



Searching for a Job During a Global Crisis

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INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Q: *What are the chances that USCIS will relax 3 month unemployment rules for international students on OPT?*

A: Visit the **USCIS** website for the most accurate information about the response to COVID-19: <https://www.uscis.gov/about-us/uscis-response-coronavirus-2019-covid-19>.

Also, keep in mind that many staffing agencies are currently hiring for temporary or contract positions to help employers meet immediate needs. These short-term roles can be good options for international students with OPT in order to gain work experience after graduation at a time when permanent hiring may be uncertain.

Q: *How difficult or easy will it be for international students to secure a job right now?*

A: This is a challenging time for all job seekers, including international candidates. For helpful job search advice, visit the following:

- **The International Advantage website** <https://theinternationaladvantage.com/> and follow founder **Marcelo Barros** on LinkedIn.
- Review resources listed on **GoinGlobal**: <https://online.usacareerguides.com/>.

Other Resources:

Suffolk University's Center for International Programs & Services:

- <https://www.suffolk.edu/academics/advising-student-services/dss-spring-2020-faqs>.
- Contact the office at (617) 573-8034 or isso@suffolk.edu.



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INTERNSHIPS

Q: *What advice or resources do you have for students who are struggling to find summer internships?*

A: While it is true that some companies have cancelled or rescinded internship offers, many others are continuing with summer positions as planned, or are offering them virtually. Check out the below resources:

- For advice on the internship search process, visit **Handshake's** help center: <https://learn.joinhandshake.com/students/category/get-hired-remotely/>.
- Check which companies are still hiring using these crowd-sourced sites:
 - <https://github.com/gcreddy42/hiring2020>
 - <https://candor.co/hiring-freezes/>.
- If you are not able to find an internship, consider other ways that you can add to your resume, such as participating in volunteer work, completing an online course through LinkedIn Learning, becoming certified in a new skill, developing an independent project, or trying a micro-internship like the ones offered by **Parker Dewey**: <https://www.parkerdewey.com/career-launchers>.



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FURLOUGH VS. UNEMPLOYMENT

Q: *With furloughs, do you typically retain your health insurance?*

A: Each employer has different policies so check with your company about the status of health insurance and benefits. Typically, employees who are furloughed do retain their insurance while those who are laid-off do not. Employees who have been laid-off and are uninsured can apply for coverage through the **Mass Health Connector**: <https://www.mahealthconnector.org/>.

Q: *Are you allowed to look for another job while you are furloughed?*

A: Unless there is a contract or written agreement preventing job changes, employees generally are allowed to look for another job while furloughed (just as employees who are working full-time are). However, be aware that unemployment benefits and health insurance may be affected. Furlough policies can vary by company so be sure there are no conflicts of interest by pursuing or starting a new job while still employed (for example, working for a competitor or disclosing confidential information while being an employee of another company).

Q: *In MA, are furloughed employees eligible to collect unemployment benefits?*

A: Policies vary by state so check with your local area for the most current and accurate information. For the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, read answers to frequently asked questions here: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/employee-unemployment-faq-covid-19>. In most cases, if your hours or your wages have been reduced, you are eligible to apply for partial or full unemployment benefits, depending on your specific situation.



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INDUSTRY ADVICE/POSITIONS TO TARGET

Q: *What advice do you have for our job search during this time? Do you recommend looking for jobs in industries that are considered essential? If yes, how can we predict which companies/industry will be essential in a future global crisis? Which roles should we consider?*

A: Be practical and flexible in your approach to your job search. The COVID-19 pandemic is a temporary situation so you may have to adjust your career expectations in the short-term in order to gain employment and experience, but also have a long-term plan about how you will work toward your ultimate goals.

Industries which are likely to continue hiring, or even adding jobs, during the pandemic include healthcare (especially in direct patient service and research roles), government (unemployment assistance, public health), human services (residential programs, mental health counseling), e-commerce, supermarket chains, pharmaceutical, biotechnology, technology – especially online education providers, platforms which deliver digital work solutions (Zoom, Skype, LinkedIn), and gaming or entertainment (Netflix).

However, even within these industries there may be downsizing for certain roles (for example, administrative support in medical offices, tech support positions related to hotels, restaurants, travel). Some industries experiencing both active hiring as well as lay-offs or freezes include financial services, banking, and higher education, to name a few so research particular companies you are interested in.

This article from **Forbes** provides some insights on industry trends:

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/jackkelly/2020/03/19/the-coronavirus-effect-here-are-the-jobs-that-will-be-added-and-lost/#553239842a1c>.

Q: *I was looking to get into Corporate Training or Recruiting. Are those two jobs that will still be valuable going forward?*

A: Depending on the industry, corporate recruiting roles may be increasing if the company is rapidly hiring (such as a hospital needing to recruit more nurses), but some human resources jobs may be reduced (for example, Toast recently laid-off 50% of their staff including many recruiters, or internal corporate training programs may be put on hold).

Q: *What advice do you have for someone with limited experience in the business world?*

A: For candidates with limited experience, use this time to add to your resume by completing certification programs, taking online trainings, or working on small projects, micro-internships, or local or virtual volunteer activities. Devote time each week to networking, start with connections you already know and then start developing new ones.



