INTERNATIONAL STUDIES OFFICE (MINOR HALL 208)
International students should also contact the International Studies Office (ISO) before seeking any form of employment (paid or unpaid) whether as a student or in preparation for graduation so that you are aware of all applicable restrictions, requirements and deadlines. Remember: it is your responsibility to connect with the ISO to obtain the most current information as the rules are constantly changing. Walk-In Advising Hours: issp.virginia.edu/staff

U.S. EMPLOYMENT REGULATIONS

EMPLOYMENT AS A STUDENT
As an international student, you may have the opportunity to gain experience on Grounds and, in some cases, off Grounds. Before you begin seeking employment, it is extremely important that you connect with the International Studies Office (ISO) to ensure that you are aware of all applicable restrictions, requirements and deadlines. If you are unsure if an opportunity you are pursuing constitutes as employment, visit the ISO for more information. There are many types of training that allow certain international students to gain experience: Optional Practical Training (OPT), Curricular Practical Training (CPT) and Academic Training. It is important as you begin to pursue these opportunities that you plan ahead. Some approvals to work

EMPLOYMENT AFTER GRADUATION
There are many types of visas that provide international students the opportunity to work in the U.S. after graduation. Below are a few of the more common work visas pursued by international students and employers.

TN, H-1B1 AND E-3 CLASSIFICATIONS
Citizens of Canada, Mexico, Singapore, Chile, and Australia can often find opportunities in these classifications. If you will work in a specific occupation and you are from Canada or Mexico, you may qualify for TN status. Citizens of Singapore and Chile are given an allotment of H-1B numbers that is separate from other foreign nationals and has never been exhausted. Australians who qualify for H-1B status also qualify for E-3 status and this quota has also never been exhausted.

PERMANENT RESIDENTS (GREEN CARD HOLDERS)
If you are a permanent resident, you are eligible to work in the United States without restriction. The application process to become a permanent resident is time-consuming and complicated. If you believe you are eligible to apply for permanent residence, contact an immigration attorney for a consultation.

H-1B VISAS/ NON-IMMIGRANT TEMPORARY WORK VISA
Some F-1 and J1 visa holders may be eligible to change their status in the U.S. and acquire H-1B status. In order to qualify for H-1B visa status, you must first have a job offer with an employer who is willing to file an H-1B petition on your behalf with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. H-1B visa status is reserved for individuals in "specialty occupations" which are jobs requiring at least a Bachelor's degree. An attorney is usually hired by the employer, in order to file the H-1B petition on your behalf. Every fiscal year, the U.S. government allows approximately 65,000 new foreign nationals from around the world to gain H-1B status in the U.S. This limit on new H-1B holders is known as the “H-1B cap.” There are separate 20,000 H-1B visas available for foreign nationals who earn at least a Master’s degree from a U.S. institution as well. Some employers are exempt from the H-1B cap, such as institutions of higher education and non-profit research organizations associated with those institutions. New H-1B petitions may be filed as early as April 1 with requested start dates of the following October 1, which is the first day of the new fiscal year. In recent years, the H-1B cap has been reached as quickly as

CHALLENGES AND MISCONCEPTIONS
Some commonly experienced challenges are employer misconceptions that you can help change as you begin your own job search.

Hiring Complexities: Employers are unfamiliar with the process of hiring an international student and therefore believe it to be complicated and expensive.

Lack of Commitment to the Job: Employers fear that foreign nationals will return to their home country after a year or two and are therefore reluctant to invest time and resources into training them.

Communication: Employers are concerned about foreign nationals’ ability to communicate effectively in verbal and written English with their clients and internal personnel.

Visa Quotas: Because work in the U.S. is not guaranteed, nor promised, to international students entering the country on a student visa, and quotas are set on the number of skilled foreign workers legally permitted in the country, you may experience challenges trying to find employment.

Employment Restrictions: In general, as a foreign national, you cannot work for the U.S. federal government, for most U.S. state and local government agencies, or for private companies contracted by the government. Your visa status will be less of an absolute barrier with other industries and employers.
STRATEGIES FOR SEEKING EMPLOYMENT IN THE U.S.

