



Career Outcomes for International Students: What Does the Data Tell Us?

Jessica Brandt, World Education Services
Dr. Ryan Buck, Texas State University

Learning Objectives

- Participants will be able to:
 - Apply the findings of WES' research on career-related expectations and experiences of international students to their own services for international students.
 - Learn about available data on their campus and basic data collection and outcomes reporting techniques and how to use apply it.

Presenter Background

Dr. Ryan Buck, PhD

**Assistant Vice President, International Affairs,
Texas State University**

Dr. Buck is the SIO at Texas State and oversees Study Abroad, Intensive English, and the International Student and Scholars Offices. He earned a PhD in Public Policy from the Milano School of International Affairs, Management, and Urban Policy at The New School. He has an MA in International Politics and Volunteer Management from the University of North Texas and a BA in History and Political Science.

Presenter Background

Jessica Brandt

Director of Research, World Education Services

Jessica Brandt is Director of Research at World Education Services (WES) in New York, where she leads a team of researchers that reports on student mobility trends, international enrollment management, and skilled immigration. She holds a BA in Psychology from Stony Brook University and a MA in Industrial/Organizational Psychology from Hofstra University.

Part I:

Introduction & Background to the Research

Research Questions

- What are the **career aspirations** of international students and international alumni of U.S. higher education institutions (HEIs), and how did those influence their decision to study in the United States?
- What have been the **career outcomes** of international alumni who have graduated from U.S. institutions?
- How could international students' **experiences with Career Services Offices** and related support services on U.S. campuses be improved?

Methodology

Data Collection	Survey – June 2017	
Survey Population	Students on F-1, J-1, and M-1 visas currently enrolled in or graduated from degree programs at U.S. higher education institutions.	
Sample	Current students	Alumni
	N = 1,067	N = 1,095
Response Rate	9.9% response rate	77% completion rate

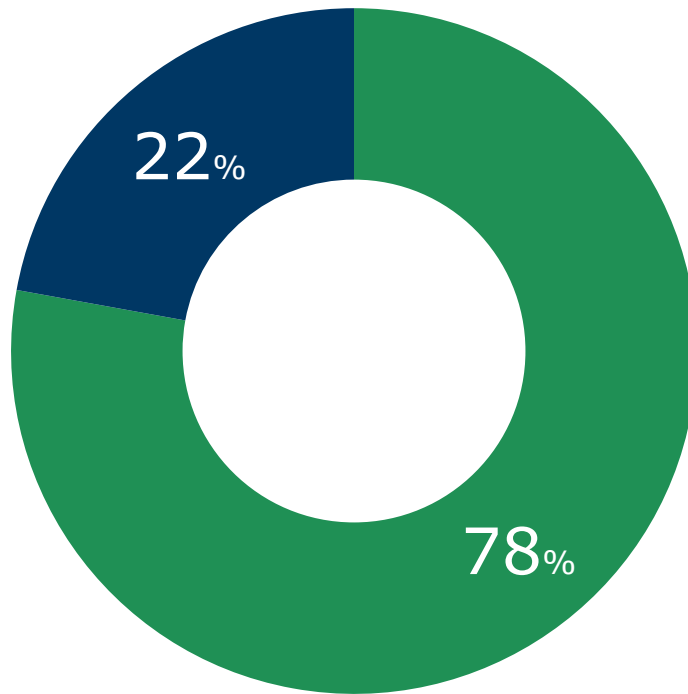
Part II:

