

Career Navigator – Product Requirement Document

An international student about to graduate feels exhilarated but lost when they try to figure out their career next steps, because there are mentorship gaps and not enough support in navigating the job market in a new country.

This document focuses on solving the fundamental pain points international students face when searching for a mentor to support their job search journey.

Team	Names
Product Manager	Karen Ebo
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Designers	[Names]
Developers	[Names]
QA Testers	[Names]
Legal SME(s)	[Name(s)]

Beta Launch: April 2026

Full Launch: May 2026

Problem Definition:

1. **Mentor Gap:** There is no official accessible channel for **international students** to connect with alumni or professionals who have navigated the same visa pathway. Career advisors are present on campus but are largely unequipped for international-specific constraints.
2. **Visa Eligibility:** Students approaching graduation do not know which jobs they can legally apply for that supports their current visa. OPT/CPT timelines, STEM OPT extension windows, and Study Permit (Canada) work authorization rules are invisible in every major career platform.
3. **Career Services Disconnect:** University career advisors are perceived as helpful but are systemically ill-equipped for the specific constraints international students face. Generic advice such as "network more," "update your LinkedIn" do not account for visa restrictions, sponsorship requirements, or the shorter timeline international students operate within.

Goals

1. Increase meaningful mentor **connections** for international students.
2. Improve **visa eligibility clarity**, measured by the % of users who can identify 3+ eligible roles after completing onboarding.
3. Increase **assessment completion rate** as the primary onboarding and engagement signal.

4. Increase **30-day student retention**, measured by users returning after their first meaningful session.

Problem Validation & Research

- **Gathered user response using Google Survey Forms:** Conducted with 7 international undergrad students, asking specific questions about career tool usage, mentor access, and visa-related confusion.
- **Personal experience:** Product Manager navigated this exact challenge as an international student.
- **Competitive gap analysis:** Handshake, LinkedIn, Interstride, and university career services. No existing tool combines visa eligibility guidance with mentor matching for both US (F-1/OPT) and Canadian (Study Permit) students.
- **A/B testing (post-launch):** Monitor mentor match click-through rate, request send rate, and mentor reply rate between cohorts to expose personalised matching vs generic mentor lists.
- **Ongoing feedback loops:** Dedicated in-app feedback channel post-launch. User interviews after beta to gather qualitative data on what's working and what's not.

Understanding the Target Audience

Three user segments shape the product requirements. The MVP is scoped exclusively for Phase 1 release.

1. **Final-Year International Undergrad Students (MVP - Primary):** Approaching graduation on a student visa (F-1 or Canadian Study Permit). Operating under a strict visa timeline.
2. **Sophomore International Students (Phase 2):** Have 2+ years of runway. Their need is exploratory. A meaningfully different job-to-be-done from the final-year student.
3. **Alumni and Professional Mentors (Supply Side):** International students who have successfully navigated OPT/CPT or Study Permit transitions, now working in industry.

Solution

1. **Skills & Career Assessment:** A 10-question assessment during onboarding. Captures the student's degree, graduation timeline, target industry, career goals, and working style preferences.
Without the assessment output feeding into mentor filter criteria, **Amara** (Selected User Persona) receives a generic list of mentors. With the assessment, she receives 3–5 mentors matched to her specific background, target role, and visa status. This connection is the product.
2. **Mentor Profile Database, Search & Messaging:** A curated database of alumni and professional mentors who have navigated international student visa transitions and pathways. Students are matched to mentors based on their career profile output from **Feature 1**.
Mentor profiles include visa path navigated, current role and company, graduation school and year, target industry, and self-reported response time.

3. **Visa Eligibility Guidance:** Plain-language, actionable guidance modules covering the key visa-to-employment pathways for international students in the US and Canada. This is the most differentiated feature in the MVP because no competitor currently provides this guidance in a format designed for students rather than **immigration lawyers**.
4. **Secure Login + Student Profile:** User authentication and profile infrastructure. Required for personalisation and mentor matching to function. Profile scope is intentionally minimal as only fields required by the matching algorithm are collected at signup. Exhaustive academic data collection would increase drop-off and collect data the matching system **doesn't need**.

SWOT Analysis



Metrics

North Star Metric: Meaningful mentor connections per active user within 30 days of signup. This means mentor request sent AND at least one reply received.

Other Supporting Metrics to track:

Metric	What It Measures	Target (Beta)
Assessment completion rate	Are users engaging with onboarding?	>70%
Mentor match click-through rate	Are recommendations relevant?	>40%
Mentor request send rate	Are users taking action after matching?	>25%
Mentor reply rate	Is the mentor supply side engaged?	>60%
30-day retention	Do users return after their first session?	>35%
Visa module completion rate	Are students engaging with eligibility content?	>50%
DAU/MAU of key features	Which features drive daily vs. monthly use?	Monitor, no target

Launch Plan

Milestone	Target Date
Design complete	October 24, 2025
Development complete	February 2026
QA & test case sign-off	March 2026
Beta rollout (~100 students)	April 2026
Bug resolution window	April 2026
Full launch	May 2026

Future Releases

1. **Automated visa data refresh via government APIs:** Manual curation is acceptable at MVP scale. As the user base grows, stale guidance becomes a scaling risk.
2. **Algorithm-driven mentor matching:** Phase 1 MVP uses human-curated matching for first 100 users, plan to automate in the future.
3. **Job market insights dashboard:** Salary ranges, job availability by industry and visa type, top sponsoring employers. High engineering effort required.

4. **LinkedIn profile integration:** Surface mentor and student profile data from LinkedIn to reduce profile-building friction. High effort, low unique value until Phase 1 is established.
5. **Progress tracking and career analytics for students:** Visualising career progress, session history & goal completion. Relevant once adoption is established & users are returning.
6. **Employer-facing portal:** Long-term vision for monetisation and supply-side value.
7. **Sophomore persona onboarding:** A different product experience for students with 2+ years of runway. Build after the final-year core is proven and user base is established.

Risks & Mitigation

Risk	Impact	Mitigation
Mentor supply insufficient at launch	High	Connect mentor database through university alumni network partnerships before student-facing launch. Human-curated matching for first 100 students. Track mentor reply rate as an early warning metric.
Visa guidance becomes stale or inaccurate	High	All modules reviewed by legal SME before launch. Add explicit "last reviewed" date to each module. Trigger a content review within 30 days of any government policy change. Automated refresh API is Phase 2.
Assessment outputs feel irrelevant or untrusted	Medium	10-question structure intentionally kept lightweight. Post-beta user interviews specifically to gather whether match results feel relevant. Refine question weighting based on which outputs have the highest click-through and connection rates.
Low student adoption post-launch	High	Analyse onboarding funnel to identify drop-off points. Prioritise user feedback in first 30 days. Target international student offices at partner universities for direct pipeline.
Mentor reply rate too low (supply-side disengagement)	High	Set expectations with mentors at onboarding, clear commitment level (e.g., 1–2 conversations per month). Track reply rate weekly. If below 40%, trigger mentor re-engagement. Mentors not replying within 14 days are deprioritised.