

International Students Guide

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Introduction

As an international student, you have unique circumstances due to work authorization and employment eligibility. Navigating the job/internship search can be challenging due to factors such as work eligibility, legal complexities, cost of sponsorship, economic uncertainty, language barriers, cultural differences, and time pressure. However, international students also have their own strengths and often shine in areas such as intercultural fluency, technical competency, resilience, initiative, and career management.

Before starting your job/internship search, be sure to:

1. Go to the [International Students Advising \(ISA\) website](#) and/or meet with an advisor to learn about employment eligibility.
1. Review our [career guides](#), which cover common topics such as job/internship search, U.S. culture, networking, resumes, cover letters, and interviewing.

This guide provides additional guidance for international students.

Job/Internship Search

How to Find Jobs/Internships

Start by reviewing the [Job/Internship Search Guide](#). Start your search for on-campus jobs, internships, and full-time jobs with [SJSU Handshake](#) as early as possible. Be sure to update your [work authorization](#) on SJSU Handshake to accurately reflect your status. On the *Jobs* tab, select *Filter*, then check *US Work Authorization optional* to find relevant opportunities.

- **On-Campus Jobs:** Besides SJSU Handshake, you can also find on-campus jobs on the [Build Experience Guide](#). Keep in mind that there are more students seeking on-campus work than there are jobs available, and some positions have over 100 applicants. Here are some tips to be competitive:
 - Tailor your resume to the job by including the job title in your objective. Focus on transferable skills - specifically customer service, communication, and teamwork, rather than technical skills and experience unless you are applying for a technical on-campus job.
 - See the [on-campus resume sample](#).
- **Internships and Jobs:** Check the [SJSU Handshake](#) calendar for upcoming employer events and job fairs. Be sure to check which majors, class years, and level (undergraduate vs. graduate) the employer is looking for. Below are additional resources to check out:
 - [MyVisaJobs](#): H1B work visa database
 - [US Department of Labor Report](#): Top employers and occupations with labor certifications

Tips to Be a Competitive Applicant

- **Consider culture fit when looking at companies.** Culture fit can be a crucial factor in the hiring process. Employees who match the company's culture tend to perform better, have increased job satisfaction, and higher retention rates. Think about how comfortable you would be in the work environment and whether your beliefs, values, and needs match that of the company.
- **Strengthen your English language skills.** Communication, both verbal and written, is one of the top skills employers are looking for. Get help with writing at the [SJSU Writing Center](#).
- **Build experience outside of academics.** Get involved in student organizations, volunteer at a non-profit, or compete in hackathons and challenges. See our [Build Experience Guide](#) for more ideas.
- **Highlight your strengths as an international student.** Showcase your ability to work in a diverse workplace, help your employer compete in a global economy, and tackle the unknown.

Internship Checklist

Use this checklist as a guide to securing an internship and the required Curricular Practical Training (CPT) employment authorization.



Step 1 Learn about CPT

Review the Curricular Practical Training (CPT) Tutorial on <http://www.sjsu.edu/isa/>.



Step 2 Consult with an Academic/Faculty Advisor

You must enroll in an internship or self-study course in order to apply for CPT. Consult with your academic department to confirm if this course is offered.



Step 3 Create a Job Search Strategy

Attend the *Job Search Strategies in the U.S.* workshop, meet with a career counselor, and review online resources. Dates more information can be found by clicking on the Program Calendar found on sjsu.edu/careercenter.



Step 4 Review Resume

Attend the *Rock Your Resume* workshop, meet with a career counselor, and review online resources. Dates more information can be found by clicking on the Program Calendar found on sjsu.edu/careercenter.



Step 5 Prepare for the Interview

Attend the *Interview with Confidence* workshop, meet with a career counselor, and review online resources. Dates more information can be found by clicking on the Program Calendar found on sjsu.edu/careercenter.



Step 6 Submit CPT Documents to ISSS

Submit a CPT application along with an internship offer letter to ISSS in order to request work authorization. ISSS takes 1-15 business days to process the work authorization document (a new Form I-20 for CPT).