Profile of Respondents

Most Respondents were at the Graduate Level

Level of Study - Current Students

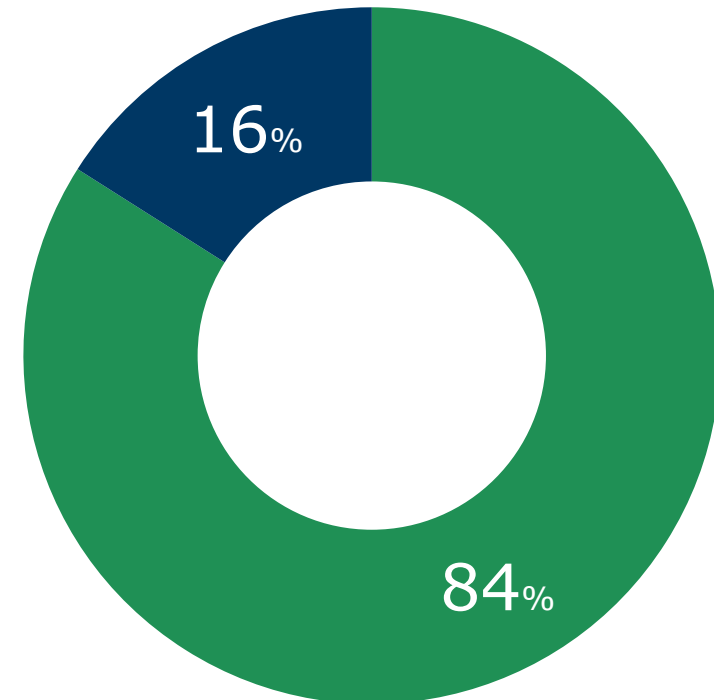
■ Graduate level ■ Undergraduate level



N=1,067

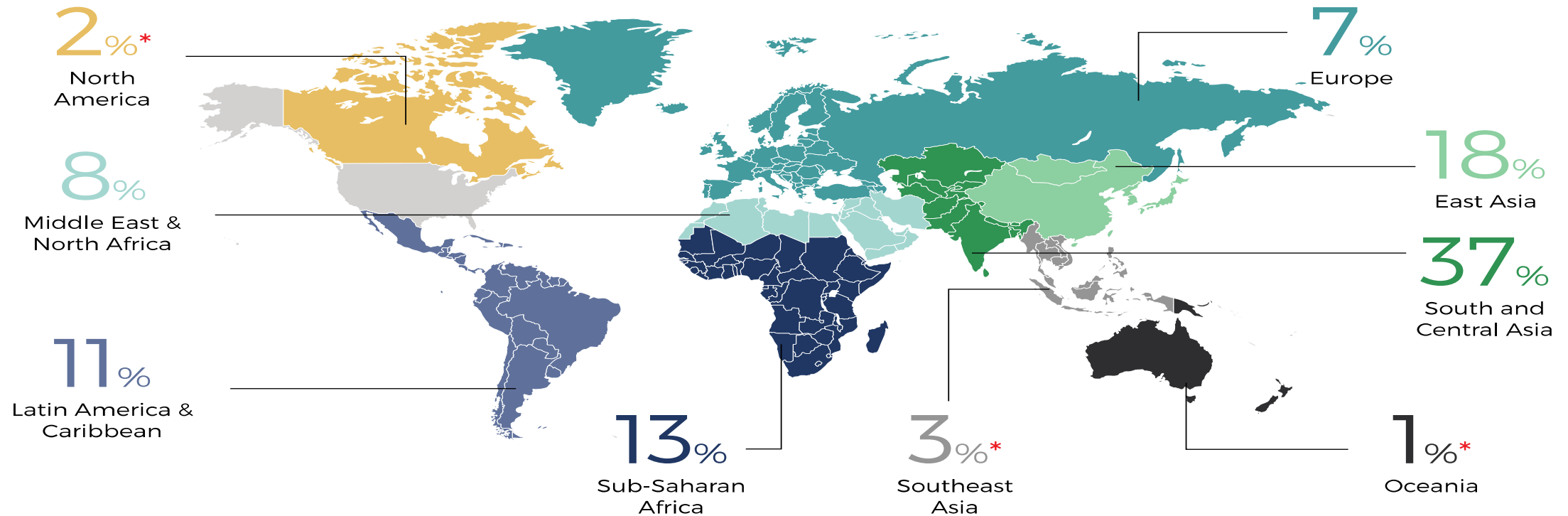
Level of Study - Alumni

■ Graduate level ■ Undergraduate level



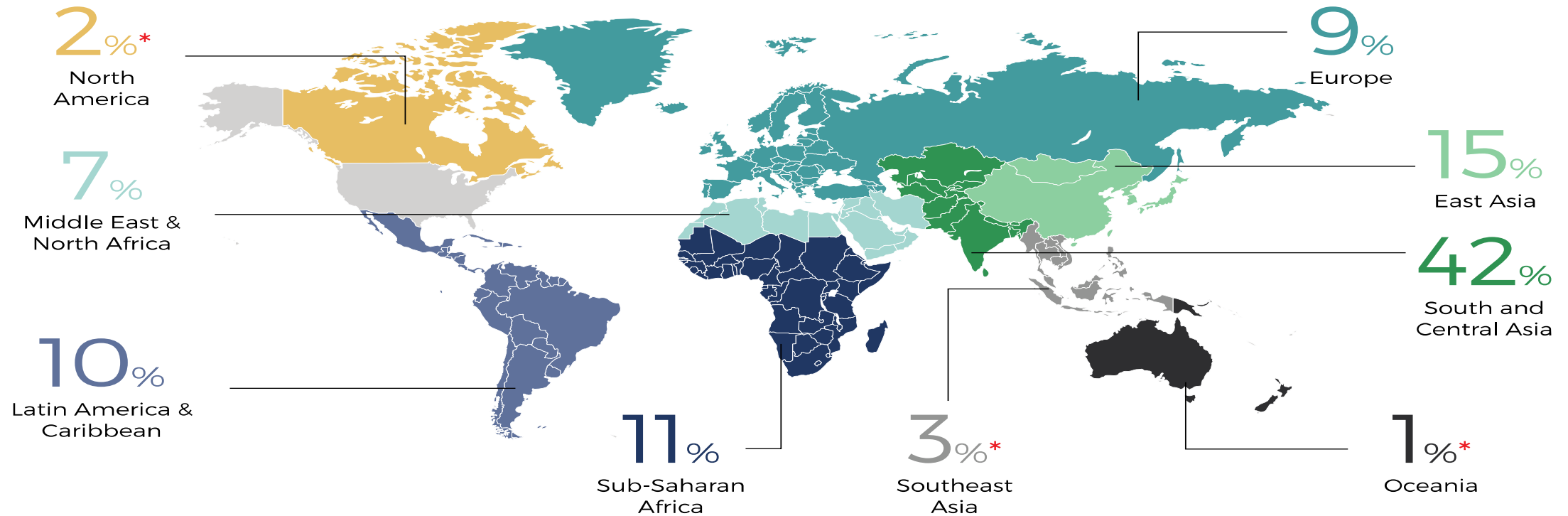
N=1,095

Respondents came from All Around the World - Current Student Respondents



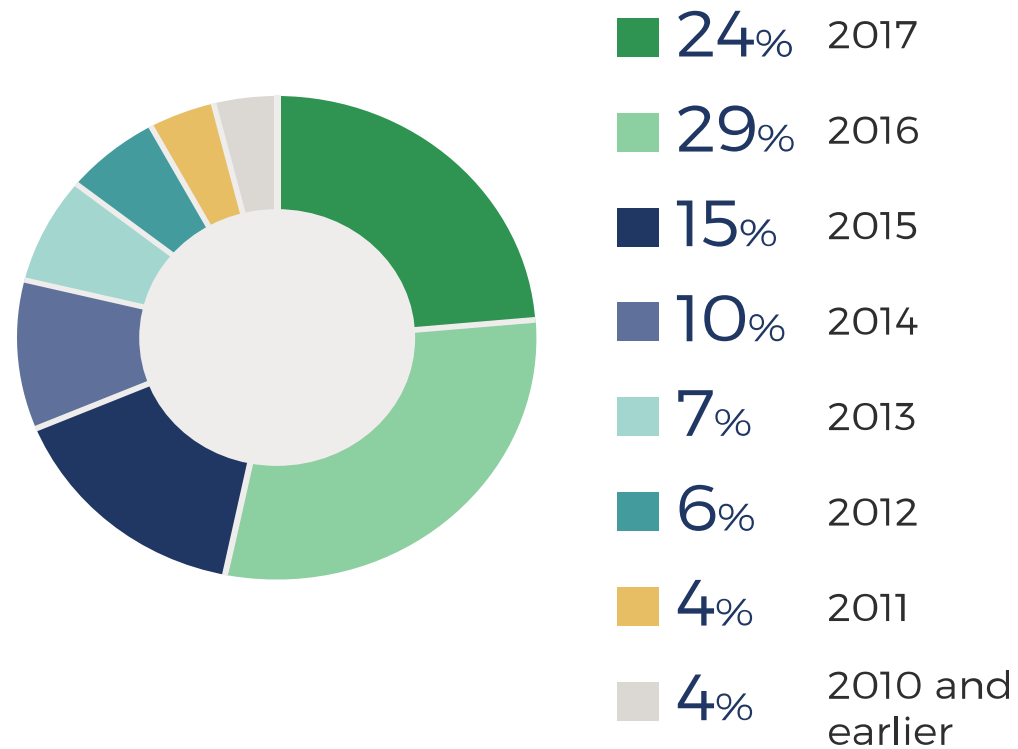
*North America, Southeast Asia, and Oceania were not included in regional analyses due to low response rates. Less than 0.5% of respondents selected "Other," which is also not included in regional analyses. Responses from these regions, however, were included in the overall findings.

Respondents Came From All Around the World - Alumni Respondents



*North America, Southeast Asia, and Oceania were not included in regional analyses due to low response rates. Responses from these regions, however, were included in the overall findings.

Most Alumni Respondents Graduated within the Last Few Years



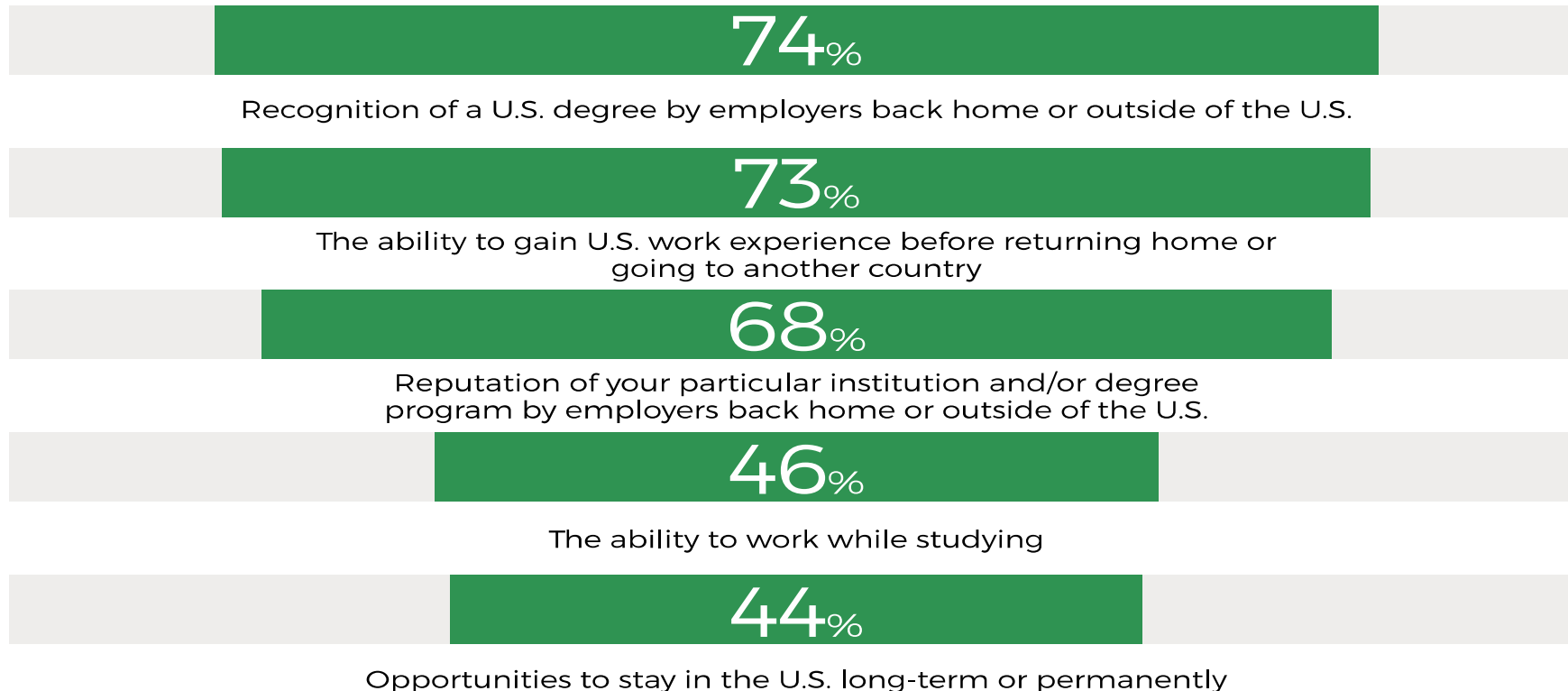
N=1,095

Part III:

Highlights from Findings

Career Factors Involving Return Home were the Most Important to Respondents

Top Career-related Factors In Selecting a U.S. Institution



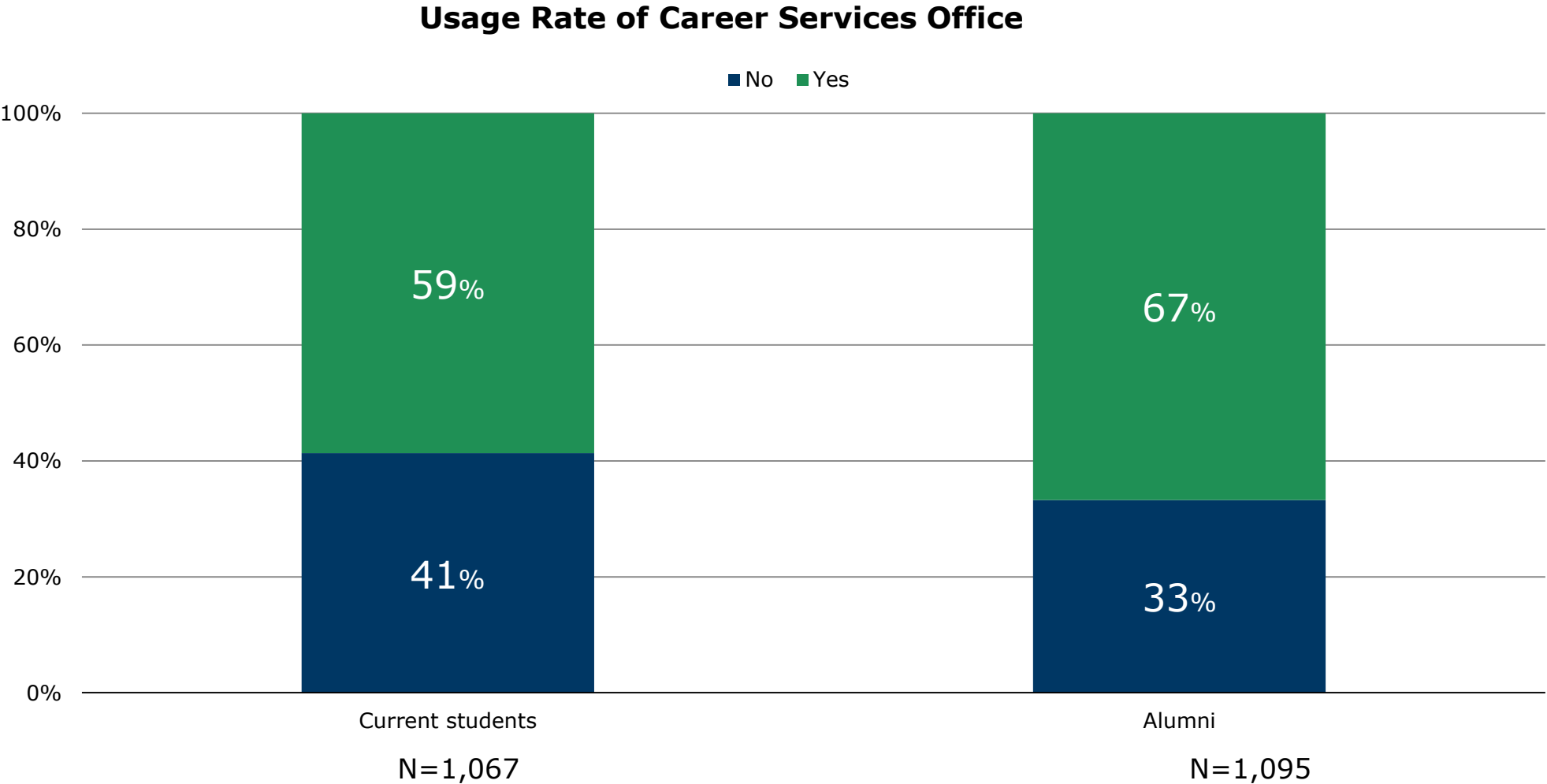
N=2,162

Q: *All respondents*: How important were the following career-related factors when deciding to study in the U.S. specifically at your institution?

