

# Job Search Handbook

## Job Search for International Students

International students oftentimes encounter difficulties obtaining employment in the United States. The challenges and issues that American students face can be compounded by a number of factors including immigration laws and a potential language barrier.

However, planning ahead and understanding the employment process and culture in the host country can help reduce anxiety. This guide is intended to provide international students with an overview of the information they will need to be familiar with in order to successfully search for jobs and potentially secure employment. It is by no means intended to be comprehensive, but it represents an important step toward achieving career success in the U.S.

## Career Services & International Student Services

Career Services works in partnership with employers and the campus community to assist students and alumni to develop and implement effective job search strategies. We hope that by reading these handouts the student will be able to conduct a successful job search. If you have any questions, or need additional information, please stop by Sheridan Hall 214, call (785) 628-4260, or email [careers@fhsu.edu](mailto:careers@fhsu.edu). Also feel free to visit us on the web at [www.fhsu.edu/career](http://www.fhsu.edu/career).

International Student Services assists international students with all their orientation and immigration needs. ISS helps international students from the initial application process through graduation. They provide the students with immigration advising, prepare international students for life at FHSU, guide new students via a weeklong orientation program, conduct numerous workshops and activities to support academic success throughout international student's academic careers, and help international students adjust to life at Fort Hays State University and the U.S. You can contact the International Student Services Office by visiting the office, located in Sheridan Hall Room 204. You can also call the office at (785) 628-4176 or email us at [international@fhsu.edu](mailto:international@fhsu.edu). To learn more about our office you can view our website at [www.fhsu.edu/international](http://www.fhsu.edu/international).



**VISA Information:**

There are basic requirements which must be met for any F-1 employment:

- The student must currently be in valid F-1 status or J-1 (student) status and in good academic standing.
- The student must be enrolled in a full course load of either 12 credit hours as an undergraduate or 9 credit hours as a graduate student.
- The student must maintain employment eligibility.

**Employment****On Campus Employment:**

F-1 students are generally permitted to work on-campus while attending school given that the basic requirements, listed above, are met. Most regulations demand the international students be limited to part-time, (20 hours per week) during fall and spring semester. You can be full time during winter and summer breaks. Working on-campus is a great way to build your resume and gain experience with working in a culture such as the U.S.

You will need a valid social security number in order to work in the U.S. Please contact the International Student Services Office to discuss the process of getting a social security card. In order to start the process of getting a social security card you will need a letter from the employer who is willing to hire you. This letter should be on letterhead and signed by the employer. The letter should say that you have been selected for employment and that they need the student to receive a social security number to finalize their employment.

**Off Campus Employment:****Curricular Practical Training (CPT)**

Students who are holding F1 Visas may be eligible for employment authorization through Curricular Practical Training (CPT) for work experience that is required of an established curriculum.

These experiences may include alternative work/study, internship, cooperative education, or any other type of required internship or practicum which is offered by sponsoring employers through cooperative agreements with the school.



If you have an academic program that requires you to do a practicum or internship; CPT may be the best option for you. If you are wondering if you qualify for CPT, please visit the ISS office to talk with an immigration advisor to discuss this possibility.

Students can engage in CPT on a part-time basis, (no more than 20 hours per week) during the fall and spring semester. The student can apply to work more than 20 hours during the winter and summer break. If the student is a graduate student working on a thesis or dissertation, full-time CPT may be an option. The employment will end after they complete their thesis or defend their dissertation, but not always, so be sure to consult with an immigration advisor in advance. It is important to know, if a student receives one year or more of full-time CPT experience they will automatically be ineligible for optional practical training (OPT).

### **Eligibility**

Students who are holding an F-1 Visa may be eligible for employment authorization through Curricular Practical Training for work experience that is required of an established curriculum.

If the student can prove the following, they may be eligible for CPT:

- The student must complete two full semesters (This includes enrolling in more than 12 undergraduate hours or 9 graduate hours each semester.)
- The student must maintain a valid I-20.
- The student must prove the training is required or an integral part of the established curriculum.
- The student must receive academic credit for the employment and the employment must be temporary in nature.
- The student must still be in the process of completing their degree.

If the academic curriculum for the student includes alternative work/study, internship or practicum there may be cooperative agreements between an employer and the school. You should talk with your academic advisor to ask about opportunities for work experience such as the ones above. This is a good way to find employment for CPT.