Step 7 Pick Up I-20

Once your CPT I-20 is issued, you will receive an email to pick up the document at the ISSS front desk. The second page of the I-20 will show your work authorization information. You should NOT start their internship until you have been granted CPT authorization and may only work for the employer and the period of time shown on your CPT I-20.



Step 8 Apply for a Social Security Number (SSN)

If you do not already have a social security number, you will need to apply for one after receiving your CPT I-20. Instructions on how to do this will be provided by the ISSS office.



Step 9 Report Your Success

Share your internship success story. Contact careerhelp@sjsu.edu to schedule a time to discuss.

Resume

Start by reviewing our [Resume/Cover Letter Guide](#). Note key differences between a US resume and a resume in another country:

- A US resume is a one page summary that highlights relevant skills and experience based on the job description. Resumes are different from CVs, which are used more often internationally. A CV is longer than one page and is a static document that includes an extensive history of your education and experience. In the US, CVs are typically only used for research or academic positions.
- Do not include personal information such as age, gender, marital status, ethnicity, or immigration status. Also do not include a photo or test scores (such as TOEFL).

Here are some top tips to making your resume stand out:

- **Check for spelling/grammar mistakes.** You can get help with writing at the [SJSU Writing Center](#).
- **Keep your resume to 1-2 pages.** Do not try to squeeze as much information in as possible, as this makes it difficult for the recruiter to scan. If you have additional experience that does not fit, include it on your LinkedIn profile.
- **Describe your accomplishments.** Replace passive phrases such as “responsible for” with strong action verbs such as led, managed, and collaborated. Quantify your resumes to show the impact of your work.
- **Include links to your LinkedIn, website, and/or GitHub account.** Use these sites to showcase examples of projects and proof of your work.
- **Demonstrate both technical skills and transferable skills** such as communication, teamwork, problem solving, and leadership.
- **Don’t focus on just academics.** Include experiences outside the classroom such as involvement in student organizations or volunteer work.
- **Provide a frame of reference for experience outside of the US.** For example, “interned at the #3 fastest growing company in India.”

On-Campus Graduate Resume Sample

IM A. SPARTAN

San Jose, CA | 408-456-7890 | imaspartan@gmail.com | linkedin.com/in/imaspartan

OBJECTIVE:

To utilize my strong leadership and organizational skills as a Front Desk Student Assistant Job at the SJSU Career Center

EDUCATION

M.S. Computer Engineering, San Jose State University, San Jose, CA, May 20xx

B.E. Computer Science, University of Mumbai, India, June 20xx

EXPERIENCE

Network Engineer Intern, Tata Consultancy Services, India, March 20xx - June 20xx

- Collaborated with team of 4 engineers to create network protocols for the leading telecommunication group in India
- Utilized creative problem solving and critical thinking skills to troubleshoot various issues
- Presented final project to panel of 3 managers utilizing Powerpoint slidedeck and handouts

Marketing Team Lead, Computer Society, University of Mumbai, India, January 20xx - September 20xx

- Led team of two students to develop marketing strategies based on in-depth research of student needs
- Re-designed website using HTML and Java to promote upcoming events
- Marketed events using posters on-campus and social media, leading to event participation of 20-100 students

Computer Science Tutor, Academic Tutoring Center, University of Mumbai, September 20xx - December 20xx

- Taught students one-on-one and group settings to improve their C++ skills
- Helped student improve two grade levels over the course of a semester

AWARDS AND ACTIVITIES

Outstanding Achievement in Mathematics Award, Rotary International, June 20xx

Event Organizer Volunteer, TechFest, University of Mumbai, March 20xx

- Collaborated with team of 25 to organize campuswide event for over 250 participants
- Managed and ran two booths throughout the day