A: All respondents who answered "Very important"

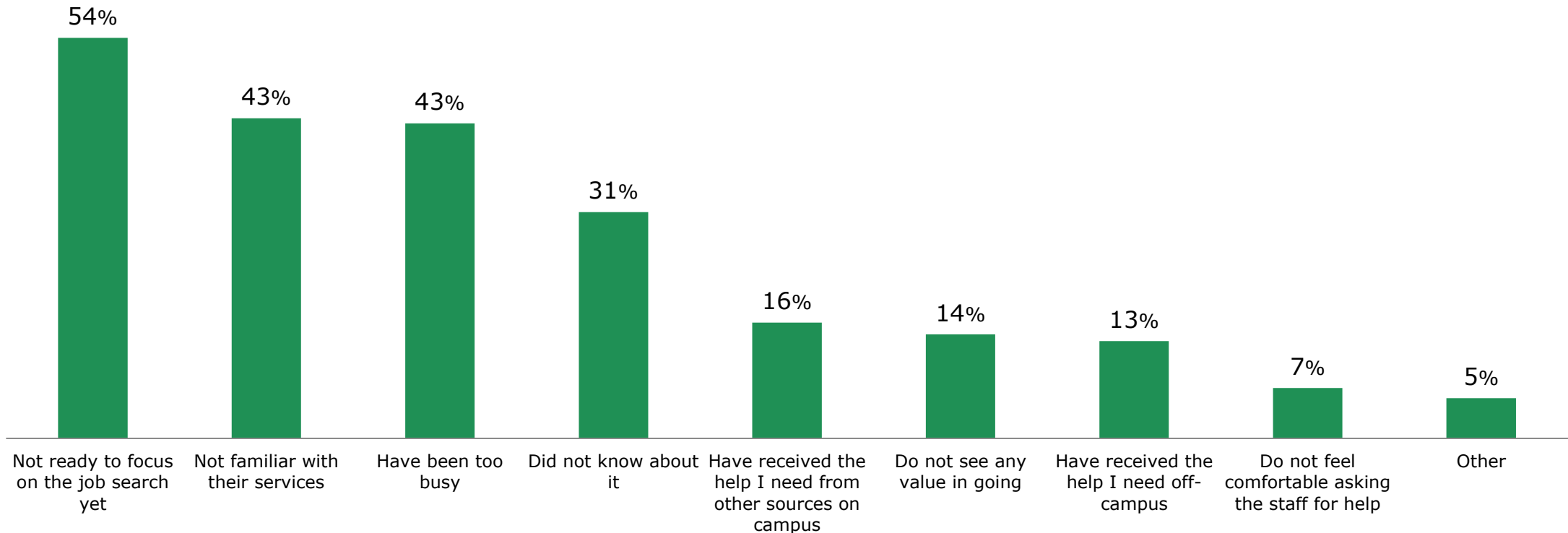
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About Two-third of Alumni Utilized the Campus Career Services Office



Many Students Sought Help from Career Services Later in their Program

Reasons Why Current Students Have Not Used Career Services



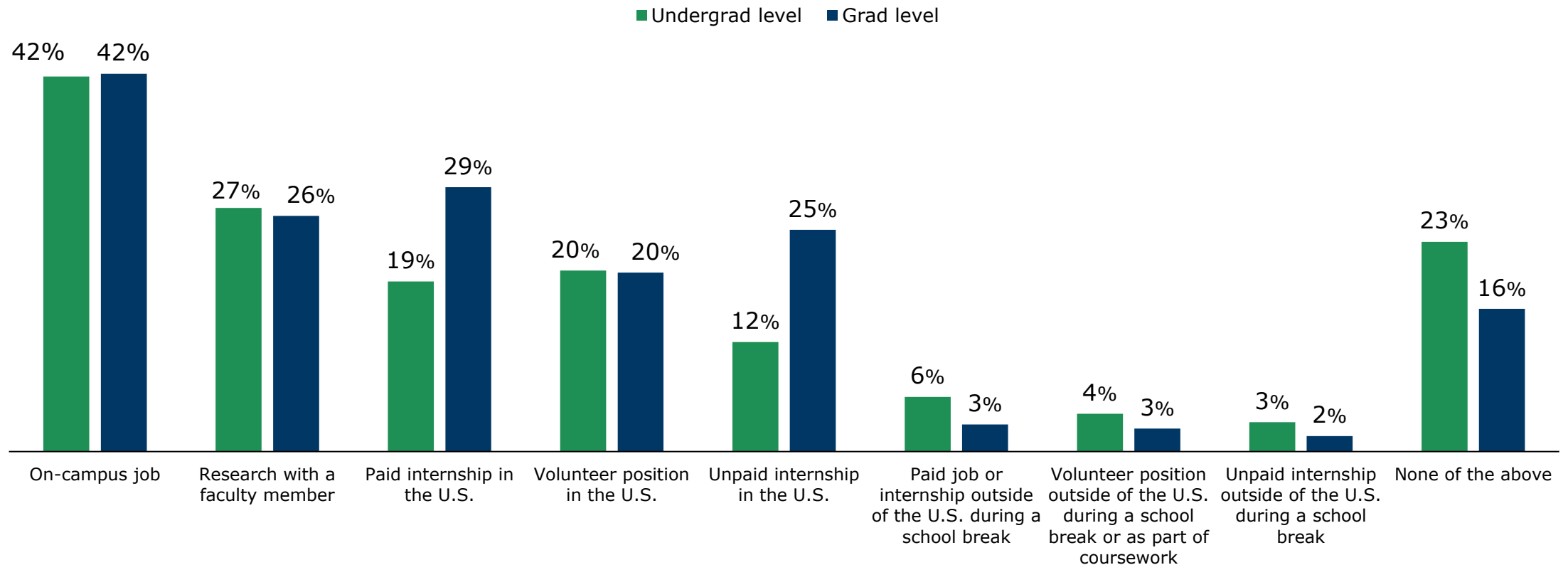
N = 441

Q: Please select up to 3 reasons why you have not visited the Career Services office on your campus or utilized their services?

NOTE: Only those who answered "no" to whether or not they utilized the Career Services Office answered this question

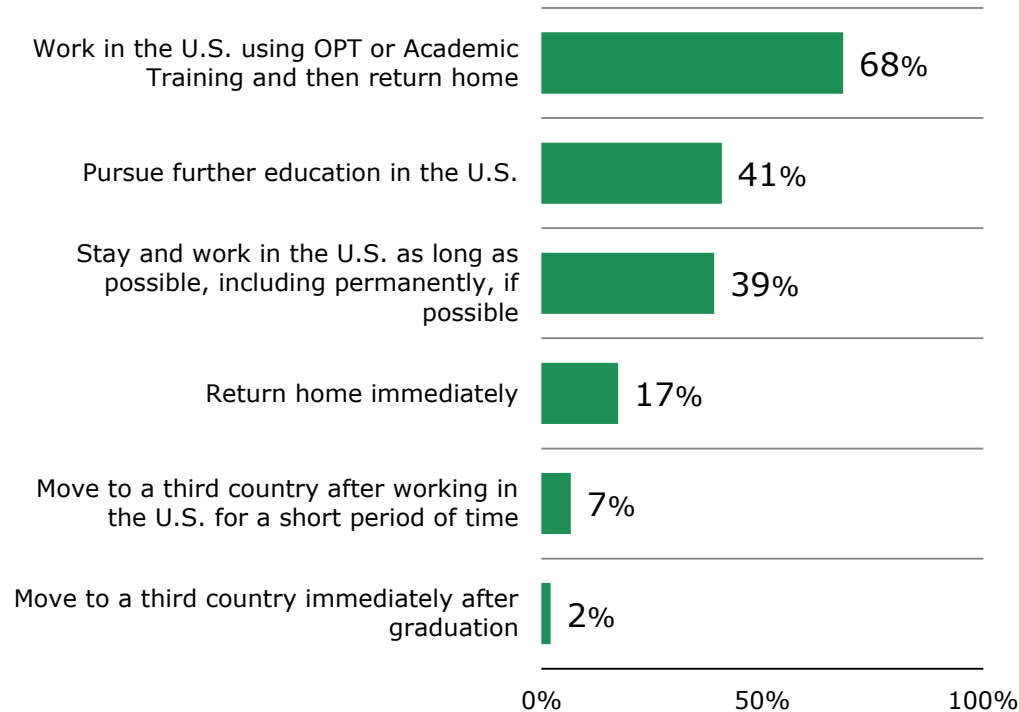
Graduate Students Seek Out Internships More Often than Undergraduates

Career-related Experiences During Study by Academic Level (N=2,162)



