

Overview Overview

For international students entering the field of international education, lack of work experience and/or work authorization issues present major concerns. Can qualifications such as academic background, leadership activities or internship overcome these obstacles? Find out how students can play an active role in their job search and how ISAs can respond to the career development needs of their students.

Presenters

Jin Abe, M.A.

**Counseling and
Student Affairs**

As Admissions/Program Coordinator, Jin advises international students, coordinates international events, conducts training and orientation, evaluates educational credentials for admission, recruits students overseas for Western Michigan University (WMU). When he quit IBM Japan to enter WMU's graduate program in 1996, he had little background or training in International Education – other than that he attended high school and college in the U.S. To date, the 2.5 years of master's training at WMU was the most intense, critical, and fruitful period of his professional transition. He owes much of his success to his graduate advisor, NAFSA mentors and colleagues, fate, and WMU's international student advisors with whom he currently works. He can be contacted at 616.387.5859; jin.abe@wmich.edu.

**Rodolfo
("Rudie")
Altamirano,
Ph.D.**

**International
Resource
Development
with
specialization in
Cross-Cultural
Communications**

is the Director of International Center at the University of Michigan. Rudie earned both his master's and doctoral degrees from Michigan State University. His field of specialization is International Resource Development and Cross Cultural Communications. At the University of Michigan, he manages and supervises the smooth functioning, procedures, planning, direction and coordination of staff (18 regular staff and 30 temporary employees) and seven departmental areas/units (International Student and Scholar Advising unit, Faculty and Immigration Advising unit, Programs, Project and Information Technology unit, Administrative and Support Services area, Overseas Opportunities Office, National Council for International Visitors area, Peace Corps program). He brings considerable experience in cross-cultural programming and expertise. He has presented and conducted more than 200 cross-cultural communication and conflict resolution workshops nationally and internationally. His quest for learning has taken him to beautiful places in Europe, Asia, and the Americas. He cherishes meeting students from all corners of the world because of the cross-cultural learning opportunities that are within his grasp. On the other hand, he savors sharing his cultural experiences not only through formal workshops that he conducts but also through the informal interactions that he has with students, scholars, staff and faculty. He is greatly fascinated with learning the cultures and languages of the world. He can be contacted at 734.764.9310; rudiea@umich.edu.

**Yating Chang,
M.A.**

**Cross-cultural
Psychology**

is the Study Abroad Advisor at Western Kentucky University (WKU). She coordinates and promotes WKU study abroad programs, and enjoys helping both students and faculty members to gain international experience at WKU. Chang came to University of Oregon in 1996. As a college sophomore, Chang studied abroad in Vienna, Austria for three months, which was a life-changing and life-shaping experience, for she recognized the importance of international perspective to her future career and lifestyle. Being both an international student and a study abroad participant, Chang is dedicated to playing a dynamic role in the field of international education. It is Chang's wish to share about her experience with people, and she hopes that others can benefit by gaining international experience for themselves. She can be contacted at 270.745.6398; yating.chang@wku.edu.

**Ravi Shankar,
M.A., M.S.**

is the Director of the International Office at Northwestern University in Evanston, IL. A self-described Global Nomad, he brings over 15 years of personal and professional experience. His foray into the world of International Education was determined by fate, rather than by design. Karmic forces notwithstanding, he is an interculturalist by profession and avocation, having grown up in the UK, India and Africa. He has presented numerous workshops on intercultural communication and F-1 regulations. At present, he is the Region V CIPP-RR for student cases and enjoys the interpretive process. He can be contacted by email: r-shankar@northwestern.edu.

Tips for students

1. Volunteer at your international office, even if it means being at the reception desk. And get started early in your academic career.
2. Travel, Travel, Travel; then integrate the study abroad experience into your education.
3. Actively participate in related campus activities and programs.
4. Utilize NAFSA job registry. Better yet, volunteer at NAFSA Job Registry.
5. Seek mentors who can help you -- grad advisors, conferences (especially through Regional, Special Interest Groups, Mentor-Mentee programs).
6. Present and volunteer at NAFSA national and regional levels
7. Use research classes (if you are still a student) to develop a project, submit for a presentation, write for publication, apply for grants, etc.
8. Feel the force with you – and when its' with you, ride that wave as far as you can!!

