Employer’s Guide:  
Hiring International Graduate Business Students
Why Hire an International Student

The Carlson School prides itself in educating diverse populations of students from throughout the globe. Our graduate programs have between 15% and 95% international students, depending on the program. Your organization will have access to a much deeper candidate pool by opening your recruitment process to international students.

**The Increasingly Global Environment of Business**

We strongly encourage our recruiting partners to consider hiring international candidates. These applicants have well-rounded global perspectives and experiences that can deliver new ideas to solving your firm’s complex business challenges. Most organizations, even if operations are exclusively located state-side, will be impacted by globalization and international influence. Having diverse talent that understands the intricacies of the global landscape will help your organization grow and thrive in this ever-changing climate.

**Diversity of Candidates and Ideas**

- Bilingual (or more) language skills
- Remarkable adaptability and perseverance
- Experience navigating international/multi-national firms
- Knowledge of business practices, norms, and local markets in different countries

**Facts & Figures**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average GMAT Score*</th>
<th>Average Years Work Experience*</th>
<th>Number of Countries Typically Represented*</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>715</td>
<td>4.98</td>
<td>8-10</td>
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**Allow Us to Uncomplicate the Process**

The goal of this guide is to answer our most frequently asked questions from recruiting partners regarding hiring and sponsoring international students. The following pages will cover internship and full-time hiring, different visa definitions and requirements, and student and employer responsibilities.

Please contact the Graduate Business Career Center with any questions regarding this process. Our business development team will be happy to discuss any specific requirements or special cases.

gbccinfo@umn.edu
(612) 625-3632
Visas and Citizenship

**Visa Types**

- **F-1**
  Non-immigrant visa for those wishing to study in the United States. Most of our international students are F-1 visa holders.

- **J-1**
  Exchange visitor visa for students participating in study-based exchange programs. A small percentage of our students are J-1 visa holders; this is more an exception than the rule. These students have 18 months of Academic Training (AT) in which they are authorized to work in the U.S.

- **H-1B**
  Non-immigrant visa designed to allow U.S. employers to recruit and employ foreign professionals in specialty occupations within the U.S. for up to six years. This is the most common visa for students post-graduation.

- **L-1**
  Intracompany transfer visa that allows foreign worker to transfer to a U.S. office within the same organization after one year of employment abroad.

- **O-1**
  Non-immigrant visa for individual who possesses extraordinary ability with national/international acclaim in the field of science, art, education, or business.

*Other visa options are available for individuals from Singapore, Chile, Australia, Canada, and Mexico. Please contact our office for any questions specific to those countries.*

**Citizenship and Permanent Residency**

At any point during the post-graduation employment relationship, the employer may begin the process for establishing permanent residency, also known as “applying for a green card.” The first step in this process is to apply for Labor Certification with the U.S. Department of Labor. Permanent Residency status is a separate process from visa sponsorship and is not required for an H-1B visa.

**Internship Hiring**

The vast majority of our international students have an F-1 visa. For the two-year MBA and MA-Human Resources/Industrial Relations (MA-HRIR) programs, this visa qualifies students for summer employment through Curricular Practical Training (CPT) after their first year of graduate studies. Work authorization is issued by the University of Minnesota. A job offer is required to apply for CPT, and the CPT is issued for a specific employer.

*Note:* Students in one-year programs (MSBA, MSF, and MSSC) do not qualify for CPT, as they have a much longer training period that begins post-graduation called Optional Practical Training (see next section).

**Student Responsibility**

Complete CPT online workshop and paperwork and submit to the University’s International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) office. Student will take the internship for credit.

**Employer Responsibility**

None – All paperwork is completed and filed by the University and student. The student must include the job offer.

**Cost to Employer**

None.

**Timeline**

ISSS will issue CPT within 7 business days of receiving paperwork.
Full-Time Hiring

Graduates from the MBA and MA-HRIR programs receive 12 months of Optional Practical Training (OPT) post-graduation during which they can work without employer-backed visa sponsorship. Our one-year specialty masters programs (MS-Business Analytics, MS-Finance, MS-Supply Chain) are STEM-designated, and they receive an additional 24 months, totaling 36 months of OPT.

At the end of the OPT period (either 12 or 36 months), the employee will need visa sponsorship to continue being eligible for U.S. employment. The H-1B visa is the most common route for our recruiting partners.

Student Responsibility

Complete online application with the University’s ISSS office. ISSS processes, approves, and sends application back to the student. Student mails completed documentation and fee to the U.S. Customs & Immigration Services (USCIS) to secure OPT work authorization. USCIS will issue an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) card.

Employer Responsibility

None — No action is required by the employer; applying for OPT is the responsibility of the student. Students may apply for OPT with or without a job offer, though students are encouraged to attach a job offer to accelerate the process.

Cost to Employer

None — There is no cost to the employer during the OPT period.

Timeline

ISSS processes OPT paperwork within seven business days. USCIS processes and issues an EAD in 2-4 months. The 12 months (36 for STEM programs) of OPT begins after the EAD is issued.

The next page of this guide will cover long-term hiring and the H-1B visa process.

Hiring for Home-Country Placement

On occasion, U.S. companies will recruit and hire Carlson School international students for placement in the students’ home countries. After one year of full-time employment abroad, these employees can be transferred back to the U.S. on an L-1 visa (intra-company transfer).

This option requires that the individual on an L-1 visa be employed full-time, though they do not have to work in the U.S. full-time. L-1 visa holders typically apply for a green card. The employee does not have to be employed in the same capacity as abroad, but the role must have been in a managerial, executive, or specialized knowledge capacity.

