

International Law Careers

At an International Law Careers Conference, one of the speakers stated: "There is no such thing as a career in international law. There is no body of law governing international private transactions; it's really domestic law that governs these transactions. There is no court of international jurisdiction or police force regularly enforcing the rules of such a jurisdiction." The speaker did qualify his statement by saying that there are some international conventions and treaties which govern areas such as trade and business development and discovery and evidence.

Most international lawyers confirm the view that a career in international law means the practice of domestic or local law for foreign clients or the counsel given a domestic client on transactions in a foreign territory. Most attorneys who present themselves as international lawyers really work on domestic matters 90% of the time and on international matters 10%.

The following is an overview with career planning pointers for law students and graduates interested in developing a career in International Law. For more detailed information, *Career Preparation and Opportunities in International Law*, edited by J.W. Williams, published by the American Bar Association, Section of International Law & Practice, is highly recommended.

CATEGORIES OF EMPLOYERS

There are three main categories of employers for whom one can practice international law; the government, private firm practice, and the legal department of a corporation.

Government

There are opportunities, primarily in Washington, D.C., in several federal departments: Justice, State, Commerce, Labor, Office of U.S. Trade Representation, Federal Trade Commission and Federal Communications Commission.

One can practice international law within several different divisions in the Justice Department:

- Criminal -- immigration and extradition
- Tax -- international business transactions
- Environmental -- antidumping issues
- Antitrust -- policy formation and prosecution

The Commerce Dept. offers additional opportunities since it administers the government's antidumping trade policies.

The Judge Advocate General Corps provides legal counsel to the U.S. Navy, Army and Air Force divisions of the military. These positions are extremely competitive and require service with the military (varies according to military branch), yet allow for ample opportunities to travel and live abroad. Check the agency's websites for more information and application details:

U.S. Army: www.jagcnet.army.mil

U.S. Navy: www.jag.navy.mil
U.S. Air Force: www.au.af.mil/au/cpd/jagschool/

Please Note: The employers listed above refuse to sign Chicago-Kent's non-discrimination policy.

Private Law Firms

Many large firms practice in all aspects of international business transactions, including regulatory compliance and tax issues, and have branch offices overseas.

When practicing at a larger firm, a lawyer practices domestic law - securities, tax, real estate - or regulatory law - customs, antitobacco, food & drug - for foreign clients.

There has been growth in small boutique firms specializing in customs and international trade practices. These firms represent businesses, importers/exporters, retailers/wholesalers, and U.S. subsidiaries of foreign businesses. These firms tend to be concentrated geographically in N.Y.C., Washington, D.C., Chicago, Los Angeles, and Miami, or cities where the decision makers (federal regulatory agencies) are located.

Corporate Law Departments

The international law practice in a corporate law department is similar to that in private firm practice. The advantage of working in a corporate law department is that the client is the company and the company's employees; so an attorney does not have to worry about bringing in business.

HOW TO FIND THE EMPLOYERS

Martindale-Hubbell is available in three different formats and you can access all three from the Career Services Office (CSO). Martindale-Hubbell is available in print on the shelves of the CSO, online at "<http://www.martindale.com>", and through Lexis under the MARHUB directory. You can use Martindale-Hubbell not only to determine which firms practice international law, but also to obtain a listing of firms with a branch office in a foreign country.

The NALP publication *National Directory of Legal Employers* is a directory of mostly large law firms and some IP boutique law firms. It is available in print in the CSO or online at www.nalpdirectory.com. Law firm's "NALP sheets" as they are sometimes known, are a fantastic source of information on salaries, concentration of attorneys per specific practice area, firm profiles, and other information. Copies of this book are available on the non-circulating shelves of the Career Services Office Resource Center and also on Lexis, which is available via the Internet.

If you have any difficulties or questions about researching employers, please do not hesitate to contact our Resource Specialist.

LOCATIONS

The best geographic locations for employers of international lawyers are the coasts: New York and Washington D.C. (especially for firms with a regulatory international law practice) on the east and Los Angeles on the west coast. Other cities with good international practice are Houston, Dallas,

Miami, Philadelphia and Chicago. A substantial number of Midwest corporate headquarters, with overseas dealings, are represented by Chicago firms.

