



The international “flag banner” system at the University of Minnesota Job and Internship Fair

In an attempt to make the University of Minnesota Job and Internship Fair more welcoming and user-friendly for international students, this year the fair is giving employers the opportunity to post a “Flag Banner” (pictured above) on their booth. The flag banner signals to international students that that employer has at least one position for which they are willing to consider hiring international students.

We hope that these banners will allow international students to interact more efficiently and confidently with employers willing to consider them as candidates.

What should the flag banners mean for international student behavior at the fair?

1. **You may want to prioritize your time so that you talk with employers displaying the banner first.** If you are a fit for the company and know that they hire candidates with your skill set, these banner-displaying companies could be strong, productive targets for you at the fair.
2. **You should also assume, however, that there are employers at the fair, willing to hire you, who do not display the banner** (they may be employers too small to know whether they are open to international students, or employers who do not want students only targeting them because they are open). You should still research employers before the fair, and approach any employer for whom you think you are an exceptional fit—and be ready to explain that fit. Even employers who believe they are not open to international students will sometimes make an exception for a student who is a great fit.
3. **You should not assume that all employers displaying the flag banner are open to hiring you specifically.** For example, some employers are willing to hire international candidates with a master’s in computer science or statistics, but not a BA in psychology. Or some employers may have one position that is open, and 4 that are not. Even if the employer displays the flag, you must do your homework and understand how your skills fit the employers’ needs.
4. **Understand that even if an employer is open to hiring international students, you must still *Compete to Win the job!*** There won’t be any employers at the fair with a quota of international students to hire (“I plan to hire 6 students from China” for example). If they display the flag, it means they will consider an international student if that student demonstrates that he or she is better than all the other candidates—including the domestic candidates—at meeting the needs of the company.