Looking for a job while working hard to finish a degree can be rather overwhelming. The best way to approach this dilemma is to start organizing and utilizing your resources the year before you graduate. Your job search strategy should include:

- Exploring Resources
- Gaining Experience
- Networking Your Way to a Job
- Preparing Country-Specific Resumes and Cover Letters

Be Informed

Recognizing that employers may have misconceptions about hiring international students can provide you the opportunity to best articulate why you are the right fit for an employer in a manner that helps alleviate potential misconceptions. For example, if you know that employers may be hesitant to hire international students because they perceive the process to petition for a visa as too complex, during an interview, you can take the opportunity to educate an employer on the steps it takes to file a petition helping them to see that it is not as difficult of a process as they may think. Be sure to read the last section of this handout, “What Employers Should Know About Hiring International Students.” Likewise, if you know that employers may be concerned about an international student applicant’s commitment to the job, you can emphasize in your interview your intention for wanting to learn and grow over time with that particular company.

Perfect Your English Skills

If you have concerns about your ability to effectively communicate (both orally and on paper) in English with employers, take steps to practice and increase your English language abilities. Look for organizations and resources at the University where you can continue to hone your speaking and writing skills. Consider participating in the Volunteers with International Students and Scholars, and Staff Program (VISAS). Visit caelc.virginia.edu/visas-

connect. Also, consider ways you can incorporate practice into your everyday life: joining a student organization, participating during class discussions, joining a study group, or volunteering in the community are great ways to increase your skills.

Employers with an International Focus or Presence

Strong employment prospects may be with organizations that have an international focus (ex: World Trade Organization, World Health Organization, or World Bank). You may also find success with U.S. companies that have an international presence/office in other countries. Keep in mind that U.S. institutions of higher education may be an option. Your international experience, language, and cultural fluency may make you a very appealing candidate to these organizations. In addition, if your U.S. work authorization is delayed, you may be able to continue to work at one of their branches outside of the U.S. The Career Center library has several print resources that name American companies with divisions throughout the world, including:
- Directory of American Firms Operating in Foreign Countries
- Directory of Foreign Firms Operating in the U.S.

Seek Exposure to Industries in Demand

As an international student, you may find the job search process less difficult if you study or gain exposure to subjects in demand. Currently firms in the U.S. desire skilled workers, particularly in the areas of Systems Analysis and Programming, Engineering, Accounting, Computer Science, Hospitality, Business, Finance and some Healthcare Fields. If you are not majoring in one of these areas, consider developing computer skills (programming, word processing, spreadsheet design), quantitative skills (accounting, statistics, economics) and/or scientific skills (lab research) through elective classes, independent studies, or extracurricular activities to make yourself a more marketable applicant.

Articulate the Unique Benefits of Hiring an International Student

EXPLORE RESOURCES

The UVA Career Center is a great place to start your research. The Career Center has a large number of resources online to assist you in researching various industries, generating a list of prospective employers, and finding actual job listings. Come to the Career Center in Newcomb 170 during open office hours or make an appointment with a counselor for an orientation to any of the resources listed below. To schedule an appointment, please call (434)924-8900 or sign up via

countries. Also a great resource for researching U.S. companies who have filed H1B visa petitions in the last year.

Handshake

Database which includes externship, internship, part-time and full-time job postings, and provides access to On Grounds Interviewing (OGI). Handshake also includes the following resources:

Career Insider by VAULT - Includes an internship database which lists opportunities open to international students. Also a great resource for industry overviews, profiles of top career paths, and tips on resumes/cover letters and interviewing.

Going Global - Provides information on domestic, as well as international employment opportunities, to include guides for working in over 20

The Institute of International Education

Includes resources for non-U.S. students, including the Freeman Assist Internship Program

The International Student City Career Center

Provides career advice which addresses the unique concerns of international students. istudentcity.com

H1base.com
GAINING EXPERIENCE

Gaining relevant work experience, in addition to your degree, will make you a more competitive job candidate. Internships during the summer are a great way to build skills and augment your classroom experience. Your internship should be related to your declared major or your principal field of study. If you plan to work in the U.S. after graduating and decide to use some of your OPT to do an internship in the U.S. while still a student, you should seek out internship opportunities with companies that have a history of sponsoring employees who are on a work visa. That way, you will be building a relationship with an organization that is more likely to hire you for a full-time position upon graduating. Many employers favor applicants for their entry-level positions who went through their internship programs.