Using OPT or Academic Training and then Returning Home is the Top Intention

Initial career plans

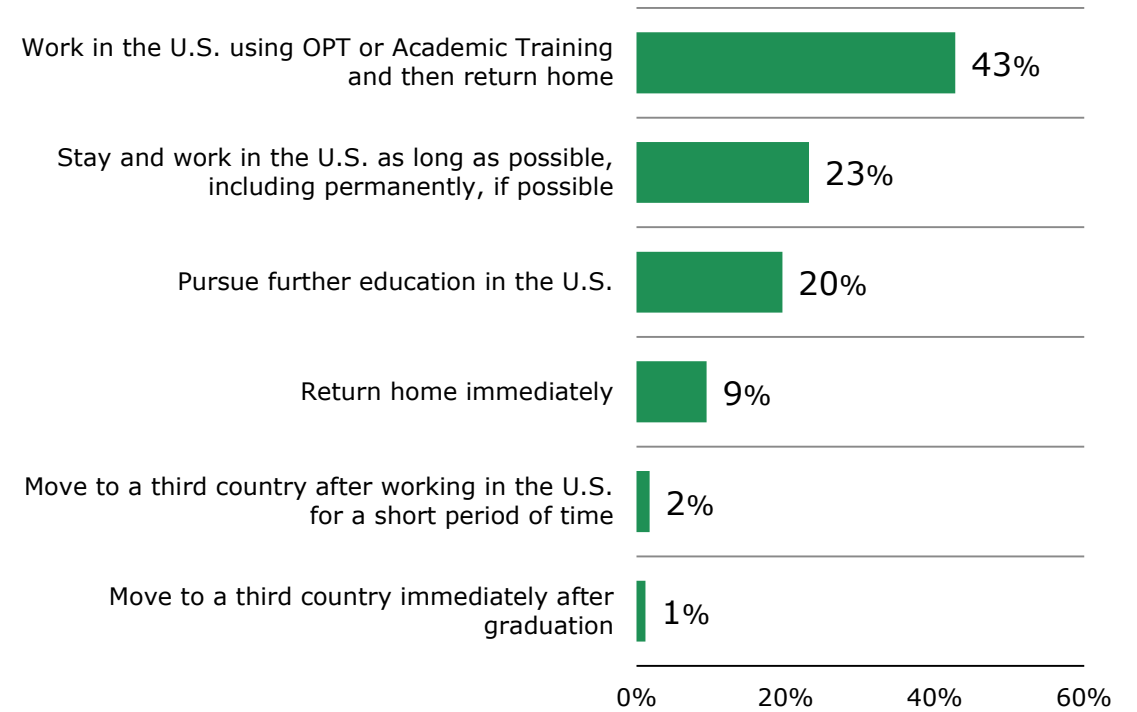


n = 1,095

Q: *Alumni*: When you first enrolled in your most recent U.S. institution, what were the top 2 options you were considering for shortly after graduation? (Select up to 2 options)

NOTE: "Other" and "Not sure" are removed from both charts (each received a 1% answer rate).

Main Intention at Time of Graduation

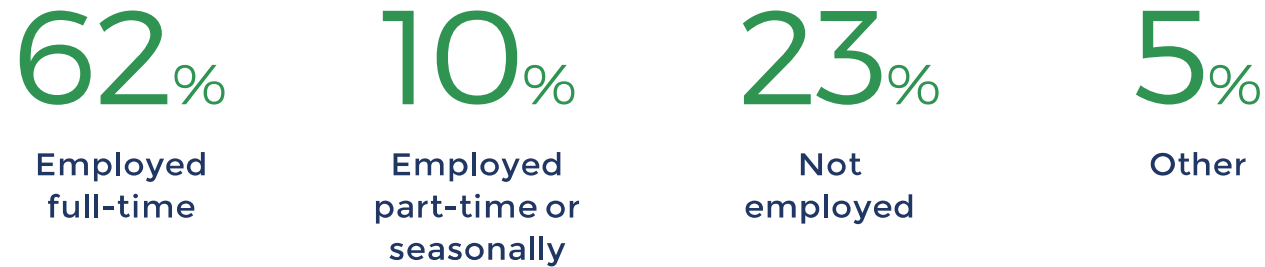


n = 1,095

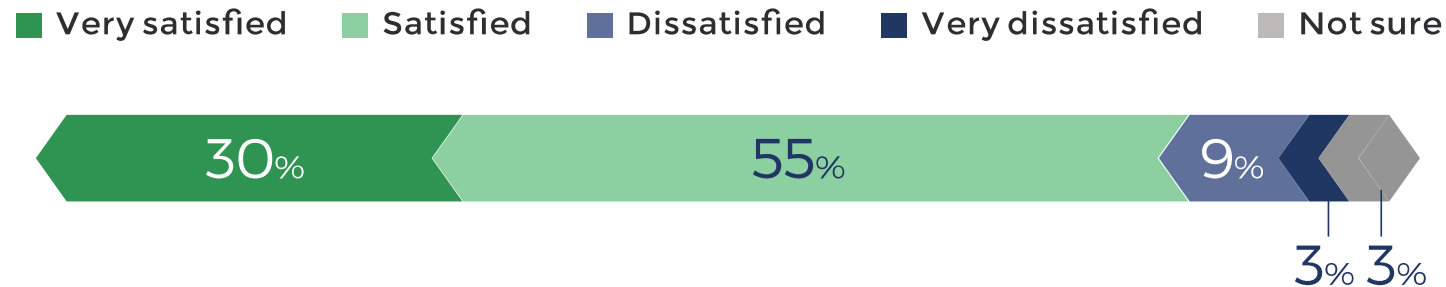
Q: *Alumni*: At graduation, what was your main intention? (Please select your first choice.)

Good News: A Majority of Alumni are Employed and Satisfied with their Jobs

Employment Status (n=1,095)



Satisfaction with Current Job (Employed Alumni) (n=846)

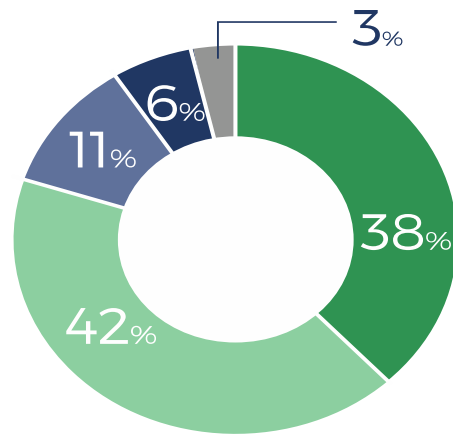


A: Only alumni respondents who are employed answered this question

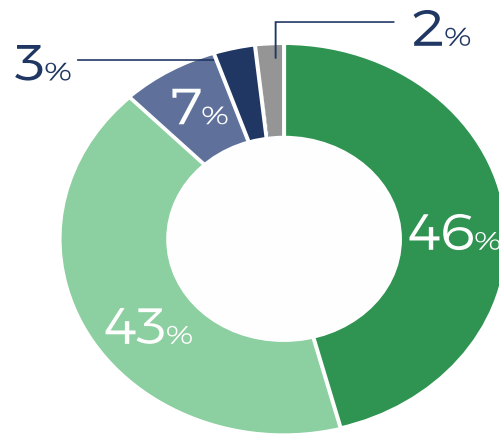
Most Employed Alumni Believe that their Jobs are Relevant to their Backgrounds

Relevance of Current Job to Education and Background (Employed Alumni) (n=846)

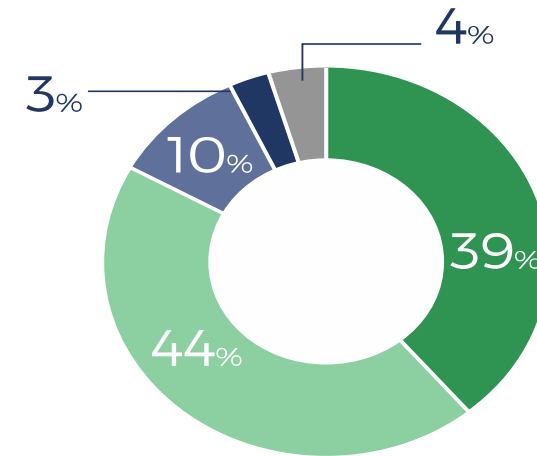
Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree Not sure



My current position is related to the highest level degree that I received from my U.S. institution.



My current position utilizes my knowledge and skills.

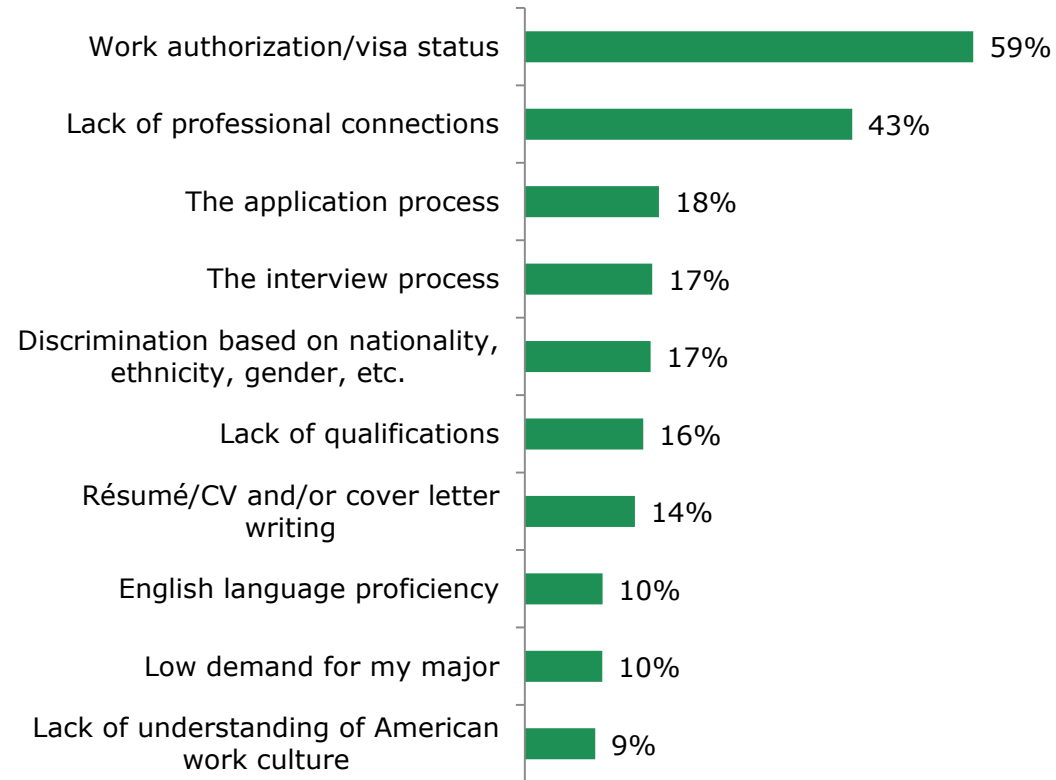


There are opportunities for career advancement in my current position.

N=846

While in the U.S., Work Authorization is the Biggest Professional Challenge

Work Challenges while Students



N=2,162

Q for Current Students: Please select up to 3 top challenges that you have encountered in finding jobs or internships in the U.S.

