

Understand the arrangements for your work visa. Although your employer may take on the responsibility of obtaining your work visa for you, it is up to you to ensure that all measures are legitimate and consistent with the requirements of the country concerned. Refer to the section entitled "What Documents Do You Need?" for details.

Avoid risky ventures. Always remain sceptical of overseas placement firms that operate solely by telephone or mail, and avoid companies that charge advance fees for placement. Women should be particularly wary of employment opportunities that offer quick and easy money for entertainment or hostess jobs. Many are thinly veiled prostitution rings. For more information, visit www.voyage.gc.ca/main/problems/scams-en.asp.

Some employers may say they will offer you a ticket home upon completion of the contract or will reimburse the costs of your trip. Be aware that sometimes this commitment is not honoured. It would be better to request an open-ended round-trip ticket in advance.

It is also wise to take with you extra copies of your résumé, degrees, diplomas and other certificates, and reference letters so that you have the option of pursuing other job opportunities while you are abroad. If you carry your résumé on diskette, you will be able to update it as you go. Find out, however, what the requirements are if you decide to change jobs or companies, as doing so may render your visa or work permit invalid. For more details, see the section entitled "Visa and Work Permit."

Learn About Your Destination

Take the time to learn about the political, cultural and economic environment of your destination. The working conditions and pace of life may be very different from what you are used to, affecting your personal life, work habits and job satisfaction. Read as much as you can and try to talk to people who have worked in the same country or for the same organization.

Your research will help you find out the do's and don'ts of social life abroad. Making your first contact will be easier if you know how to greet people, how to dress and how to behave in your new work environment.