

Navigating Career and Immigration Pathways: Insights from The Build Fellowship and F1 Hire Webinar (Feb 6, 2025)

International students at Grand Valley State University (GVSU) recently had the opportunity to gain valuable career and immigration insights from industry experts during a webinar featuring The Build Fellowship and F1 Hire. Organized by GVSU's International Student Services Office and Career Center, the event focused on practical strategies for navigating work authorization and building careers in the U.S.

If you missed the session, you can watch a full recording of the session [here at this link](#).

Key Takeaways for International Students

1. Utilize GVSU's Career and Immigration Support

GVSU offers a range of resources to help international students transition from academia to the workforce. These include resume-building workshops, interview preparation, and guidance on work authorization options like CPT and OPT.

- **GVSU Resume and Cover Letter Resources:** [Resume Guide](#)
- **GVSU OPT Information:** [OPT Overview](#)
- **GVSU CPT Information:** [CPT Overview](#)
- **GVSU ISS Request Center** (for CPT & OPT Applications): [Request Center](#)
- **Contact ISS:** istudents@gvsu.edu

2. Understanding Cap-Exempt H-1B Options

The traditional H-1B visa lottery is competitive and unpredictable. Danielle Goldman, Co-founder and CEO of The Build Fellowship, explained an alternative: the cap-exempt H-1B. Through partnerships with universities and research institutions, cap-exempt H-1Bs allow international students to obtain work authorization outside of the lottery system.

- **Explore Cap-Exempt H-1B Opportunities:** [The Build Fellowship](#)
- **The Build Fellowship Education Hub:** [Hub Registration](#) – Explore STEM & Business Build Projects
- **H-1B Modernization Rule:** [Read More](#)

3. Strategic Job Searches for International Students

Andrew Chen, Founder and CEO of F1 Hire, emphasized the importance of targeted job searches. Using data-driven approaches, international students can identify companies with a history of sponsoring visas and tailor their applications to meet employer expectations.

- **Job Search & Visa Sponsorship Research Tool:** [F1 Hire Data Tool](#)
- **F1 Hire Presentation:** [F1 Hire PPT](#)

4. Alternative Visa Pathways

The H-1B is not the only option for international students. Other visa pathways include:

- **O-1 Visa:** For individuals with demonstrated expertise in their field.
- **L-1 Visa:** For students working at multinational companies who may transfer to a U.S. office.
- **E-2 Visa:** For students from treaty countries who want to start a business in the U.S.

Next Step: Research visa options early and consult an immigration expert to determine the best fit for your career goals.

5. Job Search Best Practices for International Students

- **Start Early:** Engage in job searches and networking well before graduation.
- **Know Your Work Authorization Options:** Understanding CPT, OPT, and H-1B sponsorship is crucial when speaking with employers.
- **Communicate Clearly:** Ensure potential employers understand your work authorization status to avoid misunderstandings.
- **Optimize Applications:** Adapt resumes and cover letters to align with applicant tracking systems (ATS) to improve job prospects.
- **Build Your Experience:** Secure internships and work experience before graduation. GVSU students have [free access to all Build Projects](#) to accumulate real world industry experience.

Moving Forward

The webinar underscored the importance of early planning and informed decision-making for international students. GVSU's International Student Services Office is available to assist students in navigating career and immigration pathways.

For additional guidance, explore these resources:

- **The Build Fellowship** – Information on cap-exempt H-1B opportunities.
- **F1 Hire** – Job search strategies for international students.
- **Sojon.io** – Database of [H-1B cap-exempt job listings](#)
- **How to talk with your employer about the Build Fellowship:** [Guide](#)
- **Build Projects Contact:** education@buildfellowship.com

By taking a proactive approach, utilizing available resources, and staying informed, international students can better position themselves for success in the U.S. job market. Stay connected for future events that provide additional insights and opportunities!