[NOTE: "I have not (yet) applied for a job or internship in the U.S." removed from chart above.]

Work Challenges among Alumni in the U.S.

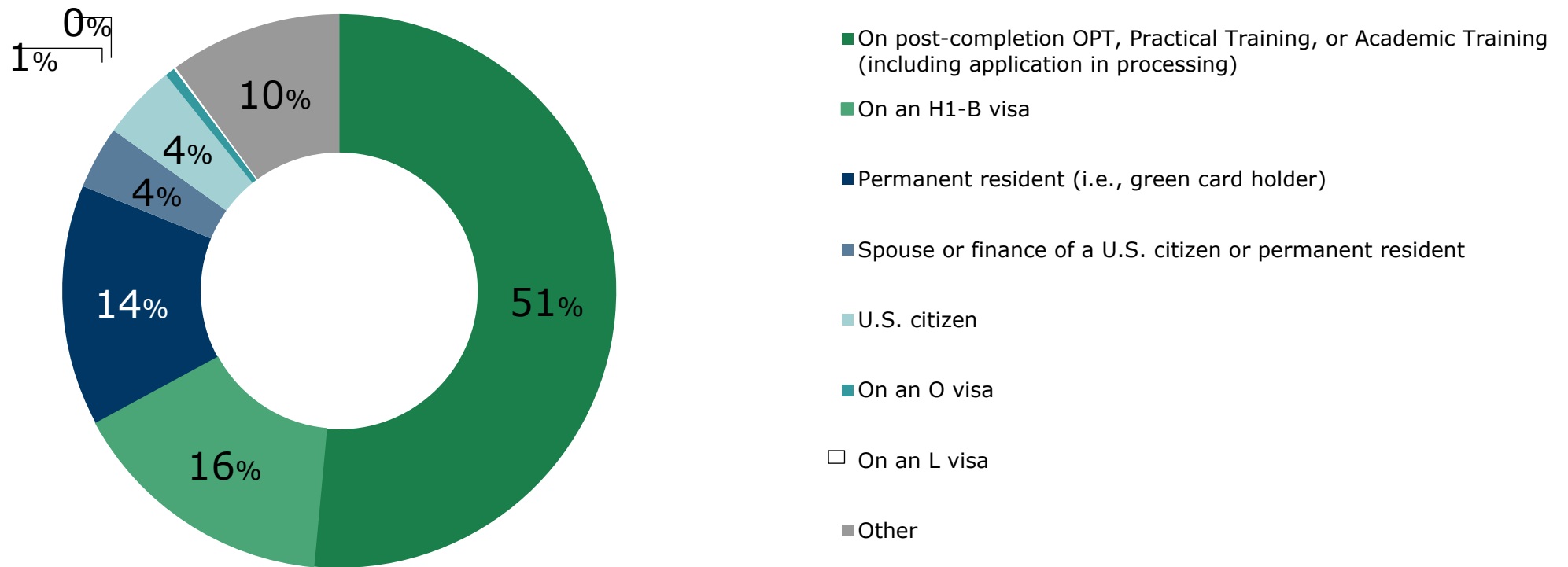


N=845

Q: Please select up to 3 top challenges that you have encountered in finding jobs in the U.S. upon or after graduation.

Most Alumni in the U.S. are on OPT or Academic Training

Alumni Current Status in the United States



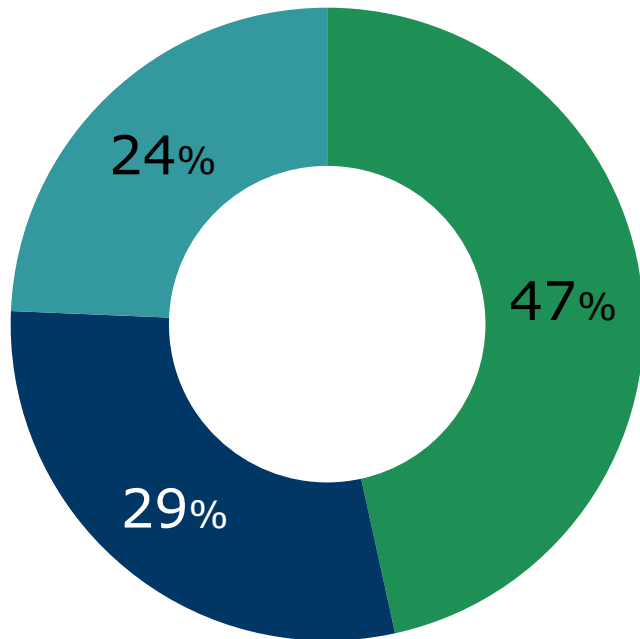
77% of alumni respondents were in the U.S.

n = 845

Almost Half of Students who Returned Home did so mostly for Work-related Reasons

Considerations in Returning Home*

■ Work-visa driven ■ Lifestyle-relationship driven ■ Equal



Top work/visa reasons**

Found a good job opportunity in my home country	33%
Unable to gain work visa sponsorship (e.g., H1-B visa)	31%
Unable to find a good job opportunity in the U.S.	31%
Good economic outlook in my home country	26%

Top lifestyle/relationship reasons**

Missed my family and friends back home	39%
Missed my country, community, and/or culture	26%
The cost of living in the U.S. or lower cost of living back home	25%
Better standard of living or lifestyle back home	25%

*Q1: Which of the following statements is most true for you? My decision to move home was: 1) Entirely based on work- and/or visa-related reasons; 2) Mostly based on work- and/or visa-related reasons; 3) Based equally upon work/visa-related reasons and lifestyle/relationship-related reasons; 4) Mostly based on lifestyle- and/or relationship-related reasons; 5) Entirely based on lifestyle- and/or relationship-related reasons

**A: Respondents could select up to three options.

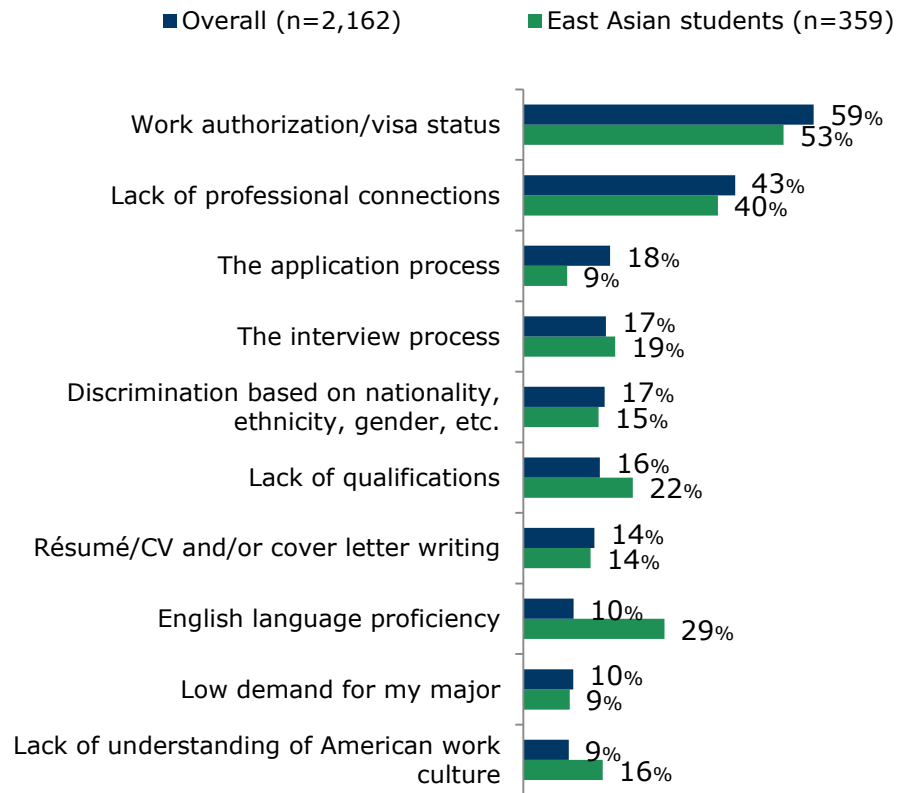
n=189

Part VI:

Highlights by Region of Origin

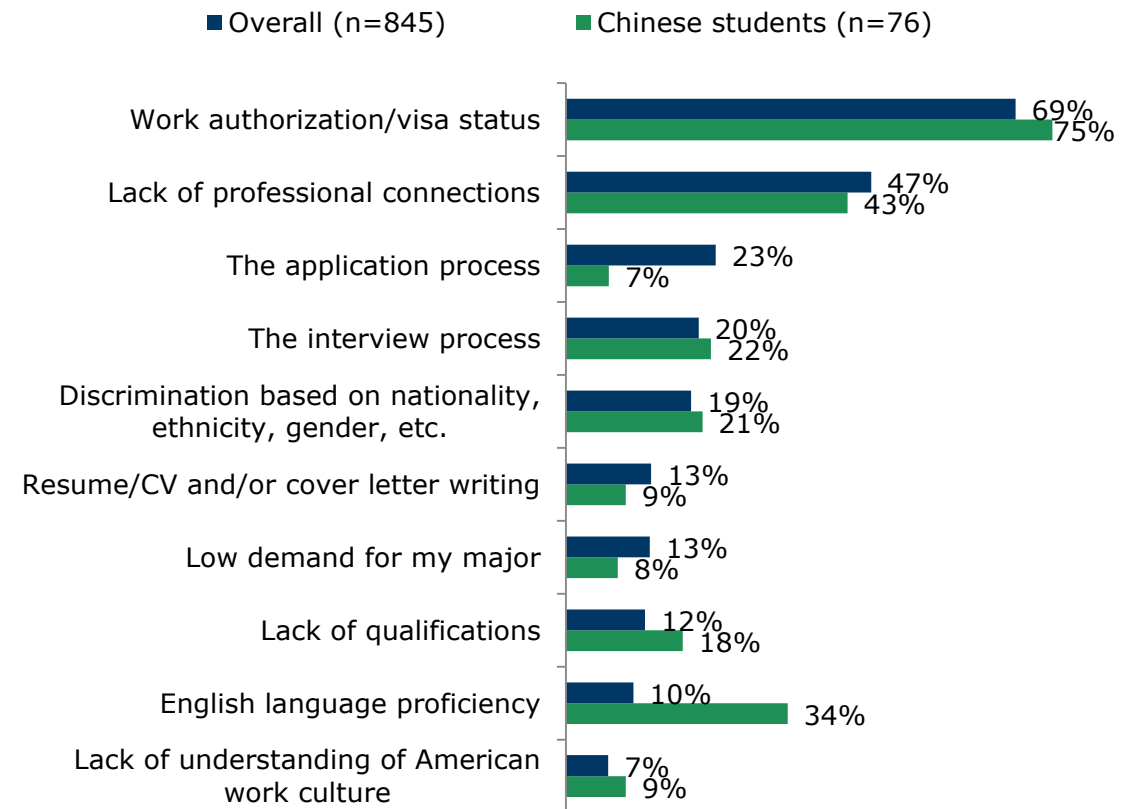
East Asian Students often Struggle with English Throughout their Time in the U.S.