RECOMMENDED LAW SCHOOL COURSES

Commercial Law, Business Law, Sales, Contracts, Tax, Secured Transactions, Corporations, Corporate Taxation, Remedies, Antitrust, International Law, International Business Transaction, and Intellectual Property Rights are recommended. Courses in public international law are strongly encouraged even if an attorney plans to practice in the private international area. A growing number of issues involving private individuals against governments is requiring attorneys to have some background in public international law.

SKILLS AND PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Aspiring international lawyers need to be bright and enthusiastic and have good business skills. Language proficiency can provide that needed edge, especially when an attorney has proficiency in more than two foreign languages. International lawyers must also have a sensitivity to other cultures. Foreign study programs or overseas experiences are valuable only to the degree that they can develop that sensitivity. If a student does wish to study abroad it is preferable to study foreign courses in a foreign language than to study international law courses taught in the student's native language. Again, the emphasis of any foreign experience is to stay in a location for a substantial amount of time and, most importantly, to be immersed in the culture of that location. Academic achievement, however, may be the single most important factor in getting a position with the very large firms that have an international practice.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Government service is one of the best entry level avenues for future practice in international law. Government attorneys who gain experience in international law can generally move into private practice with relative ease. Law graduates who wish to go into private practice directly out of law school need to become good domestic lawyers first. Those wishing to practice in a corporate law department are advised to work with a law firm first; corporations generally do not hire new law graduates.

ORGANIZATIONS & ASSOCIATIONS

The following is a listing of organizations and associations which can be a valuable resource for information relating to your international job search and a gold mine of networking opportunities.

American Bar Association/ Central European and Eurasian Law Initiative (ABA/CEELI)

740 Fifteenth St., NW, Eighth Floor, Washington, DC 20005-1022

Phone: (202) 662-1950 Fax: (202) 662-1597

E-mail: ceeli@abanet.org

www.abanet.org/ceeli

The Central European and Eurasian Law Initiative (CEELI) is a public service project of the American Bar Association designed to advance the rule of law by supporting the law reform process underway in Central and Eastern Europe and the Newly Independent States of the former Soviet Union. Through various programs, CEELI makes available the legal expertise of American volunteers to assist emerging democracies in modifying or restructuring laws and legal systems.

American Bar Association Section of International Law & Practice

740 15th Street NW, Washington, DC 20005

Phone: (202) 662-1660 Fax: (202) 662-1669

E-mail: intlaw@staff.abanet.org

www.abanet.org/intlaw

The Section of International Law and Practice of the American Bar Association (ABA) focuses on the full range of international legal issues and is involved in a wide variety of substantive legal activities. Member interests range from cross-border transactions and disputes to the regulation of international trade and investment to foreign law and public international law.

International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights

Wickenburgg 14/7, A-1080 Vienna, AUSTRIA

Phone: +43-1-408-88 22 Fax: +43-1-408-88 22-50

<http://www.ihf-hr.org/> email: office@ihf-hr.org

The International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights (IHF) is a self-governing group of non-governmental, not-for-profit organizations that act to protect human rights throughout Europe, North America, and the Central Asian republics formed from the territories of the former Soviet Union. A primary specific goal is the monitor compliance with the human rights provisions of the Helsinki Final Act and its Follow-up Documents.

International Crisis Group

1629 K Street NW, Suite 450, Washington, D.C. 20006

Phone: (202) 785-1601 Fax: (202) 785-1630

e-mail: icg.washington@crisisweb.org

www.intl-crisis-group.org/

The International Crisis Group (ICG) is an independent, non-profit, multinational organization with over 80 staff members on five continents, working through field-based analysis and high-level advocacy to prevent and resolve deadly conflict.

International City/County Management Association

777 North Capitol Street NE, Suite 500, Washington, DC 20002-4201

Phone: (202) 289-4262 Fax: (202) 962-3500

www.icma.org/

Founded in 1914, the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) is the professional and educational association for more than 8,000 appointed administrators and assistant administrators serving cities, counties, other local governments, and regional entities around the world. ICMA's mission is to create excellence in local government by developing and fostering professional local government management worldwide.