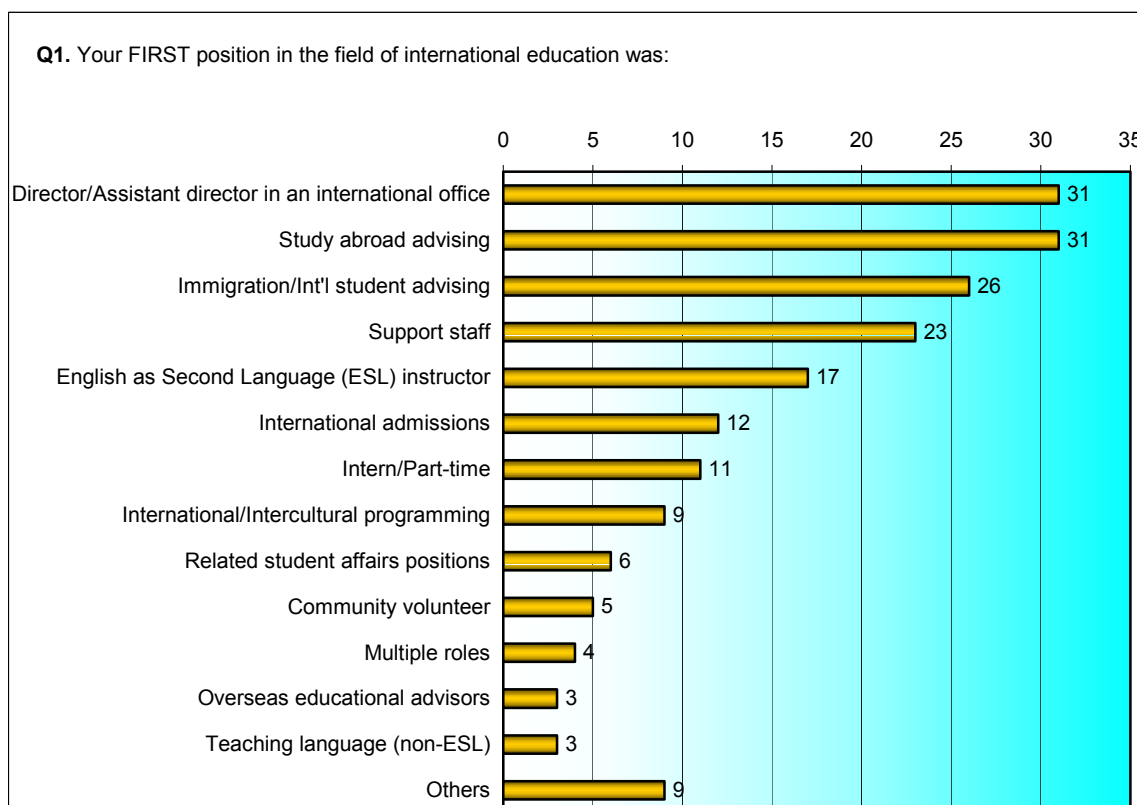
Resources

- Abe, J. & Chang, Y. (2002). *Survey: Entry into the field of international education*. Retrieved from NAFSA Region V Web site: <http://www.region5.nafsa.org/survey>
- Mueller, S. L. (1999). *Careers in International Education, Exchange, and Development : Selected Resources*. Washington, D.C.: NAFSA: Association of International Educators.
- O'Conner, K. (1996). Graduate programs in international education. *International Educator*, 5 (3), 4-5.