Work Challenges While Students



Q for Current Students: Please select up to 3 top challenges that you have encountered in finding jobs or internships in the U.S.
 [NOTE: "I have not (yet) applied for a job or internship in the U.S." removed from chart above.]

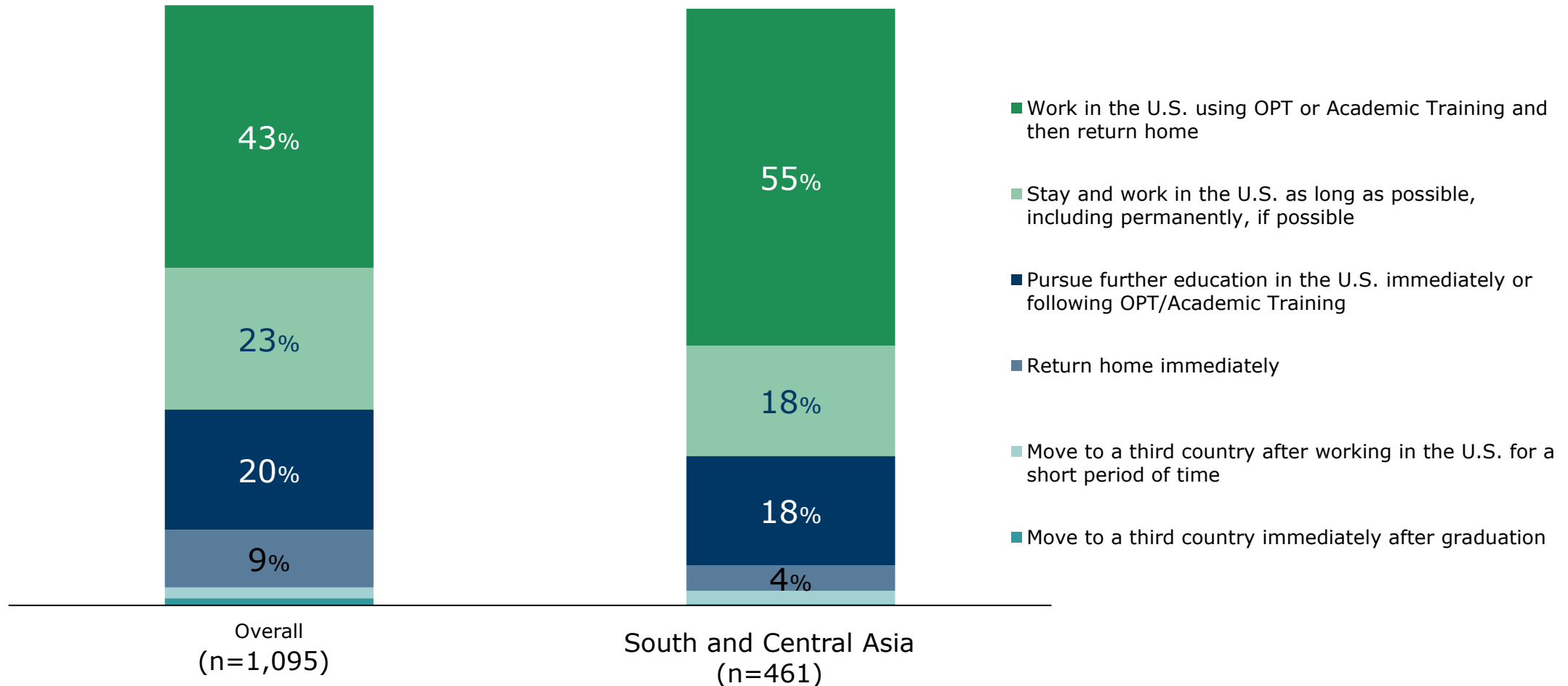
Work Challenges among Alumni in the U.S.



Q: Please select up to 3 top challenges that you have encountered in finding jobs in the U.S. upon or after graduation.

South & Central Asian Students are the Most Likely to Utilize Work Training

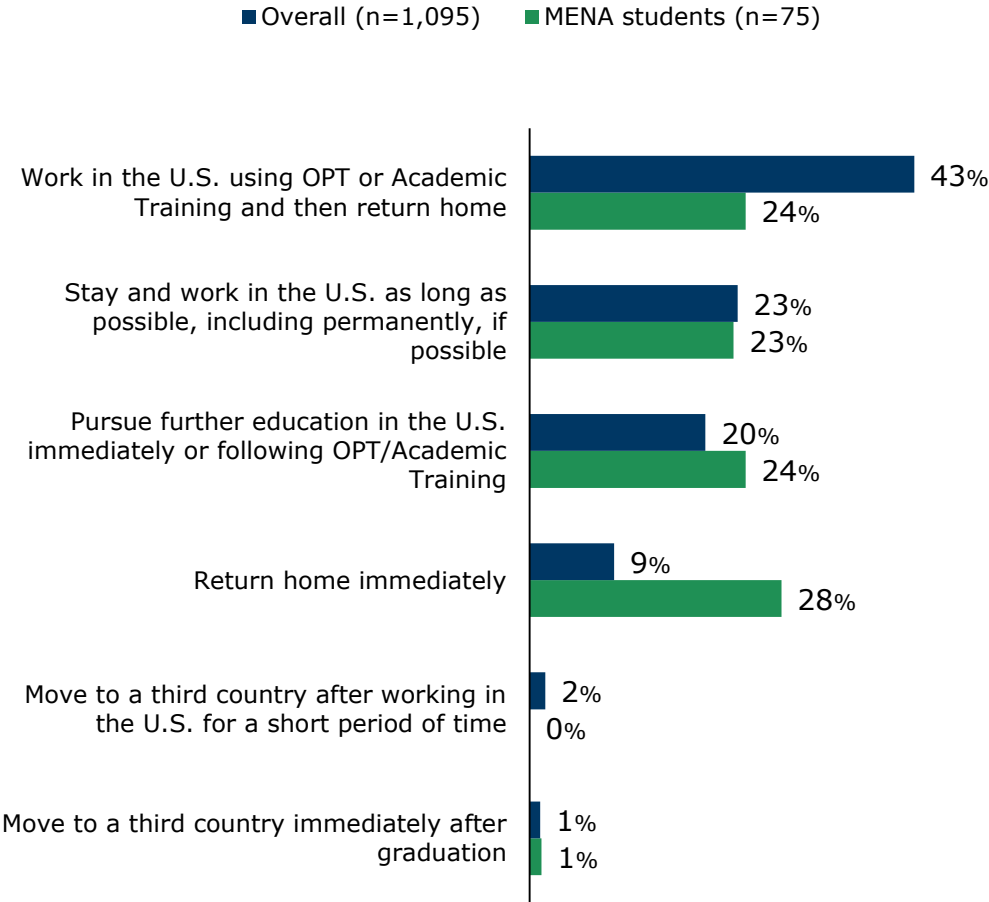
Main Intention at Graduation - Alumni



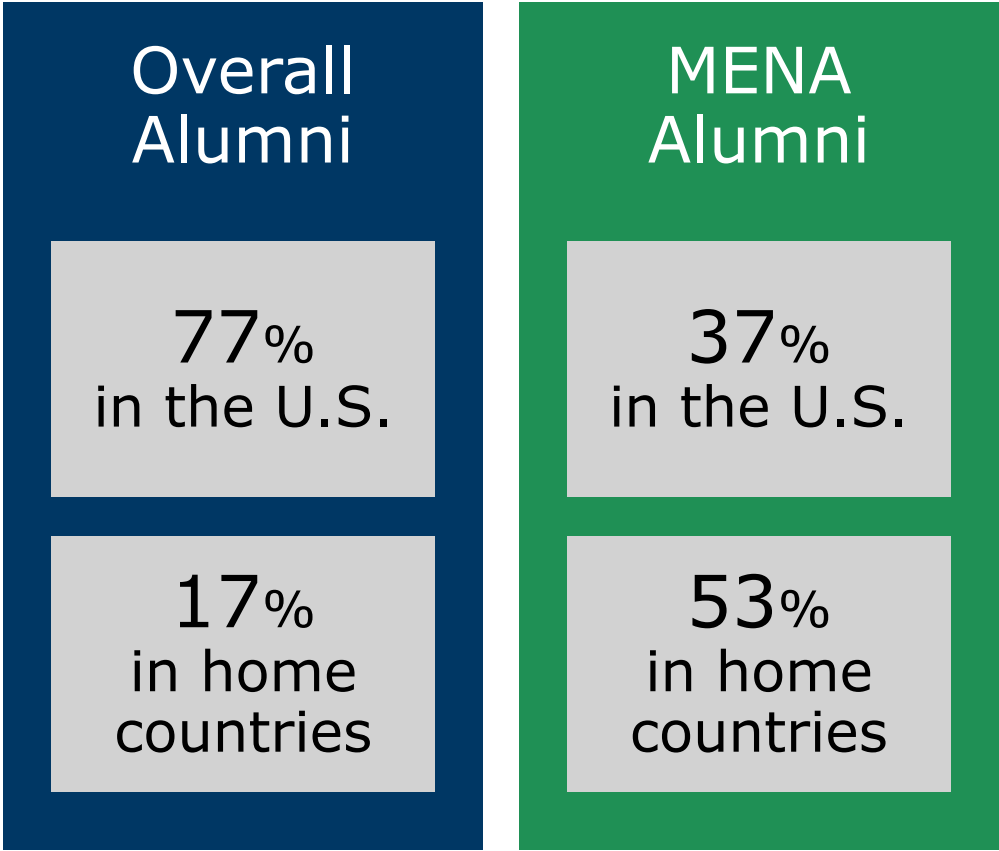
Q: At graduation, what was your main intention? (Please select your first choice.)