The approval process for CPT includes:

- The student needs to provide a letter outlining your experience.
- The student must present a prospective employment letter for a potential job opportunity. This letter must be on letterhead and outline the objectives of the employment, the skills the student will acquire, the number of work hours, location, supervisor, and the start and end dates of employment.
- The student must provide proof that they are registered in the internship/practicum course.
- The student will need to provide an Academic Advisor recommendation letter. This letter must state that the student is required to do an internship or practicum as an integral part of the curriculum.
- The student must apply for CPT through the International Student Services Office. There is no cost to apply for CPT.
- The student must not begin training for the job or employment before they are authorized for CPT.

### **Optional Practical Training (OPT)**

Optional Practical Training (OPT) is a period during which undergraduate and graduate students with F-1 status who have completed or have been pursuing their degrees for more than nine months are permitted by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to work for one year on a student visa towards getting practical training to complement their education.

### **Eligibility**

If a student can prove the following they may be eligible for OPT:

- A student who has been lawfully enrolled as a full-time student for one full academic year.
- The student must not be enrolled in an English Language Training Program.
- **The employment the student finds is related to their major field of study.**

An eligible student does not need a job offer in order to apply for OPT. The student can begin the process through two different processes. They may apply for

**Pre-completion OPT** which entails a student applying for OPT before completion of their academic program. **Post-completion OPT** which entails a student applying for OPT after completion of academic programs. Students can apply for post OPT starting 90 days prior to graduation and end 60 days after graduation. USCIS must receive the application by the 60<sup>th</sup> day post-graduation or the application will be denied.



Once the student sends in their application to the International Student Services Office along with a **\$410.00** application fee, the packet will be reviewed by an immigration advisor to ensure that the application has all the required documents for the application process. Then the packet and the money will be sent to USCIS, in which they will accept or deny the application.

### Differences between CPT and OPT

	CPT	OPT
Job Required to Apply	Yes	No
Processing Time	2-3 days	2-4 months
Application Fee	None	\$410
Authorized by	International Student Services (ISS)	USCIS - immigration
Form of Authorization	I-20	Employment Authorization Document Card (EAD)
Hours per week	20 hours maximum per week, unless approved full time hours during winter and summer breaks	Pre-completion Post-completion Full time only (means 20 hours a week or more)
Maximum Duration	None	12 months full-time per higher degree level
Extension Possible	Yes	Only STEM extension if eligible

## RESUME BUILDING

A resume is a document used by a person to present their backgrounds and skills, typically they are used to secure new employment. The resume is one of the first items, along with a cover letter, references and sometimes an application when looking for a job.

The employer will take the documents and read through them to screen applicants.

An employer will typically follow up with an interview if they think you are a qualified applicant. If they think that you would be a

good fit for the job they may follow up with an email or phone call regarding the information you provide in your cover letter.



Resumes intended for U.S. employers may look slightly different from those in other countries. For example, U.S. resumes do NOT include:

- A photograph
- Marital status
- Gender
- Residency status
- Date of birth
- Social security number
- National origin
- Salary expectations
- Reference list

### **What should be included in a Resume?**

There are options for students to use formats or templates located on computer programs such as Microsoft Word or Publisher. As a student at FHSU, the Career Services Office has resume examples available for your use. The resume examples and much more can be found on the Career Services page on the Fort Hays website.

### **Always begin your resume with your name, address, phone number(s), and e-mail**

**Objective:** While an objective is considered optional, if you know your specific objective and the qualifications for that objective, you can state it. For example, “To work as a Public Relations Assistant in an advertising company.” If you are unsure of your objective, you may state your interest in the job that you are applying for in your cover letter.

**Education:** Degree, name of institution, city and state, major(s), date of graduation.

**Experience:** Job titles, company name, city and state, responsibilities and achievements, employment dates; may include volunteer experiences, field experiences, co-ops, internships and summer employment.

**Activities:** Professional, educational or organizational involvement and leadership responsibilities assumed.

**Computer Skills:** List the software and/or hardware with which you are familiar.



### Optional Categories

- Job Objective
- Languages
- Publications & Patents
- Relevant Course Work
- Honors and Awards
- Travel
- Military Experience
- A statement indicating  
"References available upon  
request."