The Career Center has extensive resources for researching internship opportunities. Internship opportunities may vary tremendously depending on your area of interest, and may be paid or unpaid. For more information on obtaining an internship, see our handout called “Internships, Externships, Summer Jobs, and Other Ways of Gaining Experience.” Please note that Ferguson’s Career Resource Guide to Internships and Summer Jobs is extremely helpful and Princeton’s Internship Bible, which is also available in our library, includes an index of internships open to international students.

Externships are short-term job shadowing experiences (one day to three weeks in length) which enable students to clarify their career goals, gain “real world” experience, and get their foot in the door for competitive internships and jobs. Students participating in externships are not paid by the employer and must supply their own housing, food, and transportation; however, the networking opportunities provided by this kind of experience make them highly valuable. More information on externships is available on the Career Center website.

Faculty may be in a position to provide work opportunities during the academic year and summer months through grants or their departmental budgets. Check with your faculty advisor to see if there are any opportunities international students and alumni, since companies who have hired international students in the past are likely to continue to do so.

Joining a professional association related to your field of interest is also a wonderful way to make connections with those who can provide you with sound advice about how to find jobs in a particular field. Visit the websites of these organizations to request information on their publications, student rates, local chapters, and conferences. For the names of professional associations, speak with a faculty member in your department, or use the Career Center resource “What Can I Do With This Major?” under the Resource library in Handshake.

Many international students are discouraged because they believe that they have no network in the United States, as their connections are with people in their home countries. It is important to understand that, in the U.S., a network is actively developed and does not connotate long-standing, life-long

NETWORKING YOUR WAY TO A JOB

In seeking advice from any career counselor in the U.S., you will be advised about the benefits of interviewing for information and networking as a means to finding a suitable job. Indeed, it is common to find employment as a result of having the right connections. The ability to make connections with people, or networking, is a skill you can begin developing while on Grounds (refer to our handout on “Networking and Informational Interviewing”).

Begin talking with faculty members and fellow students. Many faculty members have worked outside of the university context and maintain professional contacts with their former colleagues. In addition, start building relationships with upperclassmen and attend networking functions where alumni will be in attendance. It will prove to be helpful for you to connect with people who have already successfully found employment here in the U.S. and can provide you with insight about the process. The best way to find companies that are willing to hire international students is to talk to other

PREPARING RESUMES & COVER LETTERS

A well-prepared resume and cover letter are essential to getting a job interview. For a U.S. job search, your resume and cover letter must conform to basic, generally accepted standards. The U.S. resume is succinct, including only information which is relevant to an employer’s needs. Personal information is usually excluded. The resume is also limited to one page in most cases. The Career Center has several resources, which can assist you. Check out the handouts on Writing Resumes and Cover Letters.

Your resume should be free of spelling and grammatical errors.

After you have developed a resume, bring it to the Career Center to have a career counselor review it with you. You should also have your cover letters reviewed by a counselor to ensure that the writing style, as well as, the content conforms to employers’ expectations.

Remember, it is your responsibility to ease the concerns that employers may have about hiring you. This means you should

INFORMATION TO PROVIDE

- Test scores (TOEFL and/or SATs, particularly verbal or writing scores)
- Writing and English courses completed
- Descriptions highlighting your communication skills (where applicable)
- “Translated written and spoken English daily for 2 years.”
- “Tutored other international students in reading, writing and speaking English.”
- “Gave 15 minute PowerPoint presentation on paper entitled “___” before an audience of 50”
- Frame of reference for foreign employers and schools:
  - #1 research institution in India
  - Second largest technology manufacturer in Europe
  - A $10 million marketing firm

HIGHLIGHT YOUR UNIQUE QUALITIES

- International experience
  - “Lived in Ghana for 10 years and U.K. for 7 years.”
  - “Traveled extensively throughout South and Latin America.”
  - “Developed a solid understanding and appreciation for Russian culture and customs.”
- Language skills
  - Fluent in English, native speaker of Chinese, and proficient in French
PREPARING FOR AN INTERVIEW

The interview is your opportunity to convince the employer that you are the right person for the job. In most instances, an employer is expecting you to articulate your future career goals and past accomplishments. The interviewer is assessing you according to values such as self-confidence, initiative, directness, and individualism. You must learn to become comfortable with the idea of marketing yourself to an employer.

