Graduate School, Financial Assistance, and H-1B, Oh My!

Life After Your First Degree
What Are You Going To Do Next?

Home?
Work?
Graduate School?
Graduate School

- Where do you want to go?
  - Apply to graduate programs that will
    a: further your education
    b: provide practical applications
    c: provide financial assistance
Graduate School

RESEARCH!!!!

• Look for institutions that are geared towards your major.
• Engineering majors! Don’t pick a liberal arts school…
• Don’t omit schools because they seem far or not what you would normally be used to.
  – Caution!!! If climate is an issue, University of Alaska or University of Arizona may not be for you.
• Learn as much about the school before you go. Take a campus tour and a virtual tour.
Graduate School

- Deadlines!!!!!!

February 1, means February 1!!!

- Most programs do not have “rolling” admissions. Be proactive!
- Not all programs have the same deadlines. Biology ≠ Engineering
- Not all requirements are the same for all programs.
Graduate School

• Financial Assistance???

International students are not eligible for federal financial aid, but there are other sources of financial aid.

NOW WHAT?????
Financial Assistance

• Private Loans
• Grants
• Fellowships
• Scholarships
• Assistantships
Financial Assistance

- Private loans – you will need a co-signer
- Grants, Scholarships and Fellowships (free money)
  - You pay it back, not in dollars, but in product.
- Where to get them?
  - Apply online – NGOs, NPOs, your country, Foundations, for profit organizations, etc.
  - Ask the department
  - Contact financial aid at the school
  - Human Resources
Financial Assistance

• These are *competitive*, merit-based awards with a minimum GPA and specific requirements.

• Examples: American Association of University Women (AAUW) International Fellowships, Daewoo’s People’s Republic of China Scholarship, Ford Foundation International Scholarships, Fulbright Grants for Non-U.S. Citizens, Margaret McNamara Memorial Fund for International Scholars, Rotary Foundation Ambassadorial Scholarships
Financial Assistance
Assistantships
Assistantships

• What is an Assistantship?
  - A financial award given by an academic department or non-academic office that provides full or partial tuition waiver, health insurance and a stipend to graduate students, in return for services.
  - The stipend is given for services given.
Assistantships

• Eligibility Requirements
  – Must be enrolled in a 9-12 credit hour program
  – Maintain a 3.0 GPA; departmental requirements may be higher
  – Make satisfactory progress towards a degree. It takes 2 to 2 ½ years to complete a Master’s not 5.
  – Meet requirements to be eligible for employment in the U.S.
  – YOU **CAN** LOSE AN ASSISTANTSHIP!
Assistantships

  - An assistantship can pay for school 100%.
  - 20 hours of work.
  - Available to any graduate student.
  - Competitive. Apply for an assistantship like you would a job. You may have to interview.
  - The deadlines for assistantships may or may not coincide with admissions deadlines.
  - Search for assistantships 3 ways: online, in the department, on the HR website.
Assistantships

Types of Assistantships:

- Graduate Assistantships (GA)
- Graduate Research Assistantships (RA)
- Graduate Teaching Assistantships (TA)
Assistantships

- **Graduate Assistantship**
  - Provide academic and program support
  - May be administrative in nature and consist of duties unrelated directly to teaching (such as academic advising, program planning, assisting the department)
  - Can be related to program or study or completely unrelated. Example: Residential Life
Assistantship

• Research Assistantship
  – Grad student provides significant academic and research support to a specific academic department or primary investigator, e.g., professor. Ex: CELS (College of Environmental Life and Science) and Engineering
  – Will most likely work beyond the 20 hours that are required
Assistantships

• **Teaching Assistantships**
  
  – Academic support is provided directly to the professor
  
  – Help teach classes, grade papers, conduct review sessions, prepare the lesson
  
  – Assist the professor with his/her research
Assistantships

• What you receive
  – Tuition waiver (full or half)
  – Health and Accident Insurance
  – Stipend ($10,000 - $30,000)
  – Immediate practical experience
Assistantships
Assistantships

• Ms. Stevens at URI (in state tuition & fees, total amount equals $8,887)

  – Tuition  6,032  paid by dept. to school
  – Ins.     1,079  paid by dept. to school
  – Stipend 12,300  paid by dept. to me

TOTAL: I paid $1,776 per year
Assistantships

• International Student (always considered out-of-state, equals to $29,593)
  – Tuition  17,288  paid by dept. to school
  – Insurance  1,079  paid by dept. to school
  – Stipend  12,300  paid to you

TOTAL (approx. ):  $ 30,667
H-1B

• **What is the H-1B?**
  
  – Work visa or work permit with a duration of 3 years, and an extension for 3 more years; max 6 years.
  
  – Foreign nationals may temporarily work in a professional capacity.
  
  – The **employer** must file for you.
  
  – Requires the assistance of a lawyer.
H-1B

• How do I qualify?
  – Must demonstrate that the occupation sought is of a special nature that cannot be easily filled with the workforce available in the U.S.
  – You must fit into the category of “priority workers” which includes:
    • Workers with advanced degrees or exceptional ability;
    • Professionals (Bachelor's Degree or the equiv.)
    • Skilled workers or others
H-1B

• What is the Quota System?
  – DHS sets up a quota (or cap) for issuing the H-1B based on job categories.
  – Period starts between October 1st and ends the following year September 30th.
  – Once the quota is filled, you will have to wait until the following year to file.
Five parties are involved in the H-1B

- The U.S Department of Labor (DOL) – determines wages for compensation, certifies Labor Condition Applications (LCAs)

- The Department of Homeland Security – accepts the petition for employment with DOL-certified LCA attached, determines if occupation qualifies as a specialty occupation, confers H-1B status
H-1B

- **The U. S. Employer** – submits application to DOL, works with DOL and DHS

- **The alien employee** – must be eligible for H-1B classification, must intend to work for petitioning employer, responsible for maintaining status

- **The U.S. Department of State (DOS)** – through U.S. embassies and consulates is responsible for issuing the H-1B visa
H-1B facts

- Employee is entitled to the same benefits as a domestic employee
- It is very difficult to lose your job (e.g. job cuts)
- Employee cannot strike or lockout
- H-1B can have dependents (H-4)
- H-1B can go to school part-time or full-time
- H-1B visa allows the person to file for Permanent Residency status for worker and entire “nuclear” family
Questions???

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