

Boston Career Forum Report

I am Manami Noji, a master's student studying International Development at the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs at the University of Pittsburgh. I am going to graduate from GSPIA this December, so I went the Boston Career Forum to start my job search.

What is the Boston Career Forum?

The Boston Career Forum is an annual career fair for graduating students looking for a job in Japan. Job hunting in Japan is unique: students in Japan typically start to find a job a year before graduation, and most the Japanese companies normally accept new employees every April. Since students who study abroad are not physically in Japan during the "job hunting season," their search would be delayed by a full year. The companies that come to the BCF are looking for globally-minded students who can enjoy new challenges regardless of the location of the business. Therefore, the BCF is a special opportunity for students to stay on track with their job search and for businesses who recognize the advantages of the skills gained through study abroad.

The Boston Career Forum 2019

There were 241 participating companies, both Japanese and international companies with offices in Japan, in varied sectors such as IT, manufacturing, pharmaceutical, consultant, real estate, merchandising, and media. I wanted to attend as many seminars in different industries as possible to shape my career interests. After visiting about 15 booths, I realized that I am more interested in jobs related to personal life events, such as real estate and education.

On the third day, I got a walk-in interview with an IT education and human resources company. The interviewer asked me what I learned from the BCF, which positions interest me, and about my current research. The most interesting questions were "Who do you usually talk to about your concerns?" and "If that person described your personality, what do you think he or she would say?"

The forum taught me, firstly, that getting a job is not a goal but rather a beginning point. The interviewer candidly shared with me the surprises, mistakes, and struggles that he experienced during his career. Secondly, I gained confidence from talking with the representatives at each booth. They helped me to understand how to market my skills and experience to potential employers. I can continue my job search with more self-assurance and direction.

Tips for prospective students

The Boston Career Forum is a great opportunity for students who are interested in working internationally but would like to have their home base in Japan. Only students who have studied outside of Japan for at least one year can join the forum. Unlike general job hunting in Japan, you can apply for positions and have some interviews online before going to Boston. Additionally, you can learn about various companies through information sessions – a convenient and efficient use of the three-day forum.

I recommend applying and scheduling interviews in advance for two reasons. First, starting the process early gives you a better chance to be hired. Secondly, once the semester begins, it's hard to find enough time to prepare your resume, application form, or interview questions. Even if you can't prepare in

advance, there's still benefit in participating. In addition to the company information sessions, some companies offer walk-in interviews.

-- Enjoy every moment as it comes. Hang in there!