Non-verbal behavior may also be a barrier to successful communication with an interviewer. Eye contact, physical distance, personal appearance, and manner of dress all communicate things about you to an interviewer. It is important that you understand exactly what you are communicating.

Understanding and mastering appropriate verbal and non-verbal communication before an interview is essential. The Career Center offers programs, books, and videos on interviewing. Once you are feeling more comfortable with the process, schedule a mock interview with a counselor. The counselor will make suggestions for improving your technique. Remember, the more practice you have, the more prepared and relaxed you will be when the time comes for an employment interview.

Preparation for an interview always includes doing research about the employer. The interviewer will expect you to have questions about the job or the organization. It is helpful to have those prepared in advance.

FOLLOWING UP WITH EMPLOYERS

After having an interview, it is always appropriate to follow-up with a thank-you note. In this follow-up correspondence, you can reiterate your interest in the position and emphasize the skills and abilities you would be bringing to the employer. This type of correspondence is not considered being pushy. In

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Should I list my visa status on my resume?

Your visa status does not have to be included on your resume. Your permanent address, educational background and work history will display that you are an international student. Hiring managers should ask appropriate questions during the recruitment process to identify if you will require work authorization. Always answer these questions honestly – whether in an application or in an interview.

Are there questions that are illegal for an employer to ask me?

An employer MAY NOT ask:

“What is your visa type, nationality, place of birth?” or “Of which country are you a citizen?”
“What is your native language?” or “What language do you most often speak?”

An employer MAY ask:

“Are you legally authorized to work in the United States?” or “Will you now, or in the future, require sponsorship for an employment visa?”

“Which languages do you read, speak or write?” (provided that foreign language skills are job related)

What steps can I take to enhance my candidacy?

Get your resume and cover letters reviewed by a Career Center counselor, employer, and/or alumni
Become thoroughly familiar with immigration regulations and benefits attached to your visa status – visit the International Studies Office for detailed information
Research the employers and the positions in which you are interested
Participate in a mock interview
Practice speaking confidently about your skills, interests, and career goals, and articulate in the interview how your international experiences make you uniquely qualified

If you need to, improve your English skills by participating in class discussions, making presentations, and expanding your circle of native English speaking associates
**COMMON CULTURAL BARRIERS**

The first step in designing an effective job search strategy which will lead to employment in the United States is to clearly understand the setting in which you are operating. As a student, you may not have had much experience job-hunting in your home country. Even if you have, you are likely to find job-hunting in the U.S. a different process.