If you need personal help building your resume, make an appointment with Career Services and a professional will help you build a resume that is fit for the position you are applying for.

Career Services is located in Sheridan Hall Room 214 on the Fort Hays Campus. You can call them at (785) 628-4260 or email them at [careers@fhsu.edu](mailto:careers@fhsu.edu)

### **How should a resume look?**

The appearance of a resume should be very clean and neat. A few tips on how to make your resume look organized are:

**Keep the document attractive and easy to read:** Use capital letters, bullets, underlining, appropriate margins and spacing. If a scannable resume is being created underlining should be omitted as it interferes with correct scanning.

**Keep the document concise:** Typically one page or two pages. It is best if you can keep the resume under one page as a recent college graduate.

**Keep the document free of spelling, grammatical, and typographical errors:** Utilize the resources on the FHSU campus. The Writing Center is a great resource to look over papers and proof read for grammatical errors. The Writing Center is located in the Forsyth Library and you can schedule an appointment with them on the Fort Hays website or you can call them at (785) 628-4106.

**Keep the resume unique:** You also may want to consider printing the resume on resume paper, it is usually a neutral color paper.

As an international student you may want to include that you have strong English skills. For example, you may want to add a phrase such as "Translated written and spoken English on a daily basis for two years." This will ensure your employer does not question or doubt, your English skills.

You may also want to add that you are bilingual, trilingual, etc. This is a great way to market yourself and make yourself a better candidate for the position.

# Kathryn Smith

502 Nautical Dr., Miami, FL 32400

Phone: 456-555-5554

E-Mail: KSmith321@googlemail.com

## Objective:

To find employment which enables me to use my experience in both marketing and business to find creative solutions in increasing revenue generation and sales.

## Experience

**University of Miami**, Miami, Florida 20XX – 20XX  
*Business Internship - Hurricanes Team Store*

- Worked with groups of business students to create, organize, and implement business and marketing strategies to boost sales of UM's Hurricanes sports team merchandise online 15%.
- Attended brainstorming sessions with top brand representatives and focus groups to learn more about UM's products and consumers.
- Monitored revenue and reported to UM merchandise managers; organized data and created graphs using Microsoft Excel.
- Created monthly presentations using Microsoft PowerPoint for account managers to illustrate the progress and effectiveness of our business/marketing strategies.

**Natural Care Store**, Miami, Florida 20XX – 20XX  
*Store Manager*

- Managed store employees, organized work schedules, enforced corporate protocol, and assisted customers.
- Introduced sales goals and strategies that improved revenue earnings 12%; findings were reported directly to the regional manager.
- Implemented new marketing strategies in the stores by collaborating directly with the corporate sales team.
- Provided high quality customer service by working to resolve issues with unsatisfied clientele.

## Education

**University of Miami**, Miami, Florida 20XX  
 Bachelor of Arts Degree in Business, minor in Marketing, GPA of 3.7 and 4 consecutive years on the Dean's List for high grades.

## Skills

Microsoft Office, Facebook, Twitter, Google+, and WordPress

## Activities

Marketing Club, BCBS Blood Donor, YouthFriends Volunteer

## Xiao Chen

Apt.304 Wiquan Road Qingdao, China 2660711  
(401)-555-5079 | Email: xiao.chen@mail.fhsu.edu

### Highlights of Qualifications

- Trilingual in Mandarin Chinese, Italian, and English languages
- Certifications: Tilinger's Concierge Skills, ServSafe Alcohol, Food Safety and Sanitation Manager
- Eta Sigma Delta (ESD) - Hospitality Student Honor Society
- Hospitality Leadership Association
- National Society of Minorities in Hospitality (NSMH)

### Experience

#### **New Orleans Marriott at the Convention Center**

**New Orleans, LA**

Guest Service Representative

July 20XX-July 20XX

- Check an average of 80 guests in and out of the hotel per shift
- Sell hotel rooms at "rack rate" whenever possible to maximize rooms revenue
- Ranked in the Top 3 for doing up-grade/up-selling within the Front Desk Department
- Conduct quality performance of Full Service Property Management System
- Work in coordination with other departments as telephone operator (AYS) to resolve issues and to prevent future problems
- Ensure guest satisfaction by handling guest complaints properly and following up on all matters

#### **Radisson Hotel Providence Airport**

**Providence, RI**

Intern

September 20XX-November 20XX

- Served food and beverage items for up to 250 meals per shift
- Ensured customer satisfaction by keeping an open line of communication

