## Cultural Differences

This document includes information that Middlebury College’s Center for Careers & Internships (CCI) highlighted as part of its Fall 2016 presentation entitled: *The U.S. Job Search for International Students*. In November 2016, this information was posted on the Loyola Marymount University website, with credit to the University of Minnesota.

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<th>U.S. Employer Expectations</th>
<th>Values in Other Cultures</th>
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| **Self-Promotion Expected** | • Sharing specific skills, strengths and accomplishments seen as boastful  
• Focusing on individual experiences and goals seen as too individualistic |
| • Talk openly about skills and strengths  
• Share examples of past excellent performance  
• Openly discuss future goals and interest in advancement | |
| **Direct Communication** | • Questions are often answered vaguely and constructive criticism is avoided even if feedback is requested |
| • Open and direct responses to questions are expected | |
| **Body Language** | • Light/limp handshake may be more common  
• Handshakes/touching may be inappropriate between men and women  
• Direct eye contact may be seen as disrespectful, rude or a sign of physical attraction  
• Crossing legs and/or showing the soles of your shoes may be perceived as rude |
| • Firm hand shake shows confidence  
• Direct eye contact is expected and is seen to show honesty and confidence  
• Crossing legs is common | |
| **Informality and Self Disclosure** | • Questions about likes, dislikes or hobbies would be seen as an invasion of privacy/inappropriate  
• Interviews are more formal and candidates would show much respect to interviewer  
• Using first names would be too informal |
| • Questions regarding likes, dislikes and hobbies are not unusual  
• Interviews may be conversational and include humor or joking  
• First names are sometimes used | |
| **Career Plans and Direction** | • Job seekers may have chosen profession due to family or government expectations  
• Career goals are defined by company and community needs, not individual preferences  
• Company or manager assign work tasks and individual must accept what is available/assigned |
| • Candidates are expected to be passionate about the field and why they chose it  
• Short term and long term career goals should be clearly articulated by the candidate  
• Candidates may be able to request specific job responsibilities they most enjoy | |
| **Individual Responsibility in Job Search** | • Family and/or government may assign you to jobs  
• Someone may act as an agent to “place” candidates into a job |
<p>| • Job seekers are responsible for finding positions on their own and may use many resources to aide this including the online tools, family, friends, faculty, networking contacts, career services etc. | |</p>
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| • Candidates are expected to arrive for interviews 5-15 minutes before the start time  
• Being late would be seen negatively by the employer | • Significant lateness from scheduled meeting time is not uncommon  
• Relationships are seen as more important than timeliness |
| **Resumes**                |                          |
| • Resumes are typically 1-2 pages and tailored to the specific job and or field  
• Date of birth, social security number, marital status, gender and photos would never be included | • Resumes are often called Curriculum Vitae (CV) and often include a more comprehensive overview of all experience and education  
• Personal data is more commonly included in the resume. |
| **Company Research & Questions** |                  |
| • Candidates are expected to research the company thoroughly prior to the interview  
• Questions of the employer during the interview are expected and show genuine interest | • Researching the company before the interview may indicate excessive interest  
• Asking questions during the interview may be seen as disrespectful |
| **Follow Up**              |                          |
| • Following up after interviews via thank you notes and calls or emails to determine the status of an application is considered appropriately assertive | • Asking an employer about the status of a job application would be seen as rude |
| **Equality**               |                          |
| • Age, race, gender should not impact the interviewing relationship  
• Laws protect candidates from discrimination based on age, race, gender, national origin, marital status, religion, and disability | • Males are expected to dominate interactions with females  
• Younger candidates defer to older professionals  
• Laws may not protect candidates from discrimination |

Other factors to consider:  
- Vacation, Sick & Maternity Leave is not guaranteed in the U.S. and is generally up to the employer.  
- Health insurance is generally provided by employers. There is no government-sponsored healthcare and individually purchased insurance can be quite expensive. Remember to plan for this during the job search.

**Note:** These values do not represent one particular culture, but those that may be true across a variety of cultures around the globe.
