

International Students Internship & Job Search

4 Steps to Your US Internships and Job Search Success

(Adapted from content developed by Marcelo Barros, founder of [The International Advantage](#))

FACT: US Employers hire International Students because they are interested in the candidate's potential value as an employee and for skills they are unable to find in US candidates.

Successful International Students:

- ✓ Know the skills they offer, have articulated their value for a specific employer and position and communicate that with confidence to networking contacts, hiring managers and recruiters
- ✓ Earn strong grades **and** develop a diverse portfolio of experiences which build *employer relevant* skills
- ✓ Understand the competencies employers seek in their areas of industry interest
- ✓ Highlight *Technical* and *Analytical* skills in resume and LinkedIn profiles
- ✓ Understand CPT and OPT and are able to address employer concerns
- ✓ Are Flexible! Have a Plan A, Plan B, Plan C, etc.

Completing and taking action on the following steps will increase your confidence and results in the Internship and Job Search process.

STEP 1: Create Your ISEL Worksheet and complete the ISEL Grid

- Establishes the value you will offer to future employers based on **I**nterests, **S**kills, **E**xperiences and **L**anguage abilities
- Reinforces your confidence in promoting your skills and experiences
- Provides content for resume, cover letter, LinkedIn profile, interview and other job search materials

Tools: Resume, Academic Projects, Competency Inventory, Career Assessments, Career Coach meetings

STEP 2: Develop a Target List of Employers including for profit and not for profit entities

- Meet with a Career Coach or Career Peer to learn how to begin to identify employers of interest and those who indicate an interest in working with International Students

Tools: [The Job and Internship Search Worksheet](#), UMassHandshake, LinkedIn, and other networking connections

STEP 3: Reach out to and Establish Connections at chosen entities

- Learn about employers, get expert advice, begin to build relationships
- Use the outreach communication template in the LinkedIn Guide on [IConnect](#)
- **Keep track of outreach and responses**, including next steps for follow up

Tools: Company and Industry Research resources (Company websites, IBISWorld database),

STEP 4: Manage the Conversation

- Leverage Isenberg's [Great Way to Career Conversations with TIARA](#) resource on IConnect
- Seek to connect and learn
- **Identify opportunities for follow up** to begin to build relationships, take action on application or further networking

ISEL Profile Worksheet

I = Interests! Employees seek interesting people! Having confidence connecting your interests to the industry, services and products of employers you seek to work for is key to making a positive impact in networking conversations and interviews.

Identify your interests with the prompts below. Write down a few things about each one and why it's important to you.

Why did you choose your major? _____

What kinds of problems do you enjoy working on?

What do you spend a lot of your time thinking about?

Is there one (or more) problems in the world you'd like to be part of solving? _____

What are your favorite classes and why? _____

What books, movies, genres of music are you drawn to and why are they interesting? _____

Which skills do you enjoy using most? _____

ACTION: Write these into the **I** Quadrant of your ISEL Grid. Use short phrases or key words to remind you of them.

S = Skills! Employers in the United States hire and sponsor International Students primarily because of the skills these candidates have and develop while studying in the US. These are skills that are in HIGH demand and are hard to find in domestic, US candidates.

Hard to find skills tend to be focused in 2 PRIMARY areas: **TECHNICAL** and **DATA ANALYSIS**. While it is not necessary to be enrolled in a STEM major where these skills are highly concentrated and developed, students in NON-STEM majors will want to seek ways to build skills in industry technology and seek ways to add Data Analysis skills to their toolkits.

Pro -Tip: Analyzing internship and full-time job descriptions is a great place to begin to identify the critical skills employers seek.

List your skills below and describe how you will continue to advance them:

GENERAL SKILLS: includes “people skills” such as written & oral communication, presentation skills, collaboration; organizational skills, time management, goal setting, career awareness, ability to motivate self, leadership, etc.