#### **JW Marriott Shanghai**

**Shanghai, PRC**

Intern

July 20XX

- Provided business services including faxing, photocopying, messenger service, and message delivery
- Prepared and served breakfast for VIP guests at Concierge Lounge

### Education

#### **Johnson & Wales University**

**Providence, RI**

Bachelor of Science: International Hotel & Tourism Management

May 20XX

Concentration: Travel Agent

Cumulative GPA 3.81/4.0

#### **RAS Vesuvian Institute**

**Castellemmare de Stabia, Italy**

Study Abroad: International Hotel & Tourism Management

Spring 20XX

Intensive program consisting of thorough coursework in Italian and European hospitality management, policies and trends

### Volunteer Experience

Habitat for Humanity - New Orleans, LA

Providence Intown Church Association (PICA) - Providence, RI

Hasbro Hospital & Ronald McDonald House - Providence, RI

## **Cover Letter**

A cover letter is a formal letter of introduction to the employer. It is typically attached in the front of your resume. It serves as a way to introduce yourself to the employer you would like to work for and encourage him/her to consider reviewing your resume for a job within the organization.

### **Things to include in your cover letter?**

#### **Explain why you are sending a resume**

It is common knowledge that if you are applying for a job you should always send a resume and a cover letter together. The cover letter should never leave the reader guessing about what you are asking for – be specific. Do you want a summer internship opportunity, or a permanent position upon graduation; are you inquiring about future employment possibilities?

#### **Tell specifically how you learned about the position or the organization**

It is good to include a small description explaining how you learned of the position. For example: I had seen this position opening from a flyer that was marketed by your company. Other examples would be from a website or a family friend who works at the organization. It is appropriate to mention the name of someone who suggested that you write.

#### **Convince the reader to look at your resume**

The cover letter will be seen first. Therefore, it must be very well written and targeted to that employer. Make sure to address the cover letter to whom was stated in the job description. If there is not a specific person, you can make it out to the office specified or to the search committee. Do not make the cover letter more than one page for entry level positions.

#### **Call attention to elements of your background**

Education, leadership, and experience that are relevant to a position you are seeking. Be as specific as possible and if possible use examples.

#### **Provide or refer to any information specifically requested**

The job advertisement may request for detailed information. If they ask for an availability date, or reference to an attached writing sample, the cover letter would be an appropriate place to inform the reader of those details.

#### **Indicate what you will do to follow-up**

Typically, the last paragraph in your cover letter will include a sentence regarding how you would like them to contact you for an interview. It's appropriate to state "I look forward to talking with you. I can be reached by email at \_\_\_\_\_ or by phone at 333-333-3333. Thank you.

**Always finish by thanking the reader**

It is important to finish by thanking the reader for his/her consideration. Last you will want to type your name and after printing the document sign above the typed name.

Most importantly, consider proof reading your paper carefully and repeatedly. Try reading it out loud. This may help catch grammatical errors.

## **How do I write a cover letter?**

**Opening Paragraph:** State why you are writing. Establish who you are writing to. Remember, this needs to be a specific person and their title. Then, you will want to give some brief idea of who you are. Example: “My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am a senior communication major at Fort Hays State University.”

**Paragraph(s) 1-2:** Include a few impressive points from your enclosed resume. You can highlight how you are qualified for the position by mentioning points that are likely to be important for the position you are seeking. Explain how your education and experience suit the requirements of the position and, by elaborating on a few points from your resume, explain what you could contribute to the organization. (Your letter should complement, not restate, your resume.)

**Closing Paragraph:** Politely request an interview at the employer’s convenience. Indicate what supplementary material is being sent with the cover letter and offer to provide additional information (i.e. references, portfolio) and how it can be obtained. Lastly, thank the reader for his/her consideration and indicate that you are looking forward to hearing from him/her.

**Finally, make sure you sign your name in ink at the bottom of the page.**

Your Mailing Address  
City, State ZIP Code  
Phone Number  
Date of Letter

Ms. Rhonda West  
Customer Service Manager  
Acme Inc.  
123 Corporate Blvd.  
Sometown, CO 50802

Dear Ms. West:

I was excited to see your opening for a Customer Service Representative, and I hope to be invited for an interview.