The differences are culturally based and, therefore, you may have to work at overcoming the natural inclination to conduct yourself as you would if you were looking for a job in your home country. Different cultures have different sensibilities. Be aware of the setting in which you are interviewing.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Expectations in U.S.</th>
<th>Possible Conflicting Values of Another Culture</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-Promotion</td>
<td>• Assertiveness, openly discussing personal strengths and job fit&lt;br&gt;• Follow-up with employers (telephone inquiries, thank you notes, etc.)</td>
<td>• Unless presented as part of a group activity, citing achieved goals, accomplishments and skills is viewed as boastful, self-serving and too individualistic&lt;br&gt;• Asking employers directly about status of application may be viewed as rude</td>
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<tr>
<td>Directness in Communication</td>
<td>• Open and direct responses to questions&lt;br&gt;• Eye contact with interviewer, relaxed posture, and other appropriate nonverbal behavior&lt;br&gt;• Discussion of salary and benefits only when initiated by interviewer or at time of job offer&lt;br&gt;• Candidate asks questions about the job at the end of the interview</td>
<td>• Eye contact, especially with persons of higher status (e.g., employer/interviewer), is disrespectful&lt;br&gt;• Appearance of criticism must be avoided to save face&lt;br&gt;• Asking opened-ended questions about the job may be seen as rude and inappropriately direct</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-Disclosure</td>
<td>• Personal descriptions of experiences, hobbies, strengths and weaknesses are common&lt;br&gt;• Answers to questions related to personality (e.g., leadership style and problem solving abilities)</td>
<td>• Personal questions about likes, dislikes, etc. are considered an invasion of privacy and are discussed only with close friends and family&lt;br&gt;• Personal questions sometimes are seen as irrelevant to a candidate's qualifications&lt;br&gt;• Revealing outside interests may be considered a threat to time, energy and other resources invested by a candidate into the job</td>
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<td>Career Self-Awareness</td>
<td>• Demonstration of knowledge of self, career goals and how they relate to job&lt;br&gt;• Discussion of long-range career plans&lt;br&gt;• Ability to be self-directed in one's career development</td>
<td>• Questions about role in company indicate potential disloyalty&lt;br&gt;• Jobs are assigned by government or family or determined by school or test score&lt;br&gt;• Individual must be flexible to accept whatever job becomes available without regard to their own career goals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual Responsibility in Finding Employment</td>
<td>• Use of a wide variety of resources in identifying jobs (e.g., friends, family, contacts, associations, Career Services, faculty, etc.)&lt;br&gt;• Networking by candidates; personal referrals can carry great weight in evaluating a candidate's potential</td>
<td>• Jobs are found for the individual by government, school, or family&lt;br&gt;• Dependency relationships in job search are fostered. One resource (e.g. academic advisor or employment agent) will find work for job seeker with little proactive action on the part of the seeker</td>
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<tr>
<td>Informality in the Interview Process</td>
<td>• Congenial interviewing environment that encourages openness, some joking and exchange of information</td>
<td>• Sitting with a person of higher status requires deference. The job applicant is very polite and does not ask questions or provide information that may indicate lack of respect for interviewer's position. Handshaking, using first names, crossing legs, etc., are inappropriate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Punctuality</td>
<td>• Arrive 5-15 minutes before appointment</td>
<td>• Personal relationships are more than time. Anywhere from 15 minutes to 2 hours lateness from agreed meeting time is not insulting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Effective Letters of Application and Resumes</td>
<td>• One page, error-free, concise and attractive outline of relevant job experience, skills, academic credentials and accomplishments&lt;br&gt;• Personalized to reflect each individual's strengths and capabilities</td>
<td>• Resumes are a detailed chronology of academic and formal work experiences and not a tool for self-promotion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual Equality</td>
<td>• Race, sex, and age are legally not supposed to affect the interview process&lt;br&gt;• Politeness and respect are shown to all employees a candidate meets, whether receptionist or CEO</td>
<td>• Males and older persons may expect to assume dominance in interactions with females and younger persons&lt;br&gt;• Level of organizational hierarchy may determine the amount of respect an individual is given&lt;br&gt;• Attitudes on gender, race, and other individual characteristics and how they impact hiring decisions vary from culture to culture</td>
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<tr>
<td>Knowledge of Organization Prior to Interview</td>
<td>• Obtain as much information as possible about the company before the interview. Demonstrate awareness of organization in letter of application and during the interview</td>
<td>• Research about organization may indicate excessive and undesirable initiative or independence</td>
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SEARCHING FOR OPPORTUNITIES OUTSIDE OF THE U.S.

Given the shortage of U.S. work visas, it would be wise of you to at least consider looking for employment in your home country or another country outside of the U.S. as well. The international job search strategy includes the same elements as the U.S. job search:

- Exploring Resources
- Gaining Experience
- Networking Your Way to a Job
- Preparing Country-Specific Resumes and Cover Letters

EXPLORE RESOURCES

The Career Center library has a large number of print and electronic resources, which relate to finding a job in the global marketplace. Some of the material is designed for American students who are searching for employment abroad; however, much of the information is just as relevant for an international student seeking employment abroad. International Employment Weekly is another great resource that you can sign-up for through Handshake.

