BE PREPARED

Obtaining an internship or full-time employment in the United States is a competitive and complex process that requires plenty of preparation. Depending on the role, location of the company, and the industry, there may be hundreds of people applying for one position. Due to the market’s competitive nature, students must consider their career options and begin preparing for employment as soon as possible. Fortunately, engineering is a growing field; enrolling in a graduate program at the School of Engineering and Applied Science at the George Washington University is a great first step in gaining the experience needed to obtain internships and full-time employment.

BALANCING SCHOOL, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, AND SOCIAL LIFE

While academic studies are a priority, it is recommended that students prioritize their time in such a way that allows for professional development and social activities to make the most out of their student experience in the US. We have included some advice below to help prospective and current students research, prepare for, navigate, and set expectations about obtaining employment in the US.

KNOW WHAT RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE

There are several career resources available at GW to help prepare students for the job search. In addition to the GW Center for Career Services, SEAS students also have the W. Scott Amey Career Services Center in the Science and Engineering Hall to assist with one-on-one career consulting, résumé reviews, mock interviews, industry programs, workshops, career fairs, and more.

Things students can do to support their job search while attending school in the United States include:

- Engage in the classroom
- Collaborate with students, faculty, and staff
- Attend career services presentations, information sessions and workshops
- Participate in experiential experiences such as academic competitions and internships
- Attend or present at conferences and speaking engagements
- Look for opportunities to build a portfolio of skills that employers in your field of study value
- Do research on the type of career you want to pursue
- Practice written and oral communication
- Research the trends in your field of study
- Join a student organization or start a study group
- Connect with students outside of your immediate social group at networking events
- Create a marketable online presence using LinkedIn, Twitter, Weibo, or other social media accounts
- Connect with SEAS alumni

KNOW YOUR OPTIONS

The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) requires employers to verify the legal status of potential and current employees to ensure adherence of all requirements, conditions, and authorized periods of stay. International students must consult the GW International Services Office (ISO) prior to accepting employment or volunteer work. For more information regarding the visa process for GW international students and employment in the United States, contact the ISO at iso@gwu.edu.

U.S. EMPLOYMENT VISA OPTIONS

- **Curricular Practical Training (CPT):** CPT must relate to your major and the experience must be part of your program of study. CPT is not available during your first semester and requires approval from your advisor.

- **Optional Practical Training (OPT):** In specified circumstances, an F student has authorization for up to 12 months of OPT after completion of their program of study. OPT must relate to your major or course of study.

- **Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics (STEM) Extension:** Students who graduate with a degree in the STEM fields are eligible to remain in the United States for an additional 24 months on an optional practical training (OPT) STEM extension. The program must be listed on the Department of Homeland Security’s STEM designated degree list and the employer must use the E-Verify Program.

For more information, visit [studyinthestates.dhs.gov](http://studyinthestates.dhs.gov).
### WHEN SHOULD YOU APPLY FOR JOBS: UNDERSTANDING THE RECRUITING CYCLE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quarter</th>
<th>The amount of new hires during this time is</th>
<th>Steps to Consider</th>
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| First Quarter (January, February, March) | LOW.                                       | • Begin applying during the beginning of this time period if you would like a summer internship.  
• Apply during this time period if you would like full-time employment in the spring of the same year and have not already started your job search the previous quarter. |
| Second Quarter (March, April, May) | HIGH.                                      | • Begin applying during the end of this time period if you would like an internship in the fall of the same year.  
• Begin applying during this time period if you would like full-time employment in the early fall of the same year. |
| Third Quarter (June, July, August) | LOW.                                       | • Begin applying during this time period if you would like an internship and have not already started your job search the previous quarter.  
• Apply during this time period if you would like full-time employment in the fall of the same year and have not already started your job search the previous quarter. |
| Fourth Quarter (September, October, November, December) | HIGH.                                      | • Apply at the very beginning of this time period if you would like a fall internship and have not already started your job search the previous quarter.  
• Begin applying during the beginning of this time period if you want a full-time position in the following spring.  
• Begin applying during the middle to the end of this time period if you would like a summer internship. |

**Please note that the dates above are general and recruiting cycles may vary depending on a company’s needs. Furthermore, international students should always consult the International Services Office (ISO) prior to accepting a job offer. It is encouraged for students to contact the ISO and their academic advisor early in the semester in which they intend to begin their job search.

### RESOURCE LINKS

- **International Services Office, The George Washington University:** [http://internationalservices.gwu.edu](http://internationalservices.gwu.edu)
- **U.S. Citizenship & Immigrant Services:** [http://www.uscis.gov/working-united-states/students-and-exchange-visitors](http://www.uscis.gov/working-united-states/students-and-exchange-visitors)
- **Working in the US, Department of Homeland Security:** [http://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/students/resources/working](http://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/students/resources/working)