RELOCATING

Q: *I'm looking to relocate and change industries. What tips do you have on finding a job in a new location?*

A: Before relocating, take time to:

- Research the local job market to identify top industries, prominent companies, growth opportunities, and hiring trends.
- Have a good understanding of the cost of living in the new region to prepare an appropriate salary negotiation strategy, and plan for expenses such as moving, housing, and relocation costs.
- Utilize the following resources to research positions, companies, and salary ranges: Vault.com, GoinGlobal city guides, chambers of commerce, and local business journal publications.
- Begin building your network by: setting up virtual informational interviews, searching for connections on LinkedIn, joining the alumni group for your new city, identifying local chapters of professional associations, and asking for recommendations of contacts from professors, family, and friends.

Q: *How would you navigate writing relocation cover letters especially now?*

A: In your cover letter and application materials, it may be helpful to state clearly that you are relocating to the area, a timeline for when you will be able to start working and when you will be available for an in-person interview, as well as ways the employer can reach you remotely in the meantime (phone, Zoom, Skype).

Otherwise, approach the cover letter as you would any other and be sure to highlight your relevant qualifications, examples which highlight your accomplishments, plus your interest in the company and why you believe you are a good fit there.



INTERVIEWS

Q: *What recommendations can you make for preparations for success with virtual interviews?*

A: In order to succeed at virtual interviews, take time to prepare the same way you would for an in-person interview:

- **Preparation**
 - Research the company, review the job description thoroughly, practice your introduction, be able to speak confidently about your skills, experience, academic background, accomplishments and interest in the position, think about stories and examples that highlight your value, and have thoughtful open-ended questions ready to ask the employer.
- **Set-Up**
 - Be sure that all technology is working properly, sit in a well-lit location with a plain background behind you, keep your focus toward the camera and at eye level, and dress professionally.
- **Post-Interview**
 - Always follow up right away with a thank you email.

Review these articles for more advice: <https://online.hbs.edu/blog/post/virtual-interview-tips> and <https://learn.joinhandshake.com/students/how-to-make-a-good-impression-in-a-virtual-job-interview/>.



JOB APPLICATION STRATEGY

Q: *When can we expect hiring to resume? Any potential dates that we can look at?*

A: While some companies are putting hiring on-hold for now, others are actively hiring to meet business demands so continue to apply for any positions that you see advertised. Even companies that are on a hiring freeze may still be actively interviewing in order to have qualified candidates lined up so they can extend offers quickly once business resumes. This is an uncertain time for many companies but hopefully within the next 2-3 months companies will have more definitive plans for hiring.

Q: *What should my job search strategy be? How should I approach it?*

A: Follow the below steps when approaching your job search strategy and process:

1. Things to Consider During the Job Search Strategy

- How specialized your skill is?
- What is your experience level?
- How many jobs are available in your area?
- How narrow or broad should your focus be?

2. Frequency

- Submit 10 applications per week (2-3 per day)
- Arrange 1-2 networking meetings or informational interviews per week.

3. Match Skills with Job Requirements

- Focus on positions which are a good fit in terms of target industry, skills, qualifications, required education, and experience.
- Many companies use Applicant Tracking System software to screen candidates, make sure your resume and CV reflect all of the minimum requirements, plus any preferred requirements listed in the job description.

4. How to Apply

- The most direct way to apply is via a company's own website, because there is a chance that applications submitted on third-party sites will not go directly to the company, or the listings are not current and might include jobs which have already been filled. However, many companies do use LinkedIn, Indeed, or other sites to promote their positions, so it is fine to use a variety of sites for your search.

5. After You Apply

- Create a spreadsheet which includes the date that you applied, the company name, position title, job description, and contact person (if known).
- Copy the exact job description in order to prepare for the job interview if/when needed.



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- Two weeks after applying, reach out by phone, email, or LinkedIn to follow up, express your continued interest, and ask for feedback on the status of your application.
- If you are using LinkedIn to apply, review any mutual connections at the company, such as alumni, classmates, former coworkers, and reach out to get advice on the application and interview process, or ask for a referral.

RESOURCES

Q: *What resources are available to job seekers with disabilities?*

A: Other resources for job seekers with disabilities are state vocational rehabilitation agencies. Massachusetts agencies are fully up and running remotely and other states likely are as well. To learn more visit:

- **MA Office of Disability:** <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massachusetts-office-on-disability>
- **MA Commission for the Blind:**
<https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massachusetts-commission-for-the-blind>
- **MA Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing:**
<https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massachusetts-commission-for-the-deaf-and-hard-of-hearing>
- **Job Accommodation Network:** <https://askjan.org/>.

Q: *What job search sites should I be using to find a job?*

A: Use a variety of sites including the career pages for companies you are targeting directly, professional associations, industry-specific sites, and general job boards. Current students and recent graduates will find many jobs listed in Handshake.

This article from **The Balance Careers** lists other top job search sites, including Indeed, Google for Jobs, Idealist, LinkedIn, and ZipRecruiter:

<https://www.thebalancecareers.com/top-best-job-websites-2064080>.

Q: *Can you please list the JobScan link?*

A: Visit <https://www.jobscan.co/> to get feedback on your resume based on Applicant Tracking System technology, similar to what recruiters use in the hiring process.

Q: *Can you please suggest some helpful sources like Boston Business Journal, but in other areas like NYC or San Francisco?*

A: The parent company **American City Business Journals** issues 43 publications across the country, read more here: <https://acbj.com/brands/bizjournals>. Electronic access to the **Boston Business Journal** and other publications is available through the Sawyer Library. Chat online with a Library to get more details about how to access these resources:

<https://www.suffolk.edu/academics/libraries/mildred-f-sawyer-library>. Some materials may be restricted to current students, so alumni can also check with their local library.