

## **Do's and Don'ts for International Job Applicants**

### **Do**

- Understand that your skills represent a valuable resource for an employer.
- Realize that your international experience brings important perspectives to your work; your employer will benefit from this.
- Prepare thoroughly and carefully for the job application and interview/s:
  - Have a professional (such as an adviser at CAPS) review your résumé;
  - Learn as much as you can about potential employers;
  - Consult resources for job interview preparation;
  - Schedule mock interviews to help you prepare;
  - Read American self-help books about job searching and interviewing.
- Realize that résumés in the U.S. and other countries may look different but that you must follow the U.S. standard.
- Dress and act professionally.
- Show up on time; that means, be there and ready for the interview at least 5 minutes ahead of time.
- Check things out ahead of time (transportation, parking options, etc.).
- Use a firm handshake and make eye contact.
- Use a formal approach, at least at first. Address the interviewer as Mr. or Ms. ..., unless you are greeted with something like: "Hi, I'm Christopher. Feel free to call me Chris."
- Focus on what you can do for the company to help it be successful; while self-promotion is considered in very poor taste in some cultures, in the U.S. it is essential to getting the job.
- Treat every job interview as the employer's opportunity to assess what you could do for the company and your opportunity to determine whether you really would want to work there.
- Prepare good questions that will give you more information about the job.
- Apply for OPT/AT work authorization well in advance of your start date. For questions about the process, contact OIA at [international-affairs@uchicago.edu](mailto:international-affairs@uchicago.edu).
- Read the Do's and Don'ts document for employers.

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### **Do Not**

- Assume that good job skills are all you need to get a job; good interview skills are essential.
- Rely on the advice of family or friends; do consult professionals, such as CAPS and ESL. - See <https://caps.uchicago.edu/> and <http://ihouse.uchicago.edu/esl/>.
- Feel that being international makes you a second-rate applicant. The opposite is true: You will bring valuable new perspective to everything the company does.
- Mention visa sponsorship; all you have to disclose in the interview process -if asked- is whether you are legally authorized to be employed in the U.S. If you are in F-1 or J-1 status, the answer is "yes."
- Attempt to draw attention to your clothing, jewelry, etc. The focus should be on your skills and what you will bring to the company interviewing you.
- Let inappropriate questions throw you off. Rather, practice redirecting the question. For example, if you are female and someone asks you whether you plan to have children in the coming years, indicate that you would be happy to discuss your professional aspirations for the coming years and proceed to do just that.
- Burn bridges if the interview does not go well. Extricate yourself politely and professionally, if needed. For example, thank the interviewer for his/her time and indicate that you believe the company would not be a good fit for you.
- Dwell on a job you did not get, but do review each job interview analytically afterwards: What can you do better next time? If you are unsure, consult a professional at CAPS to review with you.