My background includes serving as a customer service associate within both call-center and retail environments. Most recently, I worked on the customer service desk for Discount-Mart, where my responsibilities included handling customer merchandise returns, issuing refunds/store credits, flagging damaged merchandise for shipment back to vendors and providing back-up cashiering during busy periods.

Previously, I worked within two high-volume customer-support call centers for a major telecommunications carrier and a satellite television services provider. In these positions, I demonstrated the ability to resolve a variety of issues and complaints (such as billing disputes, service interruptions or cutoffs.) In addition to this experience, I gained considerable customer service skills during my part-time employment as a waitress and restaurant hostess while in high school.

I am confident that I can offer you the customer service, communication and problem-solving skills you are seeking. Please see the accompanying resume for further details of my experience and education. Feel free to call me at 555-555-5555 (home) or 555-555-5500 (cell) to arrange an interview. Thank you for your time. I look forward to learning more about this opportunity!

Sincerely,

Sue Ling

Enclosure: Resume

Your Mailing Address  
City, State Zip Code  
Phone Number  
Date of Letter

Mr. Stephan Scheck  
Director  
Innovation  
6553 Carlisle Drive, Suite 300  
Los Angeles, CA 90048

Dear Mr. Scheck:

I would like to apply for the summer internship position with Innovation. I learned of the opportunity through the Career Services Office at Fort Hays State University.

I am currently majoring in Applied Technology at Fort Hays and will receive my degree this Spring. While I have a comprehensive constructive background, my emphasis is on the architectural work. I feel that your firm provides the experience I need to further my knowledge in the field of architecture and having the privilege of serving as an intern with you will give me the further exposure I need to advance my career.

Upon graduating, I hope to work for a firm that specializes in architecture and development. With the right opportunities and experience to cutting edge projects and designs, I believe I can achieve this goal. I hope to with your firm's help.

I previously held a summer internship at Smithers & Associates, a St. Louis based architecture firm. While there, I used CAD technology to help design floor plans for multi-level retail space. I also used the drafting techniques I learned on the Digital Terrain Monitor (DTM) to assist on the redesign of a movie theater in downtown St. Louis. This could be of interest to you, as I recently read on your website, Innovation will be renovating three entertainment venues in the coming year.

I would like the opportunity to meet with you to further discuss my qualifications. Please let me know if you have any questions or would like to see some work samples. You may reach me by phone at (785) 628-4000 or by email at name@mail.fhsu.edu.

Thank you for your consideration

Sincerely,

Terra Cotta

## What are American employers looking for?

There are many things American employers are looking for in a job candidate. One of the top skills and qualities they look for is teamwork. Although communication skills are also ranked high on the list. Verbal communication skills is the third most important, tied with the ability to plan, organize, and prioritize work. Teamwork can be easily expressed on a resume or cover letter by including your experiences of group work and being on a team dynamic.

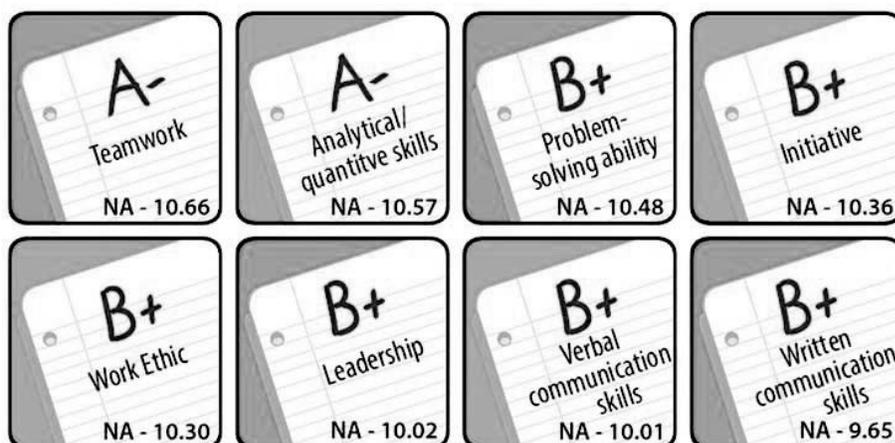
Figure 41: Employers rate the importance of candidate skills/qualities

