



**COLORADO  
COLLEGE**

**Career Center**



1130 N. Cascade Ave., Colorado Springs, CO • 719.389.6893 • [careercenter@coloradocollege.edu](mailto:careercenter@coloradocollege.edu)  
[www.coloradocollege.edu/careercenter](http://www.coloradocollege.edu/careercenter) • [sites.coloradocollege.edu/careercenter](http://sites.coloradocollege.edu/careercenter)

# International Job Search

This packet is designed to help students understand the process of finding international opportunities, including **summer internships abroad**, **short-term volunteer programs and fellowships**, or **full-time jobs**. Before beginning, understand that there is no job field called "international jobs." The word "international" in a job description typically indicates that there is an international element to an existing domestic career.

For example, some students come to the Career Center and say they want to do *international business*. What does international business mean? This only tells the career counselor that the student wants to work in some form of business that involves international work. What form of business? Import/export, management consulting, foreign investing, marketing? There are thousands of careers under the business category.

## Self-Assessment for International Opportunities

We encourage you to narrow your search down to the type of career you want to explore. Let's face it, most of us really don't know exactly what we want to do as a career when we enter college. You might have notions about what you could enjoy, but don't know exactly what that job or career looks like. To understand your own motivations and to generate some personal career ideas, **self-assessment is essential**. It is also the prerequisite for a successful job search. To begin, ask yourself the questions listed below and schedule an appointment with a career counselor to talk about them.

1. Am I clear about the kind of work I want? Am I focused enough to conduct a successful job search?
2. In which region of the world do I want to focus?
3. What are my motives for pursuing this field? Language? Gaining cross cultural understanding? The excitement of working in a diverse environment?
4. Do I want to work in the U.S. in an internationally-oriented job, or do I want to live and work abroad?

Question 4 is crucial in determining what will be available to you. There are thousands of jobs that allow an individual to live in the U.S. and work on international issues. Some may include frequent travel and some may not. If you are thinking about finding an entry-level position where you live and work in another country, you will find the job possibilities far more limiting and much more difficult to obtain. International jobs that many of us have heard of are those working for the U.S. government; for example, the Foreign Service or the Peace Corps. Later in this packet, we will discuss other options available to you that involve living and working internationally.

5. Will you be happy separated from your family, friends and the American life-style for short and long periods of time?
6. What experiences have you had living a different culture?
7. Are you prepared to become immersed in another culture?

 If you've thought through these questions and you're definitely interested in working abroad, you're ready to begin your search for available opportunities.

## Types of International Jobs and Opportunities

The following are five basic international areas:

**International Business** Through research and self-assessment the international business aspirant needs to gain a good overview of the field and an understanding of the functions they want to work in. Research the various aspects of basic business functions: accounting, finance, human services, logistics, marketing, planning and strategy, research and development, production, purchasing, and sales; focus on one to three of these functions in one to three industries.

**International Development** The main focus of this area is providing a form of technical assistance to governments, organizations, and individuals that enable them to achieve targeted goals on their own.

**International Education** This area includes more than just teaching particular subjects or the English language abroad. It also includes the administration of study abroad/exchange programs, or working with international students in the U.S. More than ever, students are studying, interning, volunteering, and working internationally through group programs. These programs need to be regulated, coordinated, and implemented by government, non-profit, educational, and propriety organizations. People who work in these organizations must be competent and sensitive to other cultures and international protocol.

**International Government** Government jobs that involve international work are found at international, federal, state, and local levels. At the international level, look at organizations like the U.N., NATO, Organization of American States, and the European Union—but know that opportunities in these organizations are few and far between. The federal government level has the most opportunities in U.S. Department of State and the Department of Commerce. The State Department is responsible for the diplomatic politics and the Department of Commerce oversees the promotion of U.S. goods and services abroad. Many of the jobs in these organizations are obtained by first taking the Foreign Service examination. Another set of Federal Government employers that do international work are the intelligence agencies. They are generally known for their acronyms: CIA (Central Intelligence Agency), DIA (Defense Intelligence Agency), DEA (Drug Enforcement Agency), FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigations), and NSA (National Security Agency). Finally, there are more and more international opportunities in state and local governments. These governments are establishing sister-city agreements involving cultural and educational exchange, and are pursuing potential markets for their locally manufactured products.

**International Non-Profit** Most international non-profit organizations can be categorized by the issue or a set of related issues they work on, that may be region-specific or worldwide. Some examples of organizations include: World Wildlife Fund, Sister Cities International, Amnesty International, World Affairs Councils, and the Population Institute. Additional areas students can explore are: journalism, volunteer programs, law, and translating/interpreting.

## Gaining Experience

As with all jobs, your education is not the only factor that determines how marketable you are to employers. Your work, volunteer, and extra-curricular experiences are vital in landing good jobs after graduation.

**Study Abroad/Language Study** Students interested in international careers are encouraged to participate in study abroad programs, study languages, and take international politics, economics, history, and other courses involving international topics. CC sponsors numerous study abroad programs in a wide variety of fields and countries. Other study abroad programs, in which many CC students participate, are offered through the Associated Colleges of the Midwest (ACM). These programs include study in London and Florence, the Czech Republic, India, Japan, Russia, Costa Rica, and Zimbabwe. In addition, students may participate in and earn credit for programs sponsored by other colleges and universities across the country. To find out more about international programs, stop by the Office of International Programs in Armstrong Hall, second floor, rooms 213B-218 (southwest corner of the building).

