

Work Abroad

Increasingly, students seek international work to completely immerse themselves in the language and culture of their host country. Working abroad can provide many benefits, such as improving foreign language skills, networking with local employers, and developing a global business perspective. The skills learned abroad can be used later on the job in the United States and may give some employees an advantage over those who do not have any international experience.

If you want international work experience on your resume, it is never too early to begin planning. International careers don't just happen. They are carefully planned. The key to gaining international experience is to dive into all things international while you are at Wash U. You need to build up a host of international experience before you are ready to start applying for professional international jobs.

Here are 10 tips for landing a job overseas:

1. **Develop a Job Search Strategy** – ask yourself what types of companies' interest you (i.e. private, public, domestic, foreign, etc.) and what type of corporate culture are you seeking? Use your network, attend international job fairs and talk with alumni to determine the best fit.
2. **Determine What Jobs You Want to Pursue** – examine why you are interested in an overseas job, review the courses you have taken and develop a list of skills you've mastered. This will help you develop a profile of the types of jobs that interest you and what you are qualified for.
3. **Research Potential Jobs, Companies and Countries** – You need an understanding of the various jobs, skills, experience required, location and citizenship or work eligibility requirements before you can move forward with an international job search. A good resource to review is **GoinGlobal**.
4. **Acquire Key Job and/or Language Skills** – after completing your research, you should have a clear understanding of the skills needed to compete for the job. Global employers are always seeking the best candidate with 3 key skills: technical knowledge in the field, cross-cultural adaptability and language fluency.
5. **Prepare Job Search Correspondence** – understand the difference between a US domestic resume and the curriculum vitas (CV) that is more commonly used overseas. Do your homework on the region of the world where you want to work and tailor your CV accordingly.
6. **Build and Use Your Network of Contacts** – networking is absolutely critical for an international job search and you should talk with alumni, GoinGlobal Career Forums, Weston Career Center staff and faculty who have international experience.
7. **Prepare for the Global Interview** – you may find that the initial job screening may be conducted in a non formal way (i.e. email, telephone or videoconferencing). Be confident in your language skills and remain focused on the skills required of the position. The key to success is preparation and practice.
8. **Follow-up all Job Leads** – this is very essential in your overseas job search. You may have to be a bit more aggressive in your follow-up but be cautious not to be too aggressive. The knowledge of the culture of the country should guide you through this process.
9. **Consider a Graduate Degree** – another option for landing a job overseas is attaining a graduate degree in the country of interest. Do your homework on the various admission requirements for international study and talk with a career advisor to be sure you select a program that best fits your needs.
10. **Contemplate Volunteering Abroad** – nothing beats meeting with prospective employers face-to-face and one option is to get involved with an overseas program that promotes volunteerism. Not only do you have the opportunity to meet with prospective employer while experiencing the culture of the host country, but you get to do something that will positively affect the lives of so many people, too.

(adapted from materials presented by Dr. Randall Hansen, Quintessential Careers)

Additional resource for learning how to build an international employment includes www.transitionsabroad.com.