Team Captain, University of Mumbai Cricket Team, January 20xx - January 20xx

RELEVANT SKILLS

Microsoft Word, Excel, Powerpoint, HTML, CSS, C++, Java

Internship/Job Graduate Resume Sample

IM A. SPARTAN

Mountain View, CA | 408-456-7890 | imaspartan@gmail.com | git.hub/imaspartan | linkedin.com/in/imaspartan

OBJECTIVE: To obtain an Electrical Engineer Internship at KLA Tencor

EDUCATION

M.S. in Electrical & Electronics Engineering, San Jose State University, San Jose, CA, May 20xx

B.E. in Electronics Engineering, University of Mumbai, India, June 20xx

SKILLS

Technical: Cadence Virtuoso, Cadence SigXplorer, MATLAB, Xilinx ISE, subversion, C, Python, Shell scripting, VHDL, Verilog-A, Oscilloscope, Multimeter, Spectrum Analyzer, Network Analyzer, Waveform Generator, Linux, Windows

EXPERIENCE

Junior Software Engineer, Indigo Technologies, Pune, India, July 20xx - July 20xx

- Developed user interface application on NXP Libra, ST 5197 & Renesas SoC platforms
- Collaborated with the business analysts, quality assurance and content writer team to develop UI
- Implemented functionalities and features in channel zapper boxes
- Developed video streaming web applications on high end set top boxes
- Conducted demos of newly developed features for prospective clients

PROJECTS

Interface between microcontroller and DDR2 memory, SJSU, Fall 20xx

- Prepared design guide for interfacing PowerQUICC II Pro Processor and Micron 1GB memory
- Performed signal integrity analysis using Cadence SigXplorer to successfully enhanced performance

Design & Characterization of a Polar Transmitter, SJSU, Spring 20xx

- Utilized Verilog-A for designing digital controller
- Carefully selected the correct phase and amplifier gain for a given input
- Optimized the phase shifter using OCEAN programming

Matched Network Design for LNA, SJSU, Spring 20xx

- Created impedance matching network and conducted analysis of circuit design
- Met strict global parameters using transmission lines
- Utilized scattered parameters, Smith Chart and impedance analysis

ACTIVITIES

Member, IEEE Student Chapter, SJSU, September 20xx - Present

Networking

Start by reviewing the networking section in the [Job/Internship Search Guide](#). Here are some tips for networking:

- When first meeting someone, greet with “How are you?” or “How are you doing?”
- Prepare conversation starters for small talk such as:
 - **Student Events:** What major are you studying? What year are you?
 - **Industry Events:** What brought you to this event? What do you do?
 - **Conferences:** What session are you most excited about? Is this your first time attending this conference? How long have you been a part of this organization?
- Avoid controversial topics such as religion, politics and sex. Discussing salary should also be avoided.
- Be aware of [cultural differences](#). Arrive early or on time to events and communicate directly. Maintain an arm’s length distance from others.
- Use every opportunity to network. Networking doesn’t have to happen at an event - it is simply connecting with people and can start with your peers, professors, and neighbors.

Here are some ways you can network with peers and industry professionals:

- Check out [Coffee Night](#) at the SJSU International House, a relaxed social gathering for I-House residents and visitors.
- Join the [International Circle Support Group](#) to connect with other international students, provide support, discuss common challenges, learn information about the U.S., and practice English.
- Join [student organizations](#) on campus such as the [Global Student Network](#). Use the [Career Pathways page](#) to search organizations by industry.
- Join the [San Jose State University Students \(International Students Group\)](#) on Facebook.
- Practice public speaking skills by joining [Spartan Toastmasters](#).
- Search for industry or interest related events on [Eventbrite](#) and [Meetup](#).

Networking: LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a great tool for connecting with professionals in your industry. Here are some tips to make the most out of LinkedIn:

- Follow companies you are interested in to learn about current projects, product launches, and initiatives, as well as recruiters from companies you are interested in to get information on hiring opportunities.
- Join industry and interest related groups such as [International Students LinkedIn Group](#).
- If you completed your bachelor's degree outside of the United States, use LinkedIn to identify alumni from your university who are now employed in the US. Search for your university on LinkedIn and click *See alumni*. The filter by *San Francisco Bay Area* under *Where they live* and your field of interest under *What they do* or your major under *What they studied*. Find someone with mutual connections currently working in your field and request to connect with them. Be sure to include a personal message about why you are connecting.

