Making On-Campus Jobs Pay for Your Studies in America by Sarrfraj Ahmed

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You can choose from a host of job options on campus to pay your way through university and earn some pocket money. After figuring out financial aid and housing options, the next question on the minds of most students coming to the USA is how to pay for their living expenses. On campus jobs, offered at most universities are a great way to get a waiver on the tuition fee, some extra cash, job experience and work experience in America.

Most international students are eligible to work for 20 hours a week on campus in their first year and 40 hours a week during summer and spring breaks. After a year, many universities allow you to do part-time off-campus jobs. Visa rules are strict, and it is important to check with your university about the specific rules that govern your situation.

On-campus jobs fall into four basic categories: Research Assistantships (RA), Teaching Assistantships (TA), and industry jobs through the university and hourly service jobs around campus. In research assistantships, you are usually attached to a professor in your department. Research assistantships are coveted by Masterâ€™s students as they often come with a tuition waiver along with a monthly stipend.

An RA adds a lot to your resume, who completed her masterâ€™s in economics from the University of Nebraska- Lincoln. You get to work with the latest research in your field. It gives you a head start on your thesis and sometimes, you can also take a professorâ€™s more general research forward in a specific area and publish a paper.

Teaching assistantships (TA) are more common among PhD students. To get an assistantship, it pays to be proactive and early. Your GPA, past work experience, communications skills are all important criteria and it is a good idea to start reaching out to professors in your area of interest while you are still in India.

Corporate jobs through university collaborations offer opportunities to build a network, gain practical skills and local work experience. They are often competitive â€” so grades and past work experience all matter.

Start searching your universityâ€™s jobsite while still in India, and start applying right away. Take whatever you get and then continue the search. University jobs in the service sector, such as the cafeteria, security, library, and administration are also good options. Use university job boards and reach out to seniors who may refer you to who is hiring.

An on-campus job is not easy. In many cases, it is critical to maintain a good GPA to hold on to your job. It gets very hectic. But juggling an on-campus job is as much a part of the Indian student rite of passage in the US as worrying about visas and experiencing bouts of homesickness.

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