Specialized Knowledge Definition:

Special knowledge possessed by an individual of the petitioning organization’s product, service, research, equipment, techniques, management, or other interests, and its applications in international markets, or an advanced level of knowledge or expertise in the organization’s processes and procedures.

Visa Length: 3 years initially, extendable in 2-year increments after the initial period for a maximum of 7 years.
H-1B Visa Process for Long-Term Hiring

H-1B visa sponsorship is the most common type of visa sponsorship for Carlson School international students. Applications for H-1B visas are accepted starting April 1 every year. Over the past few years, the 85,000 visa cap has been reached within 5 business days; apply on April 1 if possible. Students who already hold an H-1B visa prior to starting graduate school are exempt from the annual cap (this will be noted on their resumes).

**Visa Length:** 3 years, plus an additional 3-year extension totaling 6 years. Renewals do not count in the cap.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of H-1B visas issued/year</th>
<th>Number held for U.S. Masters program grads</th>
<th>Date to apply for H-1B visa</th>
<th>Date visa becomes effective</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>85,000</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>April 1</td>
<td>Oct. 1</td>
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**Sample H-1B Application Timeline (MBA & MA-HRIR)**

- **Apply for H-1B**: April 1, 2016
- **Graduation**: May 2016
- **OPT Starts (12 months)**: June 2016
- **Apply for H-1B**: April 1, 2017
- **OPT Ends**: June 2017
- **H-1B Visa Begins**: October 1, 2017

**Sample H-1B Application Timeline (One-Year MS Programs)**

- **Apply for H-1B**: April 1, 2016
- **Graduation**: May 2016
- **OPT Starts (12 months)**: June 2016
- **Apply for H-1B**: April 1, 2017
- **Apply for H-1B**: April 1, 2018
- **Apply for H-1B**: April 1, 2019
- **OPT Ends**: June 2019
- **H-1B Visa Begins**: October 1, 2019

**Employer Role**

The employer files for H-1B visa sponsorship on behalf of the employee. Employers may file up to 6 months in advance of the employee’s start date or at any point during the OPT period.

To begin the visa sponsorship process, the employer obtains a Labor Condition Application (LCA) from the U.S. Department of Labor, and completes Form I-129 (Petition for Non-Immigrant Worker) with USCIS. Two conditions that the LCA requires:

- The employer agrees to pay the beneficiary a “prevailing wage” for the position
- The employer agrees to provide working conditions that will not adversely affect other similarly employed workers (ex: no strike or lockout currently at the place of business)

**Cost:** typically $2,000-7,000 (depending on size of employer’s workforce, and in-house vs. external legal counsel)

**Timeline:** 6-16 weeks for entire process, can be expedited to 2 weeks through premium processing
Frequently Asked Questions

Does an international student have a Social Security Number?
Yes. International students are issued a social security number after they file for Curricular Practical Training (CPT) with the University for an internship.

What is a STEM designation and why is it relevant for sponsorship?
STEM-designated programs are those selected by the U.S. Customs & Immigration Services as providing an in-depth curriculum in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM). Three of our specialty Masters programs have the STEM designation: MS-Business Analytics, MS-Finance, and MS-Supply Chain (Finance and Supply Chain are new programs in 2016).

Students graduating from a STEM-designated program have an additional 24 months of Optional Practical Training (OPT), totaling 36 months beyond graduation. This offers a greater opportunity to receive an H-1B visa by participating in the lottery a total of 2 times.

What qualifies as a “specialty occupation?”
A job is considered to be a “specialty occupation” if the occupation normally requires a Bachelors degree in a related field of study. Engineering, math, business, and technology typically qualify as specialty occupations. Any position that requires an MBA is considered a specialty occupation.

What is a “prevailing wage?”
As defined by the U.S. Department of Labor, a prevailing wage of a non-union occupation is “the wage rate set for the occupational classification in the geographical area of employment by the weighted average of wages paid to similarly employed workers (ex: workers having substantially comparable jobs in the occupational classification).” Wages for H-1B employees may be hourly or salary.

Don’t we have to provide proof of efforts to recruit U.S. candidates before hiring international?
The U.S. Department of Labor does not require the recruitment of U.S. workers prior to hiring an H-1B worker, unless the organization is an H-1B-dependent, a previous willful violator of H-1B requirements, or an employer receiving funding described in the Employ American Workers Act (EAWA).

To apply for permanent residency, an employer must show efforts to recruit U.S. workers, and employers are encouraged to consult with legal counsel regarding the most up-to-date requirements. Recruiting for the role at the Carlson School satisfies several elements of the process.

Can the student work part-time during the school year?
Students may work part-time during the school year following their summer internships. Part-time is considered 20 hours per week or less. Students should be cautious of working full-time (any amount greater than 20 hours per week) during the academic year, as 12 months or more of full-time CPT will invalidate OPT eligibility post-graduation. Students must remain enrolled full-time in classes to remain in F-1 status.

How is the process different for J-1 visa holders?
Under the J-1 visa (exchange student), students are authorized to work in the U.S. for 18 months through the Academic Training (AT) program. The student is responsible for completing the online application.
Companies Hiring Carlson School International Students

Resources

**Carlson School’s Hiring International Students Online Resource Center**
carlsonschool.umn.edu/hire-international

**U.S. Customs & Immigration Services**
uscis.gov/working-united-states/information-employers-employees/employer-information

**U.S. Department of Labor**
dol.gov/whd/foremployers.htm

Contact Us

We hope you found this guide to be informational. The Graduate Business Career Center would like to continue the conversation and offer our knowledge and experience in the process of hiring international students. Please reach out at any point:

✉️ gbccinfo@umn.edu  ☎️ (612) 625-3632