My plan to advance my skills: includes taking ESL classes, seeking to join professional and social clubs with individuals different from me, engage in networking, take on leadership role in projects, etc.

TECHNICAL SKILLS: includes software, operating systems, data visualization, and some basic coding

My plan to advance my skills: (Courses, individual online learning, develop a project, talk to professors, etc)

DATA ANALYSIS: includes data visualization, data mining, problem solving, critical thinking, querying (SQL) and statistical analysis

My plan to advance my skills

Action: Write these skills into the **S** Quadrant of your ISEL Grid

E = Experience! *Experience is built through both intentionally chosen activities based on your interests and skills and life events which require you to adapt and perhaps discover skills you didn't realize you have.* Consider academic, work, extracurricular and life/family/friends experiences that have created interesting or unique experiences. While not all of these will be used in your resume and other application materials, creating an inventory of these will be both gratifying and useful!

TRAVEL/CULTURAL Experiences

ACADEMIC Experiences: projects, achievements, skills gained. OK to consider pre-college experiences if they are significant.

EXTRACURRICULAR Experiences: Student clubs/orgs, volunteer, athletic, skill building through LinkedIn Learning Courses & other online classes, The Forage Experiences (*On IConnect*), individual entrepreneurial endeavors

WORK Experiences (Paid, unpaid, internship, externship)

OTHER Experiences?

ACTION: Write these skills into the **E** Quadrant of your ISEL Grid

L = LANGUAGES! Language proficiency is an important competency for International Candidates. It illustrates your adaptability and skill in learning new things. It can be advantageous, especially for employers who have an international presence! Many US candidates do not have strong skills in other languages beyond English, so be prepared to highlight your bi/multi-lingual strengths! Strong English fluency is also important and seeking opportunities to strengthen English skills is key. Your communication confidence will grow by pushing yourself to speak to native English speakers both socially and professionally.

Identify and qualify your skill level with Languages you wish to highlight:

EX:

Language: Spanish Verbal: Fluent Written: Intermediate Read: Fluent

Is this language required or desired by employer? YES NO

Opportunities for improving this language proficiency: Find a LinkedIn Learning Course, Use the Duolingo App, Watch Spanish TV or Movies, Reach out to classmate or peer I know who speaks this language, etc

Language: _____ Verbal: _____ Written: _____ Read: _____

Is this language required or desired by employer? YES NO

Opportunities for improving this language proficiency:

Language: _____ Verbal: _____ Written: _____ Read: _____

Is this language required or desired by employer? YES NO

Opportunities for improving this language proficiency:

Language: _____ Verbal: _____ Written: _____ Read: _____

Is this language required or desired by employer? YES NO

Opportunities for improving this language proficiency:

ACTION: Write these skills into the **L** Quadrant of your ISEL Grid

ISEL GRID

INTERESTS

SKILLS

EXPERIENCES

LANGUAGES

Create Your Value Statement

A value statement refers to benefits a company promises to deliver to its customers. As a candidate in the job or internship market, your value statement articulates the knowledge, skills, experiences, passions, values and commitment you'll bring to your target opportunity. In short, it's a clear statement of what you have to offer that is relevant to the opportunity you seek.

Understand your audience: Analyze job postings to understand what is important to the hiring manager. Make a list of those below:

Required and Desired

SKILLS/COMPETENCIES _____

Read company **mission** and **value** statements to learn about the values of the company's culture. Go to the Careers Area of the website and read about the people who work there and the words used to describe the culture and people.

WORDS USED:

Using your ISEL work, write down what you have in your ISEL that matches and is similar to what you have discovered about the job and the company

Craft your Value

Statement: _____

EX: I am a dual Marketing and Statistics major with a passion for consumer behavior with highly developed leadership, teamwork and analytical abilities. I am skilled in data analytics, SSPP and statistical analysis from experience as an intern at Samsung. My exceptional work ethic is derived from completing rigorous coursework while building an experience profile with various work and extracurricular activities.