Skill/Quality	Weighted Average Rating*
Ability to work in a team structure	4.55
Ability to make decisions and solve problems	4.50
Ability to plan, organize and prioritize work	4.48
Ability to verbally communicate with persons inside and outside the organization	4.48
Ability to obtain and process information	4.37
Ability to analyze quantitative data	4.25
Technical knowledge related to the job	4.01
Proficiency with computer software programs	3.94
Ability to create and/or edit written reports	3.62
Ability to sell or influence others	3.54

\*5-point scale, where 1=Not at all important; 2=Not very important; 3=Somewhat important; 4=Very important; and 5=Extremely important

It appears that employers are successfully choosing team players to fill their entry-level positions. When asked to give letter grades to their college graduate recruits, the highest grades of “A-” were in the areas of teamwork and analytical/quantitative skills. (See Figure 42.) While all of the remaining attributes received the letter grade of “B+,” communication skills (both verbal and written) received lower numerical averages in terms of grading.

Figure 42: Employers grade their average new graduate recruit on skills/attributes



NA = Numerical Average

After you have built a resume and cover letter, it is now time to begin your job search!

Remember, you will want to adjust your resume and cover letter to be specific to the job you are applying for.



## Networking

Networking entails talking with the people you may know that could be possible connections for job opportunities. You should never underestimate the knowledge and influence of the people you know.

First, begin building a network by contacting members of your family, other relatives, neighbors, personal friends, general acquaintances, professors, work associates, and service activity colleagues. Do not set limits on who should or should not be part of your network.

Some other things to consider is possibly creating a professional [LinkedIn](#) profile. Consider reaching out to some of your network through email, phone call or social media such as Facebook. Let everyone know that you are looking for a job and what type of job you're looking for.

Most importantly, maintain these contacts by checking back with them periodically.



# GoinGlobal™

Jobs here, there, everywhere.

Consider using GoinGlobal as a resource for job search and preparation. GoinGlobal is a resource that Career Services and the International Student Services Office has available for Fort Hays students. This resource can help you find jobs and internships not only in the U.S. but abroad as well. This resource provides:

- Country Career Guides, this resource will allow you to see all the career specific details for different countries and tips on how to find employment all over the world.
- This site provides extensive job postings and internship listings. You can begin to search for a multitude of job and internship opportunities and filter the occupations to the kind of jobs you are looking for.
- GoinGlobal provides you with H-1B information, and so much more...
- Students may access GoinGlobal through their Handshake account at <https://fhsu.joinhandshake.com> or through the Online Services section of TigerTracks.

## Interviewing

Interviews in the U.S. are primarily done over the phone, over skype, zoom, or in person. In most cases it is important to dress in a professional manner.

**Women:** You should consider wearing a well-fitted pant suit or a skirt with a jacket. High heels or flats are the preferred shoe. Consider ironing your clothes in order to look professional. It is encouraged to wear neutral shades like black, navy, brown or gray. You should try to carry only one bag. Hygiene is of upmost importance to U.S. employers, so make sure to shower and apply deodorant before your interview.

**Men:** You should consider wearing a well-fitted pant suit, typically neutral colors with nice, unmarked dress shoes. Your belt should match your shoes. Make sure to maintain your beard or mustache in a clean and neat fashion. Be certain to shower and apply deodorant before the interview.

### Other things to consider:

- BE PUNCTUAL. Try to arrive 15 minutes prior to the appointment.
- Always send a thank you note to your interviewer within 24 hours.
- Smile and maintain eye contact. It is important for your employer to see that you are excited to be there and have the opportunity to interview with this company.
- Know important details about the company you are interviewing with and incorporate them into your answers.

### What are typical interview questions to prepare for?

- Tell me about yourself.
- Why did you pursue a degree/career in \_\_\_?
- What are your short-range and long-range goals?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- What is important to you in an employer?
- Why are you pursuing a job with us?
- Tell me about a time that you exercised leadership in a recent situation.
- Tell me about a time when you worked as a part of a team.
- Tell me about a time that you were under a great deal of pressure. What was the source of the pressure and how did you handle it?
- Why should I hire you?

Tip: Most employers will ask you if you have any questions for them at the end of an interview. They are actually expecting you to have 2 or 3 questions to ask them. Have a few questions planned before the interview to ask. It may be good to look at their website before hand and form your questions around things you saw from the website. It shows you put in extra work to research the organization/company.

**Interviewing is your chance to impress the employer!**