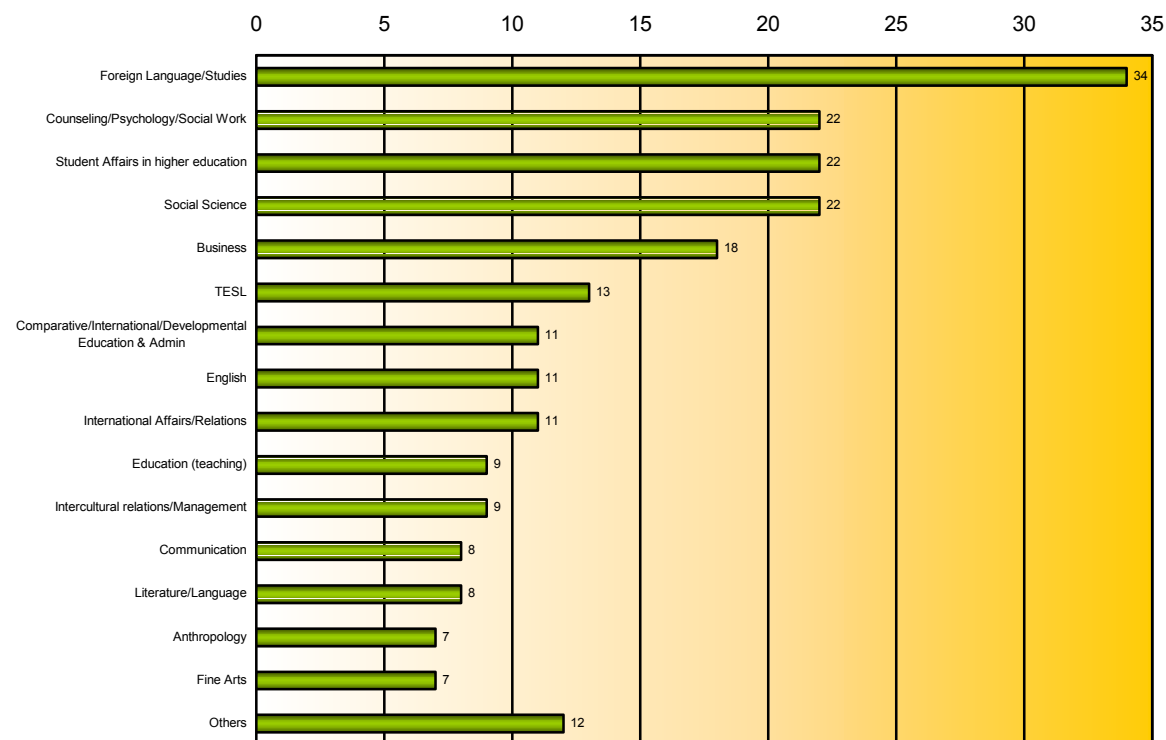
Survey: Entry Into the Field of International Education

Respondent's Profile

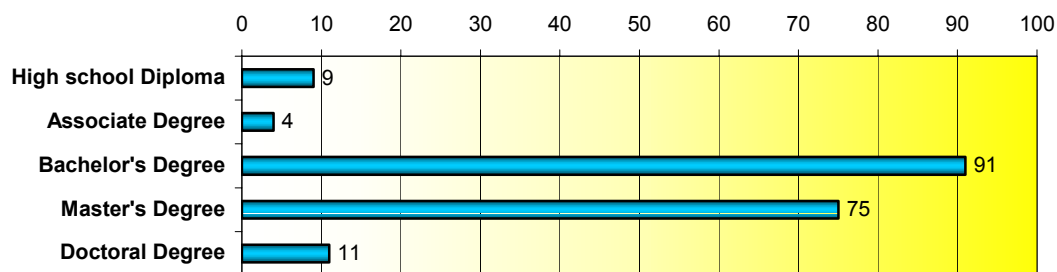
Demographics			Years in the field		
Total responded	190	100.0%	Range	0 to 39 years	
			Median	7 years	
U.S born	161	84.7%			
Female	117	61.6%			
Male	43	22.6%	3 or less	47	24.7%
Unspecified	1	0.5%	4-6 years	39	20.5%
			7-9 years	30	15.8%
Foreign born	29	15.3%	10 or more	74	38.9%
Female	18	9.5%			
Male	11	5.8%			



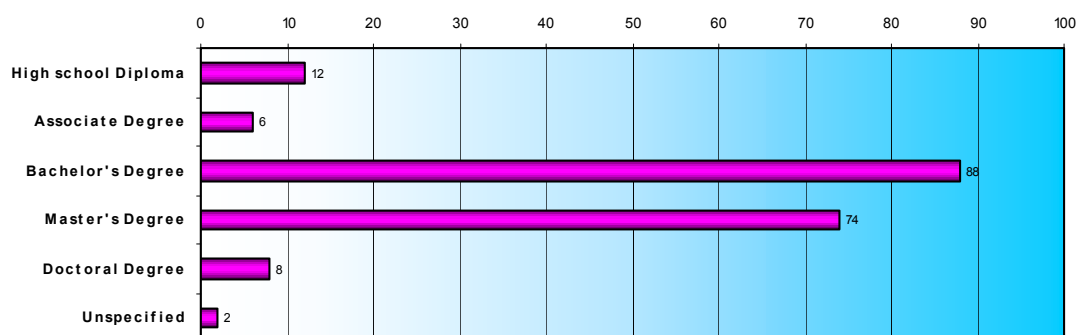
Q2. What academic discipline did you possess at the time you applied for your FIRST position (multiple answers)?



