

International MBAs and Career Management: FAQs

Visas and Work Authorization

I'm from XX country and am not a US citizen or permanent resident. Can I work in the US?

Whether it is the US or any other country where you do not currently hold citizenship or permanent residency, you will need to secure appropriate work authorization for where you want to work. Many employers are open to sponsoring students in need of permanent US work authorization, but many other recruiting companies do not.

There are a number of possible opportunities to work legally in the US during and after your studies:

- **Curricular Practical Training (CPT)** – International students in certain academic programs on an F-1 visa may be eligible to work in the USA through the use of CPT. This is permission to work when fulfilling the requirements of a course that earns credit toward your academic degree. MBA students who wish to apply for CPT work authorization must register for the single elective CBS course requiring an internship:
 - **Cross Cultural Seminar** - This seminar offers students a chance to explore cross-cultural issues while studying or working in a country other than their country of citizenship. It may be used for summer, fall or spring internships. ***Only students who have completed at least two consecutive semesters of study in the US in active F-1 visa status are eligible for this 1.5 credit course.***
- **Optional Practical Training (OPT)** - All international students are eligible to remain in the US to work for 12 months after graduation under their F-1 student visa status as OPT. This must be employment related to your field of study immediately after completion of your studies and authorized by US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). OPT is generally permitted for a period of up to a maximum of 12 months per educational level (e.g. Master's), but it may be possible to extend for 24 months more now that the MBA program is STEM designated.
 - **F-1 OPT STEM Extension:** If you are currently in your initial period of post-completion OPT and graduated from a government designated STEM degree program, such as the Columbia MBA, you may be eligible to apply for 24 more months of OPT authorization if you meet certain criteria:
 - Must currently be on post-completion OPT administered by Columbia, working in paid employment for a U.S. employer in a job directly related to your major field of study.

- Must have reported OPT employment using the online report form and have not had more than 90 days of unemployment during post-completion OPT
- Must have a job or job offer for at least 20 hours/week paid employment from an employer registered with the E-Verify employment verification system

****Note:** For those students holding a J-1 visa, the above is referenced as Academic Training (AT), and you are eligible to apply after completing one full semester in valid student status in the US. In most cases, the period of time allowed is a total of 18 months with some exceptions.

Who do I speak with if I have detailed questions about US visa and work authorization issues?

If you have questions about CPT, OPT, AT or other matters relating to your F-1 or J-1 visa status, contact Columbia University's **International Students & Scholars Office (ISSO)** at isso@columbia.edu. ISSO is the central office providing services for all international students at Columbia University and also offers annual informational workshops on international taxation, immigration and employment issues relevant to international students. See the extensive website at isso.columbia.edu.

Career Advising

What is appropriate to discuss with a Career Management Center (CMC) Advisor?

Pretty much anything on your mind related to your job search or professional development! CMC advisors provide MBA students career development guidance, including individual and small-group coaching, pitch preparation, networking strategy, resume and cover letter reviews, interview preparation, driving your job search forward and navigating job offers. Advisors also develop and present career workshops throughout the academic year.

Are there Advisors specifically dedicated to International students?

The International Advising team is comprised of Michael De Lucia and Joni Coughlin. They advise both US and international students but are particularly well-versed in issues faced by students seeking jobs outside their home country. As an international student, you are not limited to these advisors, however, and can schedule an appointment with any CMC advisor you prefer.

Additional Resources

Are there Columbia resources if I want to improve my English vocabulary or modify my accent?

- One-On-One English Language Tutoring – Through the tutoring program of the Office of Student Affairs (OSA), students receive **5 hours per semester of one-on-one tutoring free-of-charge**. Students in groups of two or more can pool their hours (i.e. one hour session with two students would only count for 30 minutes of an individual student's total 20 hours). However, students cannot donate their hours to other students. To

indicate your interest, please email cm4320@gsb.columbia.edu so that tutor resumes can be shared with you. Once you have selected a tutor, you can arrange appointments directly via e-mail.

- Group Classes - Services are offered through The Jerome A. Chazen Institute for Global Business at the Business School. The Chazen Language Program offers group classes in Business English if numbers warrant. It is best to speak to the team in Chazen to understand the content of the classes better to determine if they will suit your particular need. These classes are taught by professional instructors from ABC Languages and are NOT free-of-charge but offered at a discounted rate to students, faculty, staff and their spouses. For additional questions, please contact the Chazen Institute at chazen@gsb.columbia.edu.