MENA Students are the Most Likely to Return Home Immediately, without Using OPT

Main Intention At Graduation - Alumni



Current Residences Of Alumni



European Students are Driven More by Lifestyle and Self-fulfillment Factors

Top Factors in Deciding Upon a Career (Current Students)

Factor	Europe (n=74)	Overall (n=1,067)
Passion for the work	57%	33%
Salary	38%	41%
Fit with my experience and skills	32%	29%
Opportunity to make an impact	28%	26%
Job flexibility and work-life balance	26%	23%

Q: Aside from visa-related issues, what factors are the most important to you for making a decision about your career?
Please select up to 3 choices.

*Source: WES, [Improving the International Student Experience](#)

European Students:

- Cited career factors as being “very important” much less often than students from elsewhere.
- Are much more likely to study abroad to experience living in another country.*
- Are more interested in the location of an institution, compared with other students.*

Latin American & Caribbean Students are the Most Likely to Look to Stay in the U.S.

53%

of LA&C respondents considered opportunities to stay in U.S. long-term & permanently “very important” when considering an institution
(compared with 44% overall)

81%

of LA&C current students want to use OPT or Academic Training after graduation
(compared with 75% overall)

66%

of LA&C current students want to stay and work after graduation or OPT/Academic Training
(compared with 63% overall)

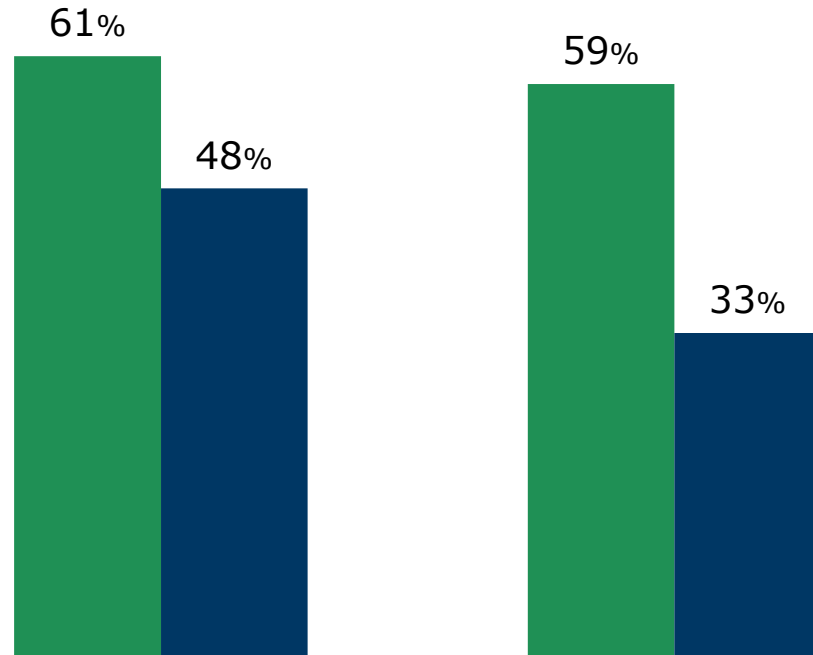
32%

of LA&C alumni chose staying in the U.S. long-term as their number one choice at graduation
(compared with 23% overall)

Sub-Saharan African Students are the Most Satisfied Overall

**Beliefs About U.S. Education
& Career Prospects - Current Students
("Strongly Agree")**

■ Sub-Saharan African students (n=140) ■ Overall (n=1,067)

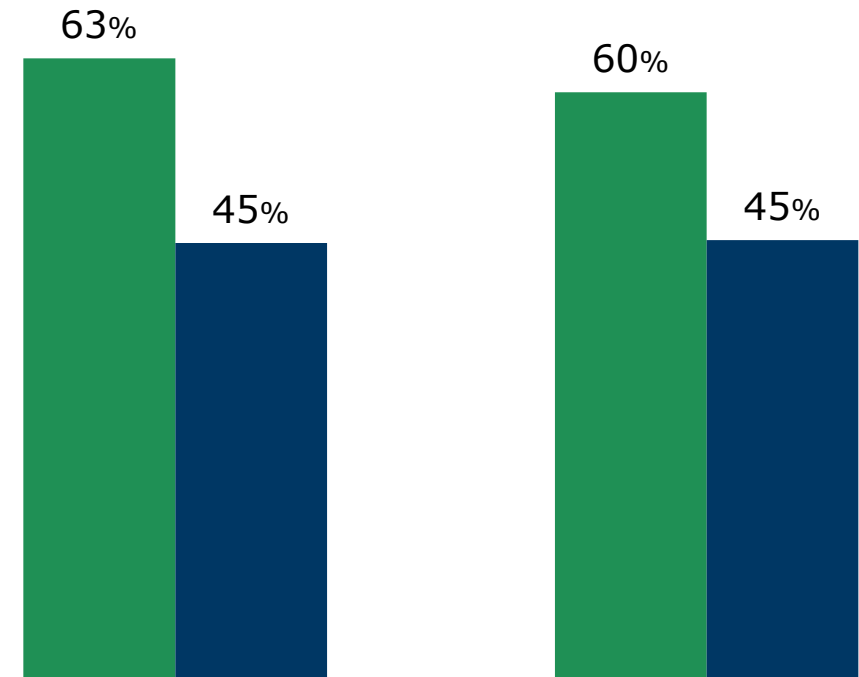


Overall, I believe studying in the U.S. has been a good investment for my future.

I feel positive about my career prospects and employability.

**Beliefs About U.S. Education
& Impact on Career – Alumni
("Strongly Agree")**

■ Sub-Saharan African students (n=115) ■ Overall (n=1,095)



Overall, I believe studying in the U.S. was a good investment for my future.

My U.S. education has had a positive impact on my career.

Part IV:

Recommendations

Promote the Career Services Office

- Start before the students arrive! Work with Enrollment Management.
- Promote at orientation.
- Follow up after orientation, however you can.
- Make the case for early career preparation.
- Have events for new students related to career engagement, such as fairs.

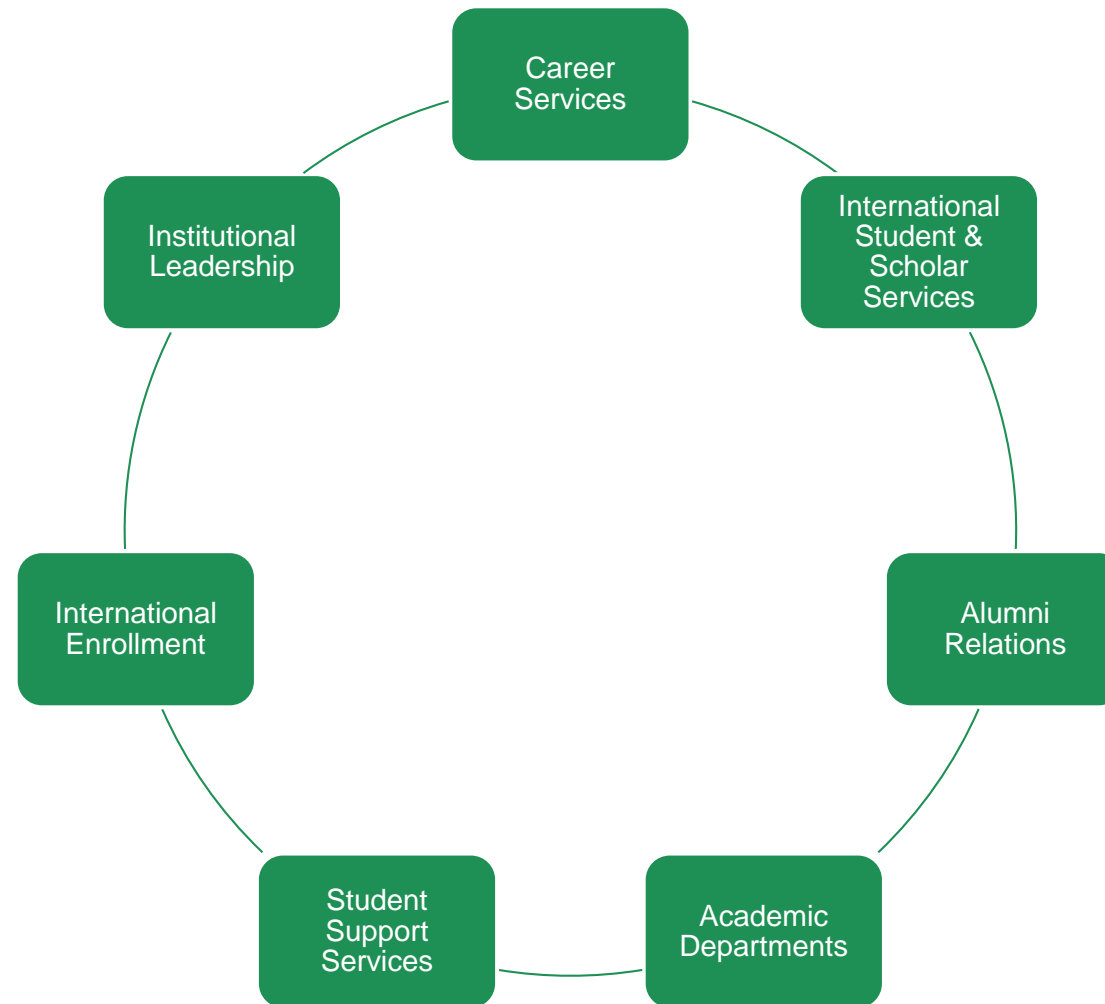
Help students with work authorization issues

- Ensure that the Career Services office is knowledgeable in the regulations.
- Make sure ISSS and Career Services have a good working relationship.
- Coach students on advocating for themselves.
- Educate employers in your network and advocate for international students.