**Internships** Internships involve a short work experience, often unpaid, in which the employer and the student have an understanding that the internship is a learning opportunity for the student. (There is a fine line between an internship and a short-term job.) Some CC students have conducted internships as part of a school program; for example, one student worked at the United Nations Industrial Development Office in Washington, D.C. during her semester with a program at American University. Another CC student utilized his father's contacts to set up a summer job in a light bulb factory in Budapest following his semester on the CC German Department's program.

**Summer Jobs or Short-Term Employment** To lay the foundation for an international career, it's a good idea to gain experience working abroad. One possible way to obtain this experience is through some type of summer job or short-term employment. Most countries require that you have a work permit to work in that country. The Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE) offers a program where you can obtain a work permit to work in certain countries. For most countries participating in this program, work authorization is for summer jobs only. However, in some countries work authorization for short-term employment can be arranged any time of the year. For more information, check out the Work Exchange Programs page on CIEE's website. If you enjoy working with children, you may want to consider becoming an au pair, nanny, or mother's helper overseas. Since these are live-in positions, you can gain firsthand perspective on family life in another culture. Information on these types of positions are available in the Career Center.

**Volunteer Activities and Fellowship Programs** Volunteer Activities and Fellowship programs are other ways to gain valuable international experience. These include programs like the Peace Corps and the Fulbright and Watson Fellowships. If you want to do something service-oriented, you might consider volunteering to work at a work camp overseas. These camps are located in a variety of settings, from small villages to big cities, from national parks and forests to archaeological digs. They usually last 2-4 weeks and don't pay a salary, but provide room and board.

 Any type of international work experience will provide you with first-hand knowledge about a specific career field, contacts in an international area, and the type of experience employers are looking for in applicants. We know it can be difficult to find these international opportunities; if you can't find an opportunity in an international field, try researching its domestic counterpart. Contact the Career Center for assistance.

## Career Center and Other Resources

The Career Center receives information about all of these types of opportunities daily. Come by our office or set up an appointment with a career coach to learn more. Also, ask college staff and faculty whose work is related to your field of interest about any international opportunities they know about. Tutt Library online collections and databases are also excellent resources for finding information about international companies and organizations.

## The Job Search

For detailed information about searching for jobs, refer to our Job Search Strategies packet. This will provide you with the general information you will need for any kind of job search. All of the information included here is pertinent to an international job search.

**Like most searches, you should develop a resume that is targeted to a specific career.** When writing your resume, highlight your international experience. Consider what types of skills you have gained from previous international experiences. These may include the ability to:

- Establish rapport quickly
- Function with a high level of ambiguity
- Achieve goals despite obstacles
- Take initiative and take risks
- Manage time
- Identify problems, use resources to solve problems
- Accept responsibility
- Communicate despite barriers
- Learn quickly
- Handle difficult situations
- Handle stress
- Manage/organize
- Lead others in formal and/or informal groups
- Conduct research despite cultural differences
- Cope with rejection
- Adapt to new environments
- Understand an organization's culture
- Learn through listening and observing

**Additional qualities you may want to highlight on a resume or in an interview that reflect your international experience include:**

Self-reliance	High energy level	Appreciation of diversity	Assertiveness	Perseverance	Independence
Tolerance	Open mindedness	Multi-cultural perspective	Inquisitiveness	Self-confidence	Self-knowledge

The Career Center offers a number of other informational packets for writing resumes, job-related letters, and interviewing. Keep in mind that resumes and cover letters should emphasize all international experiences, including **courses with an international component** and **foreign language proficiency**. If you are sending your resume and cover letter abroad, you may want to include information on citizenship, dependents, and other information necessary for governmental purposes. Also, do some research and/or come into the Career Center to find out how resumes and cover letters are done in that particular country.

## Research the Country

It is extremely important to research the culture and social conditions in the location of your potential employment. (Especially when applying with a foreign owned company abroad.) Read the literature from the location. You should come to understand the economic and socio-political environment. Analyze what you learn and how it will affect you. In researching a country or conducting a job search, you may wish to contact Colorado College alumni/ae living abroad. Utilize Tiger Link to discover alumni living abroad in your countries of interest.

## Working Abroad

Before making a final commitment to a job overseas be sure to consider the following factors:

1. **Visa Restrictions:** For a list of entry requirements by country and other information, visit <https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country.html>.
2. **Contracts:** What about housing, lifestyle considerations, etc.?
3. **Salary:** Learn about the details of currency, exchange rate, and standard of living.
4. **Taxes:** What do you need to know about taxes when you're working abroad? Consult an accountant.
5. **Housing:** Is housing included in the position(s) you're looking at? Are there any housing allowances?
6. **Transportation:** Do they provide for the transport of your belongings? Do they provide an car?
7. **Benefits:** Think about health, life insurance, and retirement.

**We encourage you to stop by the Career Center and let us help you achieve your international career goals.**