT SKILLS AWARENESS

There may be differences between your home culture and U.S. work culture.

- Verbal
 - Confidence and body language
 - Content of your dialogue and responses
- Written
 - Grammar, word choices, syntax
 - Professional communication (emails, phone calls, etc.)



INTERNATIONAL VS US ETIQUETTE

International	U.S.
Ok to be late if you know the interviewer(s) through connections	Be punctual. Aim to arrive 5 to 10 minutes prior to the interview
Eye contact, especially with persons of high status, may be disrespectful	Eye contact is expected, as it shows confidence and engagement
Citing accomplishments and skills may come off as boastful or self serving	Open discussion of accomplishments and skills shows confidence and communication
Small talk may be minimal or occur after business discussions	Small talk is common and helps build rapport before business

INTERNATIONAL VS US ETIQUETTE

International	U.S.
Decision-making follows a strict hierarchy and seniority	Egalitarian decision-making encourages input from all levels
Titles and honorifics (e.g., Mr./Ms., Dr.) are used frequently	First names are used more often, even with senior colleagues
Feedback is indirect and may be softened to avoid embarrassment	Feedback is often direct and framed as constructive criticism
Researching firm beforehand may show too much eagerness	Researching firm shows initiative and interest. You are expected to demonstrate that

VERBAL SOFT SKILLS

- **Research and prepare well.** Familiarize yourself with terminology that might come up to avoid confusion.
- **Speak slowly and clearly.** Don't worry too much if 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 experiences.** Being an international student can illustrate 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 and 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



HOW TO FIND OUT IF FIRMS SPONSOR

- Some companies will explicitly state their policy online
- *Note: BAS is not responsible for providing a list of firms that sponsor*

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



EXAMPLES FROM HANDSHAKE

At a glance

 **\$25–39.50/hr**

 **Hybrid, based in various US locations**
Work in person for part of the week, from one of the locations

 **Internship**
Full-time • From June 1, 2026 to August 7, 2026

 **US work authorization required**

At a glance

 **\$60–105K/yr**
Medical, dental, and vision coverage plus paid time off

 **Hybrid, based in Philadelphia, PA**
Work in person for part of the week, from the location

 **Job**
Full-time

 **US work authorization required**
Open to candidates with OPT/CPT



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 don't explicitly 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 qualified 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?
 - I am an international student; would you say that poses disadvantages when it comes to applying for your firm?



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



EMAIL TIPS & ETIQUETTE

- Subject Line: Keep it short and meaningful
- Greeting: Use a professional salutation
 - “Dear _____”
 - 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



03

WORK AUTHORIZATION



WAYS TO WORK IN THE U.S.

01

Campus Employment

- Unrestricted, but only part-time as a student
- Full-time possible during breaks
- E.g. campus stores, coffee hours, library, etc.

02

Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

- Related to your academic studies (major on your I-20)
- Must be approved through UCLA
- E.g. summer internship

03

Optional Practical Training (OPT)

- After graduation – up to 12 months of full-time work authorization
- Must be in your field of study
- E.g. entry-level jobs

04

H-1B Visa

- Employer-sponsored work visa
- Requires a company willing to sponsor
- Typically pursued after OPT/STEM OPT



CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING

- Off-campus internship relevant to your 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



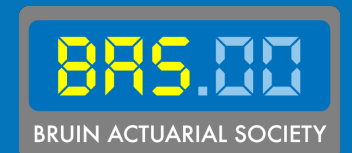
CPT APPLICATION

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
 - Be aware of business days
 - You can't work without an updated I-20



OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING

- 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



Complete the OPT Online Workshop and OPT Application from the DCISS website



Submit your completed OPT form at an OPT Hand-in Session



Return to DCISS after your submission date to sign their OPT I-20

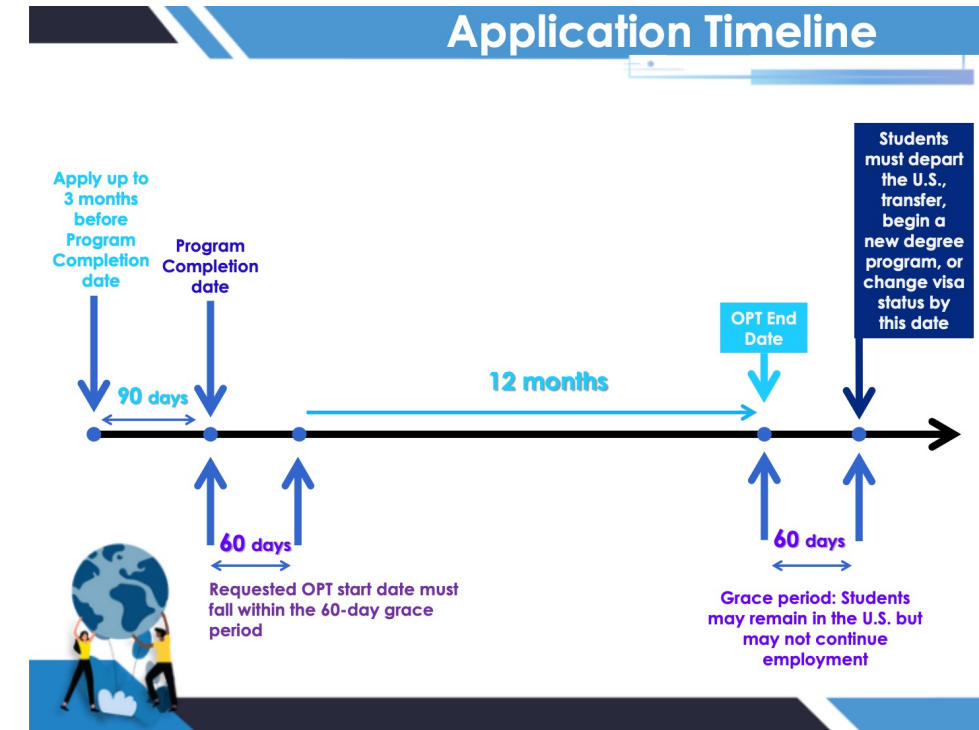


Generally, your firm enrolls you into H-1B lottery during this time



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!



Full Slide Deck : <https://internationalcenter.ucla.edu/file/5989da20-2f6f-4a9c-828e-b0915b13592c>

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 QUESTION

- 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.



04

INTERNATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES



WHAT IF I DON'T GET AN OFFER?

- Look for an internship or employment in your home country
 - Ask your friends back in your home country
 - Search on Google/LinkedIn/Handshake
- It is still very competitive to get an internship in your home country, but at the very least, the visa status will no longer be a burden
 - Companies in your home country may have different requirements than American firms
- Recruiting season is usually slightly later than the U.S.



WHAT IF I DON'T GET AN OFFER?

- Look for internship alternatives
 - CAS Student Central Summer Program
 - Actuarial Day/Job Shadow Days
 - Study for Exam P/FM if you haven't taken them yet
 - Summer Classes
 - Abacus Actuaries/OLA/IABA Summer Involvements
 - Actuarial/Data Science Bootcamps



05

GENERAL TERMINOLOGY



DIFFERENCES IN TERMINOLOGY

International	U.S.
General Insurance (UK/International)	Property and Casualty Insurance (P&C)
Motor Insurance	Auto Insurance
Excess (UK/International)	Deductible
Third-Party Insurance	Liability Insurance
Broker	Agent
Cover (UK/International)	Coverage
Claimant	Insured/Policyholder

06

HELP & RESOURCES



HELP & RESOURCES

The Dashew Center for International Students & Scholars (DCISS)

- Main resource for visa and work authorization support at UCLA

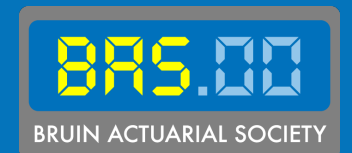
What They Offer

- **Advising & Counseling:** Schedule 1-on-1 appointments (in person or via Zoom) for questions about F-1 status, CPT, OPT, or travel.
- **Work Authorization Guidance:** Learn how to apply for CPT (Curricular Practical Training) and OPT (Optional Practical Training).
- **Workshops & Webinars:** Attend their weekly OPT and CPT workshops
- **Documents & Forms:** Find all official forms and request links [here](#)



OTHER RESOURCES AT UCLA

- Visa Policy – Dashew Center
- Internship/Job Opportunities - Career Center
- Resume Critique - Undergraduate Writing Center
- And BAS!
 - [International Student Guide](#) published by BAS
 - Note this version was updated August 2019
 - Get a BAS international student mentor at upcoming mentorship mixer



KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Research, network, stand out!
- Be flexible and take the best opportunity that comes your way (especially if you are a Freshman or Sophomore)
- Put in the work and be very knowledgeable with legal requirements/guidelines

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- *Coaching Actuaries Workshop* on Tuesday 10/28 @ MS 6627
- *Basic Excel Workshop* on Thursday 10/30 @ MS 6627
- Stay tuned for our *Mentorship Mixer* during Week 7!



www.math.ucla.edu/~actuary/



bruinactuaries@gmail.com



@bruinactuaries



THANK YOU!

Any questions?