Savitribai Phule Pune University Career Insights

Change university End year

Search alumni by title, keyword or company < Previous Next >

2,408 alumni

Engineering San Francisco Bay Area

Where they live	Where they work	What they do
40,543 India	120 Cisco	2,408 Engineering
14,351 Pune Area, India	119 Apple	831 Information Technology
9,663 Kalyan Area, India	83 Google	488 Business Development
8,835 United States	72 Oracle	346 Program and Project Management

Show more

Aditya Shingde | 1st Year B.Tech. (Computer Engineering)

1 connection in common

[Connect](#)

Aditya Shingde | 1st Year B.Tech. (Computer Engineering)

4 connections in common

[Connect](#)

Aditya Shingde | 1st Year B.Tech. (Computer Engineering)

1 connection in common

[Connect](#)

Aditya Shingde | 1st Year B.Tech. (Computer Engineering)

2 connections in common

[Connect](#)

Interviewing

To prepare for an interview with an employer in the US, review our [Interviewing Guide](#). Here are additional tips for acing the US interview:

- Arrive at least 10-15 minutes early to the interview.
- Dress professionally but appropriate for the company culture. As a general rule, dress a step above what employees would typically wear to a work day.
- Keep personal scents to a minimum. Avoid eating strong smelling foods before the interview.
- Treat everyone you come in contact with with courtesy and respect.
- Be aware of your non-verbal communication. When you first meet the interviewer, give a firm handshake. During the interview, maintain eye contact and show enthusiasm through your tone of voice and facial expressions. Maintain professionalism by having good posture. Respect personal space by keeping about 30-36 inches between you and the interviewer.
- Take an active role in the interview. Be prepared to show why you are the best candidate for the position, elaborate on your responses, and ask questions of the interviewer. This may be different than the interview culture in other countries, where promoting your own accomplishments is discouraged and taking a passive role is expected.

For more tips on interviewing, see this article [Interviewing Across Cultures](#) by Pamela Leri, Guest Columnist for Global Global.

Understanding Culture Differences

It is important to understand key culture differences when working in the US. See these differences outlined in Erin Meyer's book [The Culture Map](#).

Key Differences	United States	Other Countries
Communication	Messages are simple and clear, taken at face value.	In countries such as China, Japan, India, messages may be implied. It is important to read between the lines.
Evaluating	Negative feedback is given both directly and indirectly.	In countries such as Russia, Germany, and France, negative feedback is given directly. In countries such as Japan, China, and India, negative feedback is given indirectly.
Persuading	Arguments begin with the practical application followed by the theory or reasoning behind it.	In countries such as Italy, France, Spain, arguments begin with the theory followed by the application.
Leading	Leadership falls in the middle of an egalitarian and hierarchical organization.	In countries such as Denmark, Sweden, and Australia, leadership is egalitarian. In countries such as China, India, and Japan, leadership is hierarchical.
Deciding	Decisions fall in the middle of being consensual (agreed-upon) and top-down (made by the leader).	In countries such as Japan and Sweden, decisions are agreed upon. In countries such as India, China, and Russia, decisions are top-down.
Trusting	Trust is built on consistent, reliable work.	In countries such as India, China, and Mexico, trust is built on personal relationships built over time.
Disagreeing	Disagreements fall in the middle of being confrontational (out in the open) and nonconfrontational (avoided).	In countries such as Israel, France, and Germany, disagreements are confrontational. In countries such as China, Japan, and Thailand, disagreements are nonconfrontational.
Scheduling	Schedules lean slightly toward linear time. Tasks are completed one at a time in sequential order.	In countries such as Germany, Switzerland, and Japan, schedules are linear. In countries such as China and India, schedules are fluid and adapt to changes.

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