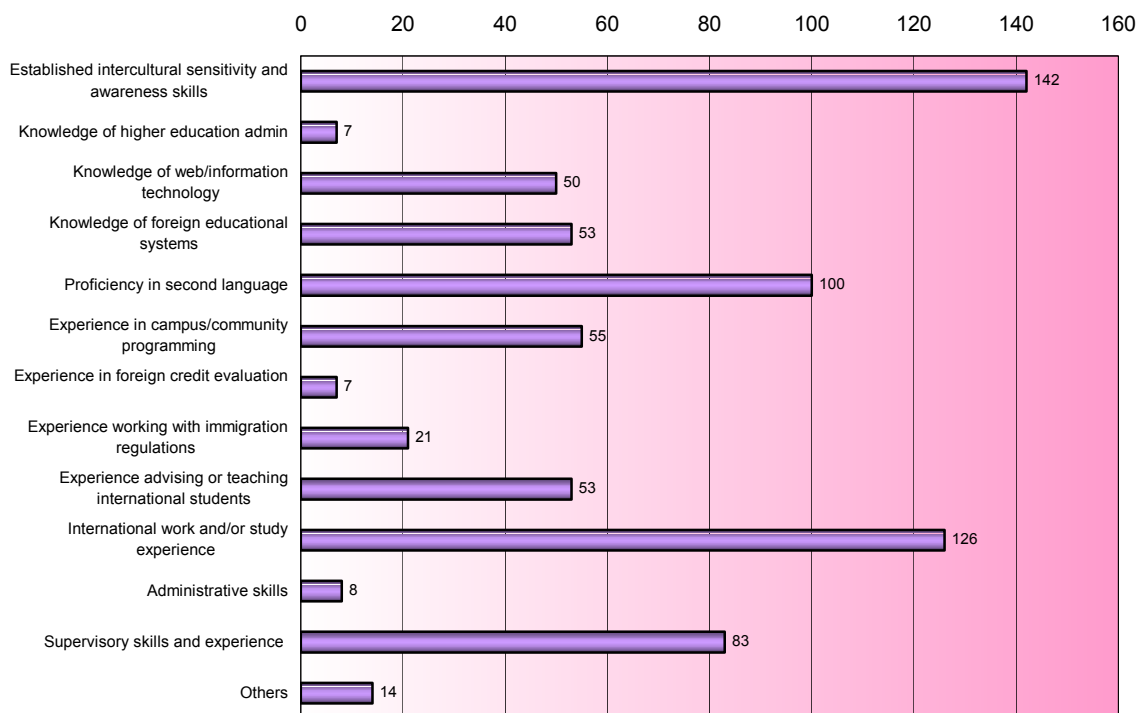
Q3. What was the highest academic degree you had attained at the time you applied for the FIRST position?



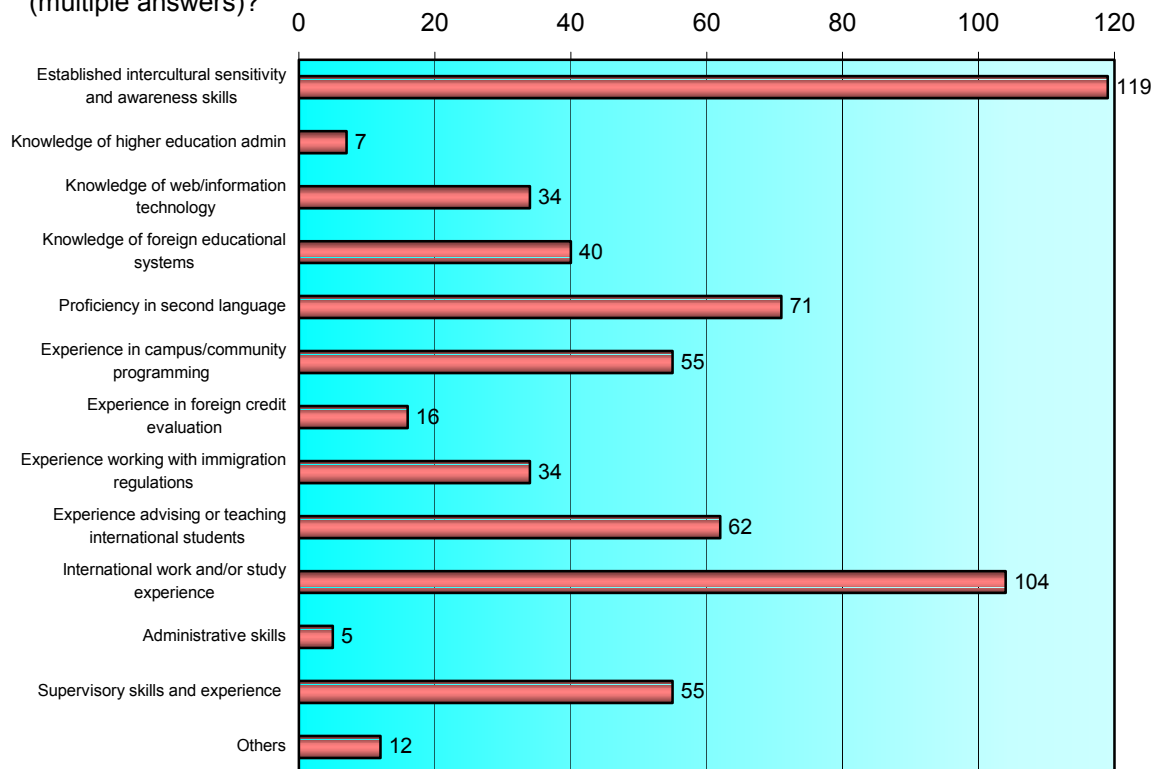
Q4. What was the preferred degree sought for the FIRST position?