International Rescue Committee

122 East 42nd Street, 12th Floor, New York, NY 10168-1289

Phone: (212) 551-3000 (toll free 1-877-Refugee) Fax: (212) 551-3180

www.intrescom.org

The International Rescue Committee is a non-profit, non-sectarian, voluntary agency providing assistance to refugees around the world. IRC was founded at the request of Albert Einstein to assist opponents of Hitler. The IRC helps people fleeing racial, religious and ethnic persecution, as well as those uprooted by war and violence.

National Democratic Institute for International Affairs

2030 M Street, NW, Fifth Floor, Washington, D.C. 20036

Phone: (202) 728-5500 Fax: (202) 728-5520

www.ndi.org

The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) is a nonprofit organization working to strengthen and expand democracy worldwide. Calling on a global network of volunteer experts, NDI provides practical assistance to civic and political leaders advancing democratic values, practices and institutions. NDI works with democrats in every region of the world to build political and civic organizations, safeguard elections, and to promote citizen participation, openness and accountability in government.

Office of the High Representative, Bosnia

Marsala Tita 28, 71000 Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina
(387-71) 447-275

This is an international organization exclusively related to Bosnia. It was created to oversee implementation of the Dayton Peace Accords. While many of the staff positions are filled with officers seconded from other governments, they also have a number of hired staff positions.

Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe

OSCE Secretariat, Karntner Ring 5-7, 4th Floor, 1010 Vienna, AUSTRIA
Phone: +43-1 514 36 180 Fax: +43-1 514 36 105
e-mail: info@osce.org
www.osce.org

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) is the largest regional security organization in the world with 55 participating States from Europe, Central Asia and North America. It is active in early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation.

Soros Foundations Network, Open Society Institute and National Foundations

400 West 59th Street, New York, NY 10019
(212) 548-0668
www.soros.org

The Open Society Institute (OSI) is a private operating and grantmaking foundation that seeks to promote the development and maintenance of open societies around the world by supporting a range of programs in the areas of educational, social, and legal reform, and by encouraging alternative approaches to complex and often controversial issues.

Established in 1993 and based in New York City, the Open Society Institute is part of the Soros foundations network, an informal network of organizations created by George Soros that operate in more than 50 countries around the world, principally in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union but also in Guatemala, Haiti, Mongolia, Africa, Southeast Asia, and the United States.

Together with its Hungary-based affiliate, the Open Society Institute-Budapest, OSI assists these organizations by providing administrative, financial, and technical support, and by establishing "network programs" that address certain issues on a regional or network-wide basis.

United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Division

Vienna International Center, P.O. Box 600, Room E1212, A-1400, Vienna, Austria
+43-1 21 345-4292

This UN office works on criminal justice issues around the world.

United States Agency for International Development

Ronald Reagan Building, Washington, D.C. 20523-1000

Phone: (202) 712-4810 Fax: (202) 216-3524
www.info.usaid.gov

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is an independent agency that provides economic, development and humanitarian assistance around the world in support of the foreign policy goals of the United States.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Case Postale 2500, CH-1211 Geneve 2 Dépôt, Suisse
Phone: +41 22 739-8111
www.unhcr.ch

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees was established on December 14, 1950 by the United Nations General Assembly. The agency is mandated to lead and co-ordinate international action to protect refugees and resolve refugee problems worldwide. Its primary purpose is to safeguard the rights and well-being of refugees. It strives to ensure that everyone can exercise the right to seek asylum and find safe refuge in another State, with the option to return home voluntarily, integrate locally or to resettle in a third country.

In more than five decades, the agency has helped an estimated 50 million people restart their lives. Today, a staff of around 5,000 people in more than 120 countries continues to help an estimated 19.8 million persons.

WEBSITES OF INTEREST

www.kentlaw.edu/depts/cso

Under the “Websites of Interest” link there are several resources for developing an international law practice. There is also information and links about study abroad programs.

www.mssc.edu/ncie

This is the website for Missouri Southern State College’s National Center for International Education. There are links on this website to international job search sites, international internship offices and other resources on international issues.

<http://www.escapeartist.com/jobs11/careers.htm>

Overseas jobs on the Internet & University career web sites.

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