The International Studies Office can provide information on a variety of organizations that assist international students in seeking employment outside the U.S. Stop by the ISO periodically to see if new information is available.

NETWORKING YOUR WAY TO A JOB

Begin talking with faculty members about your career plans. Many faculty members have worked or studied abroad and maintain professional contacts with colleagues overseas. UVA hosts visiting faculty from abroad who arrive with current information and contacts in their home countries.

UVA alumni living overseas can be valuable resources for information on employment opportunities. Use LinkedIn to contact alumni overseas. Consider joining the following LinkedIn groups: University of Virginia Networking Community and Global Career Community. Also, the UVA Alumni Association has developed 20+ alumni chapters overseas. Visit uvaclubs.virginia.edu for a complete list and contact information. While you should not contact alumni to "ask for a job," it is certainly appropriate to ask for information, advice and/or referrals.

Many professional associations have an international membership. Visit the websites of these organizations to request information on their publications, student rates, and overseas chapters. These links may lead you to knowledgeable people and, possibly, job opportunities.

Finally, don't forget to write home. Not only will your family and friends be happy to hear from you, but you can ask them for information on the job market. Family, friends, and former employers can all provide you with job leads while you are busy studying in the United States. In addition, these contacts may also be in a position to serve as references. References from the U.S., unless internationally known in their field, will not lend as much weight to your application as a well-known figure in your home country.

GAINING WORK EXPERIENCE

Use the numerous international resources and directories available through the Career Center to identify a company with a subsidiary in your home country. The International Division at company headquarters can identify the Regional Manager of the subsidiary who, in turn, can provide you with information on summer work opportunities or internships. Also, the Directory of Overseas Summer Jobs and the International Directory of Voluntary Work list information on 50,000 opportunities worldwide.

NOTE: If you are contemplating summer work overseas, it would be to your benefit to check with the International Student Advisor regarding your visa status for re-entry into the United States to continue your academic program.

COUNTRY-SPECIFIC RESUMES & COVER LETTERS

A well-written resume and cover letter is critical in any job search. However, when searching for a job in your home country, your resume must conform to the local standards and not reflect U.S. styles and standards in resume writing. Just as U.S. students come to the Career Center for help in writing an appropriate U.S.-style resume, you may need some advice in designing a resume appropriate for use in your home country or another country. Dr. Frank Klein of the University Placement Center at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale offers the following advice:

"For job searches in the U.S., the resume is most often chronological, functional, or a combination of the two. However, with regard to resume format requirements, differences exist from continent to continent, country to country. Working in the European Countries: A Guide to Graduate Recruiters and Job Seekers by A.J. Raban of the University of Cambridge Career Services makes an excellent case for a country-specific resume. In Denmark, according to Raban, extracurricular activities are defined as work experience rather than student activities and, consequently given much attention by the employer. In Germany, where extracurricular activities are defined as student activities, they receive little attention. If a single resume category, extracurricular activities, is important in Denmark, unimportant in Germany, is secondary to academic performance in Italy, and is given special attention by employers in the United Kingdom, enough cannot be said on the importance of country-specific resumes."

Resumes targeted for some countries require more personal data than is appropriate in a U.S.-style resume. Birthdate, birthplace, citizenship, passport number and even a photograph may be appropriate. Often employers from these countries are more interested in the applicant's sales ability than in the specific undergraduate or graduate degree. In many countries, transcripts, with an official university stamp or seal, or even actual photocopies of degrees, are required with the resume. Additionally, a photocopy of your degree may be required if you are applying to a university position.

In addition to the resource mentioned above, The Global Resume and CV Guide (available in the Career Center library) outlines recommendations for country-specific resumes and cover letters. Going Global within Handshake also provides countryspecific sample resumes and cover letters for 40 different countries. Use your faculty contacts (especially visiting faculty) to make sure that you are constructing an appropriate resume. Send a draft of your resume home in correspondence with family and friends. Ask them to critique your resume or find someone in your career field at home who has the knowledge and background to evaluate your resume style and content...