

# Hiring International MBAs: A Guide for US Employers

Columbia Business School attracts exceptional talent from around the globe. Our students represent over 50 nationalities, with work experience and language skills from many more. Having lived, studied, and worked in diverse contexts and cultures, Columbia MBAs are skillfully adept at navigating the nuances of the global marketplace.

About 40 percent of the graduating class holds non-US passports, and recruiting these students is more straightforward and less expensive than most employers expect. Employers often find the value of an international hire to be many times worth 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 international hiring.

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## 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 H1-B visa. In addition, visas are available to citizens of a number of countries that have special agreements with the US government. Advantages of these special agreements can include lower processing fees, no quotas, and faster processing times.

### F-1 (Foreign Student) Visa

The hiring process for F-1 summer interns is quick, free, and easy for employers. Students with F-1 status may work for the summer through Curricular Practical Training (CPT), which is processed and issued free of charge by Columbia University's International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO). Employers simply need to extend an offer and provide a letter stating the name of their company, their work address, and the intern's dates of employment.

For full-time positions, F-1 students have access to up to 12 months of work authorization directly related to their major areas of study through Optional Practical Training (OPT). No full-time job offer is necessary when submitting an OPT application. While in OPT status, the graduate can transition to another visa type, such as H1-B.

### J-1 (Exchange Visitor Student) Visa

Employers do not have to file any forms or pay any fees on behalf of students with J-1 status, as this group has access to up to 18 months of work authorization through the University's academic training program (see next paragraph). This authorization may be granted for employment before or after completion of the student's program of study and allows a student to apply knowledge obtained in an academic program to

practical work experience. Employment must be directly related to the student's field of study.

Academic training authorization is granted at no cost by Columbia University's International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO). This process is free for employers, requiring only a letter from the hiring employer stating the employer's name, supervisor's name, work address, student's dates of employment, position description, and salary. ISSO will work with employers to ensure the academic training request relates to the student's program of study.

### H1-B Visa

The H1-B is an employer-sponsored temporary work visa for foreign nationals employed in a "specialty occupation," which includes any position that requires an MBA. In most cases, an H1-B provides up to six years of work authorization. There is a limit to the number of H1-B visas granted annually.

The H1-B visa process has several steps as listed on the US Citizenship and Immigration Services website ([www.uscis.gov](http://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 talent pool and to learn how we can assist your recruiting efforts, please contact:

**Michael De Lucia**  
Director, International and  
MS Career Management  
[mad100@gsb.columbia.edu](mailto:mad100@gsb.columbia.edu)  
212-854-5806