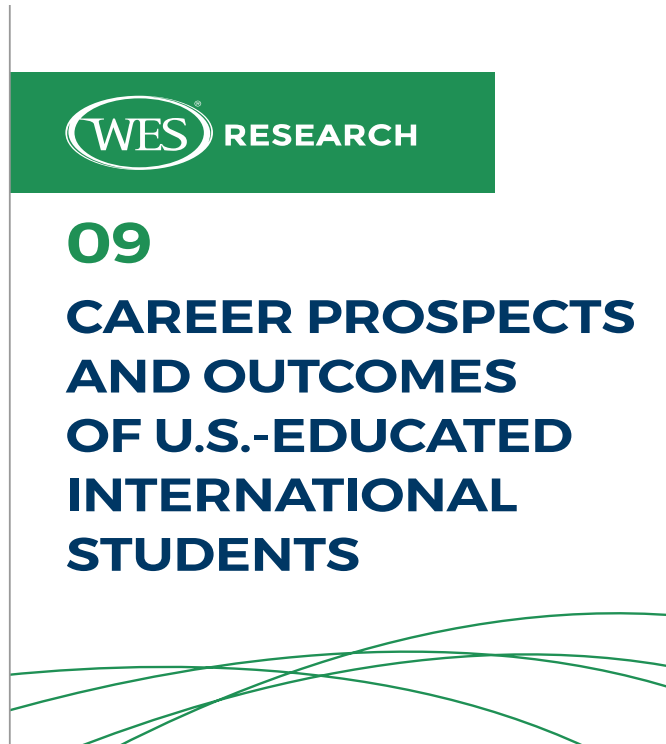
Think about helping students who leave the U.S.

- Match current students with alumni who are working back home or abroad, particularly in the student's field or industry.
- Promote and facilitate internships abroad during student breaks or during co-op programs.
- Develop a network of multinational companies.

Work together!



Resources



The full report is available at wes.org/career-outcomes.

Other relevant reports available at <https://www.wes.org/partners/research/>:

- *Career Services for International Students*
- *Improving the International Student Experience*

Article versions are available on WENR: <http://wenr.wes.org>

Dr. Ryan Buck
Texas State University

STEM Extension OPT

- Policy change implemented in Summer 2016
- STEM OPT required a completed form I-983 “Training Plan for STEM OPT Students”
- I-983 completed by the student and employer to document training, duties, opportunities, expectation, salary, company name, title, etc.
- Every 6 months information must be confirmed (employer information, personal address) through SEVIS Alerts
- After 12 months a self-report needs to be submitted to the International office
- If a student changes employer then a new I-983 is needed
- A International Office may work with a students record 5-7 times after the student graduates

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

OMB APPROVAL NO. 1653-0054
EXPIRATION DATE: 03-31-2019

TRAINING PLAN FOR STEM OPT STUDENTS

Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM) Optional Practical Training (OPT)

SECTION 1: STUDENT INFORMATION (Completed by Student)			
Student Name (Surname/Primary Name, Given Name):		Student Email Address:	
Name of School Recommending STEM OPT:	Name of School Where STEM Degree Was Earned:	SEVIS School Code of School Recommending STEM OPT (including 3-digit suffix):	
Designated School Official (DSO) Name and Contact Information:		Student SEVIS ID No.:	STEM OPT Requested Period (mm-dd-yyyy): From: _____ To: _____
Qualifying Major and Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) Code: _____			
Level/Type of Qualifying Degree: _____			
Date Awarded (mm-dd-yyyy): _____			
Based on Prior Degree? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
Employment Authorization Number: _____			
SECTION 2: STUDENT CERTIFICATION			
I declare and affirm under penalty of perjury that the statements and information made herein are true and correct to the best of my knowledge, information and belief. I understand that the law provides severe penalties for knowingly and willfully falsifying or concealing a material fact, or using any false document in the submission of this form.			
I certify that:			
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. I have reviewed, understood, and will adhere to this Training Plan for STEM OPT Students ("Plan");2. I will notify the DSO at the earliest available opportunity if I believe that my employer is not providing me with appropriate training as delineated on this Plan;3. I understand that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) may deny, revoke, or terminate the STEM OPT of students whom DHS determines are not engaging in OPT in compliance with the law, including the STEM OPT of students who are not, or whose employers are not, complying with this Plan;4. My practical training opportunity is directly related to the STEM degree that qualifies me for the STEM OPT extension; and5. I will notify the DSO at the earliest available opportunity regarding any material changes to or deviations from this Plan, including but not limited to, any change of Employer Identification Number resulting from a corporate restructuring, any nontrivial reduction in compensation from the amount previously submitted on the Plan that is not tied to a reduction in hours worked, any significant decrease in hours per week that I engage in a STEM training opportunity, and any decrease in hours below the 20-hours-per-week minimum required under this rule.			
Signature of Student: _____			
Printed Name of Student: _____		Date (mm-dd-yyyy): _____	



The Good and the Bad

- **Good news:**

- Students get an additional 7 months of STEM Extension OPT (17 months to 24 months)
- Mandated reporting which improves employment monitoring

- **Bad news:**

- A lot of work for companies, students, and our international office staff
- New compliance burden for our international office
- The SEVP rollout was less than clear
- Monitoring of records is labor intensive and tedious
- The amount of time spent on OPT record management has almost tripled



When we are given lemons...

- Provides rich new data on students and career related data
- We want to tell success stories of our international graduates
- Narratives are important for recruitment of students and stakeholders including institutional decision makers and public policy makers



Streamlining Processes

- Texas State rethinks online
- Designed a new process for both STEM Extension OPT and 12 month OPT
- Created a data collection form developed on our website
- Data entered into ISSM or spreadsheet



TEXAS STATE

Academic Affairs

International Office

[About Us](#) [New F-1 Students](#) [Current F-1 Students](#) [OPT & STEM](#) [Forms](#) [Department Resources](#) [Alumni](#) [Student Resources](#)

[Texas State](#) > [Academic Affairs](#) > [International Office](#) > [O](#)

OPT STEM Extension Submission Form

In order to complete the process you are required to **securely** upload the following documents to the International Office:

Last Name *

First Name *

Texas State ID # *

Initial Results: Salaries

Summary Table of STEM OPT:	
Number of STEM Students:	107
Average Annual Salary	\$64,075
Median Salary	\$65,000
High Salary	\$118,000
Low Salary	\$10,999

Initial Results: Where are they working?

- Understanding student employment trends
- Illustrating a degree's career prospectus



Mercedes-Benz



Initial Results: Which programs of study?

- 79% of the Texas State STEM OPT students earned a Computer Science degree
- Materials Science, Biology, and Engineering degrees are also represented in Texas State's data
- The data help link degree programs and employers
- Advisors and departmental recruiters appreciate these data when sharing information about a specific program

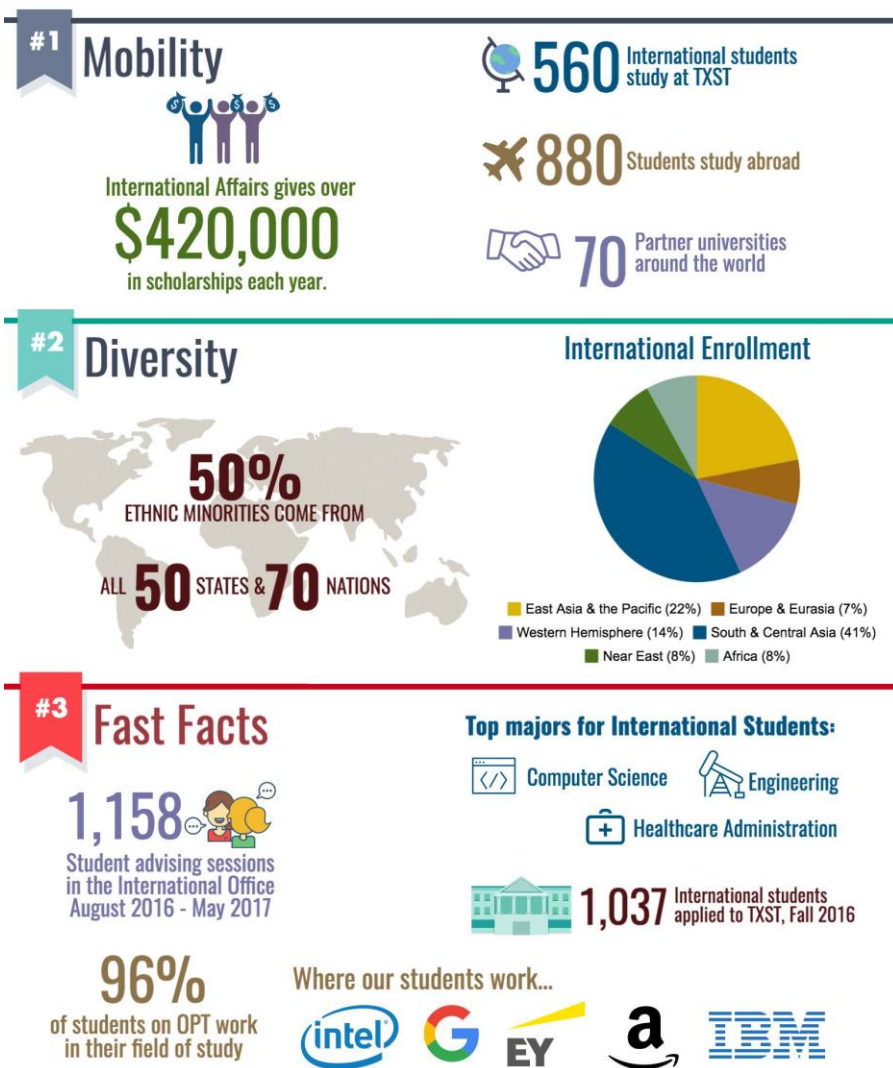
Tell Your Story

- Compliment first destination surveys (National Association of Colleges and Employers)
- Enhance advancement efforts
- Increase student enrollment
- Attract more top employers



Please Share

- Enrollment Management
- Career services
- Institutional Advancement
- Academic Departments
- Institutional leadership
- Marketing collateral on- and off-campus



Challenges and Solutions

- Labor intensive monitoring
- Share labor costs with Career Services or Advancement?
- Wait! The SEVP Portal is coming
- The data collection may be laborious, but the data is powerful