

INTERVIEW TIPS FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

International students may encounter questions regarding visa status during an interview. It is important to know how to respond to work eligibility and authorization questions. Also, interviews with U.S. companies are often conducted differently than interviews in other countries.

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How to Answer Questions about Authorization Status

Before applying to a position at a U.S.-based company, become thoroughly familiar with immigration regulations and your visa status benefits. UConn's International Student and Scholar Services can answer your work authorization questions and provide you with ongoing updates about federal work authorization guidelines.

- If you are an F-1 student you can explain your legal rights to work in the U.S. for twelve months after your practical training is authorized.
- If you qualify for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) OPT extension it will extend your OPT by 17 months.
- You can ask if a company is willing to sponsor a work permit.

2

When to Reveal Your Authorization Status

Immigration status may come up at any time during the job application process. Most companies pose the question to understand if you currently need sponsorship or if you will need it in the future. You are encouraged to answer honestly. If the question does not come up, you do not need to answer it. Sample questions: "are you eligible to work in the U.S.?" or "will you now or in the future require sponsorship for an employment visa?"

3

Illegal/Inappropriate Interview Questions

It is illegal for companies to ask about a job seeker's race, color, and national origin, place of birth, visa type, or citizenship. However, there are ways an employer can get around illegal questions. While a recruiter cannot ask about your national origin or race, they can pose the following questions to understand the fluency of a language necessary for a position: "What language do you most often speak? Or "What is your native language?" This is an opportunity for you to demonstrate your proficiency in speaking any language that is desired by the employer. Emphasize that you are bi-lingual or multilingual if you are and share with the employer how this can be of value to the company which can also help you to stand out amongst other candidates.

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Preparing for the Interview

- Develop a U.S. Style Résumé – several characteristics are unique to résumés and CVs in countries outside of the U.S. Read the article titled [Writing a Compelling U.S. Style Résumé](#). Review the sample [UConn International Student Résumé](#), and explore [UConn's CV Flipbook](#) for assistance in developing your materials.
- Research companies who sponsor visas or accept OPT/CPT.
- Join a Practice Interview at UConn's Center for Career Development. The office offers interview simulations that are conducted by specially trained staff members to provide you with tips and tricks to feel more comfortable and confident in your interview performance.
- Check out Big Interview's practice section for International Students and view Big Interview's video on Interviews for Interviewees where English is a Second Language. You can view UConn's Big Interview Custom Set for International Students to help you prepare.

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The Day of the Interview

- If you are interviewing in person, bring multiple copies of your résumé or CV in a portfolio or professional notebook. Dress in professional business attire. During introductions shake the interviewer's hand. If there are cultural, religious, or health concerns, you may politely decline to shake a hiring manager's hand. Make eye contact throughout the interview – approximately 70% of the time is recommended.
- Many interviews occur via video. It is advisable to find a distraction-free, quiet location for your online interview. Position yourself in front of a plain wall if possible, and test your technology. During your session, use eye contact - which is challenging remotely.
- In the U.S., it is not rude to talk about your accomplishments providing examples of skills, knowledge, experience, etc. Self-promotion is encouraged. Highlight how you communicate in multiple languages, and showcase your global diversity.
- Towards the end of the interview ask the interviewer about the next step in the process. Verbally thank the employer for their time.
- Follow up with a thank-you email. Include highlights of your conversation and reiterate your interest in the position.

Refer to the Center for Career Development's [Interview Preparation Guide](#) for additional interview tips.