



USIGC Decision Aid

This document outlines some of the benefits and considerations of different decisions that international genetic counselors may need to make as a student or a practicing GC. There may be other topics, options, benefits, and considerations not listed in this document. For questions about the document or to connect with an international genetic counselor, please email the International SIG at nsgcinternationalsig@gmail.com.

Topic	Option	Benefit	Considerations
Grad school Housing	Living close to/with classmates	Stronger relationships with classmates/ colleagues; personal and professional connections; easy to meet with study buddies; cultural integration; carpool to class/ clinic	Will there be a commute to class? Where are the rotation sites? Do you have/need a car? Where are the grocery stores? Which option is more affordable? Do you already know others in the same school?
	Living close to/with other international students	Support group/ community that can relate to your logistic challenges; Easier to keep track of timeline and requirements for OPT, EAD; expanded social circle	Do you or your potential roommates have food preferences and/or restrictions?
Transport during grad school	Private Transport (car)	Flexibility, independence, convenience, long-term utility (can use after school)	Distance between classes, rotations, and housing; Frequency of public transport;
	Public transport (bus, train, ride-share)	Might be cheaper More efficient in many cities	Initial and maintenance costs for car; Insurance cost for car; Process of getting a license; How often do you need to commute? Reimbursement of commute (e.g., discounts on public transport); Safety of public transport
On-campus jobs	Student Jobs - Library/Cafeteria	expanded social circle; exposure to campus facilities	Which provides more financial aid? How much time does it involve?
	Student researcher/ assistant in GC program	GC experience outside main rotations	How much effort would go into it? Which provides in-state tuition? Scheduling/ logistic considerations; Can you/do you want to work during school vacation? [can only work 20 hours during school year, 40 hours during school summer/ winter/ spring break if allowed];
	Teaching assistant	teach subjects you like and are familiar with	Compensation differences application timeline

This document does not contain legal advice. Please check with you program, an immigration advisor, or attorney for up-to-date information on visas and immigration.



Topic	Option	Benefit	Considerations
Summer rotations	At program/ school	Increase familiarity with program Could lead to in-house jobs, potentially easier to arrange	Cost of travel and additional accommodation in different city; Need for CPT or new I-20 form; Ability to count the cases; Logistic/ scheduling timeline; Documentation requirements (e.g., vaccination records); Language requirements
	Off-site/ different city	Can specialize in your interest; Can aim for a city where you want to live long-term; could be virtual	
	Abroad	exposure to different healthcare systems, cultures, cases	
Grad school Research topic	'International' topics	Study unique topics in workforce development, patient care etc. Potentially contribute to workforce development more globally	What do you find interesting? Who are your mentors? What resources are available? How generalizable is the topic?
	Non-international topic	Gain experience in a particular specialty such as cancer or cardiology	Are you interested in a particular specialty? [Experience in a specialty might help in the job search process]
H-1B discussions with employer	Asking about sponsorship early in the interview process	Saving time on your end and interviewer's end Prioritizing what you need Clarity on possible outcome	Employer experience with visas; What is your timeline? Do you have STEM OPT? Do you have experience in the specialty you are applying for?
	Asking about sponsorship later in the interview process	Gain interviewing experience Managers may be able to ask department for visa sponsorship if they like you through the interview process	
Green card discussions with employer	Bringing up green card early	Clarity on employer sponsorship and time to plan for alternate routes* if needed	[Not necessary to bring up in interview] *Please see Employment based green card info sheet for additional information
	Bringing up green card later	Can leverage current position and contributions; Have time to develop skills and gain experience to search for a new job that will sponsor a green card	
Choosing a job	Cap exempt	No lottery system; Shorter wait-time; typically non-profit employers	Employer familiarity with visas; Timeline considerations; Previous job category if applicable; Industry vs. other role
	Lottery – based	Switching to cap-exempt is easier	
Residence	Stay in the U.S.	Potentially more options for career progression	Eligibility and other requirements for transition to green card/ citizenship
	Move to home/ other country	Potentially contribute to the development of the profession	Professional and practice differences

This document does not contain legal advice. Please check with you program, an immigration advisor, or attorney for up-to-date information on visas and immigration.