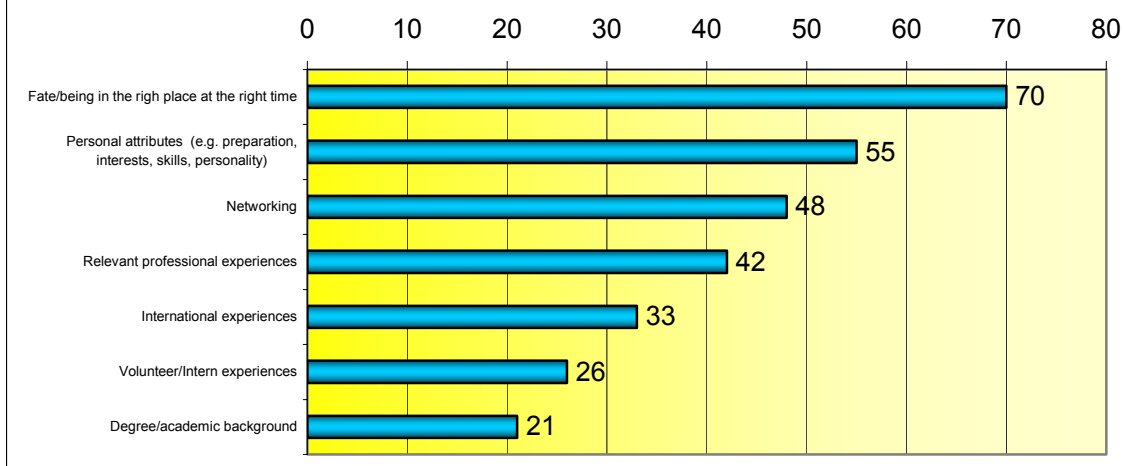
Q5. What qualification did you have at the time you applied for the FIRST position (multiple answers)?



Q6. What were the preferred qualifications sought for the FIRST position (multiple answers)?



Q7. Looking back at your FIRST position as an international educator, what do you think was the key to securing that position (open-ended question)?



Sample responses to Q7

"Willingness & eagerness to start at the 'bottom' and work (prove) myself in the profession. First position was as an international admissions secretary, was then promoted to international admissions assistant; moved on to serve as an international admissions counselor; have since moved once again and now serve as an assistant director for international admissions. Attribute success to a lot of self-educating and help from colleagues."

"After completing a MA degree in Comparative and International Education I was in the library looking at the Chronicle of Higher Education. A fellow student was also there. I asked him what types of jobs he was applying for and he answered 'foreign student advising'. I was not even aware that such jobs existed. He showed me an ad for a position at a school. We both applied and were the top two candidates. I got the job."

"The position was below entry-level (I was basically the secretary in the International Students Office and a little on the over-qualified side): I think the main things that helped were the fact that they knew me (from working across the hall, I don't know if that counts as networking) and that I already had much more international experience than the average applicant for a job as a Secretary. Six months later that position blossomed into a full-time benefit eligible position as half Study Abroad Advisor and half program assistant for incoming International Exchange students. Perhaps fate? I'll let you guys pick the words!"

"Networking, knowing someone who knew someone who was looking for a grad assistant in their office--some fate, too, I didn't KNOW then that international education was the field I wanted to work in. It was more of an academic interest in intercultural communication and psychology then."

"I worked hard on having valuable experiences (internships, study abroad experiences, international student involvement, attendance at past NAFSA conferences) listed on my resume when I applied."

"Bad fate."