

Hiring International Students: A Guide for US Employers

Columbia Business School attracts exceptional talent from around the globe. Students in our STEM designated MBA and MS degree programs represent over 50 nationalities, with work experience and language skills from many more.

Having lived, studied, and worked in diverse contexts and cultures, these students are skillfully adept at navigating the nuances of the global marketplace.

About 40% of our full-time MBAs and over 80% of our MS students hold non-US passports. Recruiting these students is more straightforward and less expensive than most employers expect. Employers often find the value of an international hire to far exceed the effort expended during the hiring process.

This guide is not intended to replace specialized legal advice from an immigration attorney but provides a quick overview of the recruitment options available for foreign national hiring.

Recruiting International Students in the USA

International students at Columbia Business School typically hold either F-1 (foreign student) or J-1 (exchange visitor student) visas. Both F-1 and J-1 visas allow students to work in the United States before and after graduation with minimal effort and investment by the hiring company. There are also a number of other work visas available to foreign nationals, including the H-1B visa.

F-1 (Foreign Student) Visa

Summer Internships:

- The hiring process for F-1 interns is quick, free, and easy for employers
- Students can work during summer and/or select academic semesters on Curricular Practical Training (CPT) issued by Columbia University
- Employers provide an offer letter stating company's name, work site address, position description, and dates/hours of employment

Full-Time Positions

- F-1 Students have access to 12 months of work authorization through Optional Practical Training (OPT)
- OPT requires no documentation from employers
- All MBA and MS students have an optional STEM OPT extension, a 24-month additional work authorization
- Students can transition from OPT to another visa, such as H-1B

J-1 (Exchange Visitor Student) Visa

Summer Internship and Full-Time Positions:

- The hiring process for J-1 students is quick, free, and easy for employers
- J-1 students have at least 18 months of work authorization through the University's Academic Training Program before or after completion of degree
- Employers provide an offer letter stating company's name, supervisor's name, work site address, dates of employment, position description, and salary

H-1B Visa

The H-1B is an employer-sponsored temporary work visa for foreign nationals employed in a "specialty occupation," which includes any position that requires an MBA or a Master's degree. In most cases, an H-1B provides up to six years of work authorization. There is a limit to the number of H-1B visas granted annually.

The H-1B visa process has several steps as listed on the US Citizenship and Immigration Services website (www.uscis.gov). Employers are not required to document or prove that a citizen from another country will not take a job from a qualified American since this is a temporary work visa.

Other Visa Options

By special agreement with the US government, citizens of the following countries have access to additional work visa options:

- Canada: TN-1 Visa
- Mexico: TN-1 Visa
- Australia: E-3 Visa
- Chile: H-1B1 Visa
- Singapore: H-1B1 Visa

Contact

For more information on accessing our MBA/MS talent pool and to learn how we can assist your recruiting efforts, please contact:

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