A Guide to Resources on Careers in Foreign and International Law*

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Mr. Hu identifies and describes resources in print and electronic formats that can assist an individual seeking information about career opportunities in foreign and international law.

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¶1 As law librarians, we often are asked by law students and even practicing attorneys, “How do I begin a career in foreign and international law practice?” The student or attorney asking this question frequently is seeking recommendations for books, articles, or other information resources on the topic. The same situation arises in a law school’s career services office. This guide is designed to help law librarians and placement officials assist individuals who are interested in pursuing career opportunities in foreign and international law and practice.

¶2 The guide is divided into four sections: Perspectives on International Law Practice, Membership Organizations, International Law Studies, and Job-Finding Sources and Tools. All resources listed in the guide are accompanied by brief annotations to help the user determine their scope of coverage and how they are used.

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Perspectives on International Law Practice

What is it like to be an international lawyer? What does international legal work involve? What educational preparation, training, language, and other skills are required to secure a position in international law? The following materials offer some insightful, practical perspectives on these and related questions.

Books and Book Chapters


Thirty areas of practice, including international law, are described, based on the author’s interviews with practitioners and experts in the selected specialties. Each practice area is defined by a set of issues, including: where attorneys in that practice area work, who the clients are, what types of cases are typical, what an average work day is like, how people generally enter the field, what skills are most important, what law school classes and training are recommended, and what is rewarding about that type of practice. The chapter on international law addresses these issues through the experiences of one corporate counsel and two firm attorneys.


This work offers an overview of international law practice areas, such as human rights, international trade, environment, telecommunications, finance and banking, international development, and dispute resolution. It also discusses career paths and employment trends and offers suggestions on career preparation. Practitioners share their experiences and offer advice in more than twenty Practice Area Summaries. This work is an invaluable resource for students seeking a career in international law.


Intended as a primer for those seeking careers in international law, this guide consists of three sections. The first contains five essays giving perspectives on how to enter the field and includes a survey of international law firms with regard to their opinions on desired qualifications. The second section offers lists of internships, summer study abroad programs, and graduate programs on international law studies. The last section supplies information on activities sponsored by the International Law Students Association. The Guide provides the reader with well-balanced, comprehensive information for planning a career in international law.

This book offers a perspective on the globalization of law and examines the role of lawyers in various fields of transnational practice.


This work consists of fifteen essays written by experienced lawyers and scholars. Each focuses on one aspect of international practice, such as corporate work, environment, arbitration, or maritime law. The writers provide background information plus analysis, and they share their stories of success and failure. The reader gets a helpful overview of international law practice.


This book identifies numerous jobs and careers (some of which are related to international law) that enable people to travel both at home and abroad. Job descriptions and requirements of the potential employers are accompanied by the employers’ names, addresses, and phone numbers. It also includes useful career-related Web sites.


This collection of twelve short essays is written by attorneys and government officials who give personal experience or insights germane to career development in public international law. The narratives cover experiences in such organizations as agencies of the United Nations, U.S. Agency for International Development, U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, U.S. Department of State, Human Rights Watch, Center for International Environment Law, and International Rescue Committee.

**Journal Articles**


This essay covers four young attorneys working in their firms’ foreign offices in Budapest, Poland, London, and Saudi Arabia, who reflect on their experiences working overseas.


The author, a law teacher, discusses public international law as a career choice and shares his own experience in the field. According to the author, public international law is severely undervalued in legal education and practice, but the prospects are bright. He suggests several ways to start one’s own international law career: work for a multinational corporation as legal counsel, seek employment with the Office of Legal Advisor to the U.S. State Department, join a large law firm with an international practice, write an article on an international law
subject while practicing domestic law, or teach public international law at a law school.


A California attorney with expertise on international law practice discusses various topics based on his personal experience: (1) what “international” practice means; (2) what qualifications are necessary to be an international practitioner; (3) whether international law practice is suitable for everyone; (4) how a person gets involved in international law; (5) what areas of law should be considered; and (6) whether international law can be practiced inside the United States.


Using immigration practice as an example, this article portrays the process of and issues in representing a foreign client. The author illustrates how representing foreign clients is different from serving the needs of domestic clients.


According to the author, a legal director of the American Civil Liberties Union Foundation of Southern California, two kinds of jobs exist in the field of international human rights law: international and domestic. On the international level, jobs exist in both official organizations (e.g., the United Nations and its associated agencies) and private agencies (e.g., Amnesty International). While it is very difficult to obtain a job in the former category, it’s relatively easier to gain employment in the latter. On the domestic level, employment opportunities can be found in both government agencies (e.g., U.S. State Department and Department of Commerce) and private organizations (e.g., Lawyers Committee for Human Rights). No matter where the job seeker looks, the best strategy is to network through either a summer internship or volunteer work.


An attorney shares the experience of his eight years working in Japan and provides tips for lawyers seeking employment abroad. He advises job-seekers to work through intermediaries rather than mailing out résumés. He also suggests concentrating on particular industries when seeking corporate positions.


This article examines the role of an international lawyer in matters involving international litigation and arbitration, because there are various difficulties and challenges in the process of representing foreign clients. The author, a partner with a Los Angeles law firm, advises that the best preparation for international practice includes taking a civil law course at law school, learning a foreign language, participating in an internship, and publishing in foreign trade journals.

A thought-provoking piece that draws from existing literature, this article critically assesses career paths in international law. It makes a coherent argument that there is no acknowledged path to such a career and then considers the value of international credentials in general based on the foregoing claim. Finally, it addresses certain educational and employment decisions a person must make early in a career.


This article, written by an associate director of international programs at a law school, primarily presents four ideas: (1) the reality check—while there are many careers in the law that qualify as international, multiple avenues exist that may lead to such careers; (2) types of practice in international law—these mainly consist of transnational practice with a private law firm, legal counsel for a multinational company, service with government agencies at all levels, and representation of nonprofit organizations; (3) search strategies—the key to a successful search in an international law career is persistence and flexibility; and (4) get started—the easy way to get into the door is to have an internship with a law firm, government agency, or other organization.


In this short essay, the author, an in-house counsel for Yamaha Motor Corporation, suggests that to pursue an international law career, law students should attend a law study abroad program, join the international law section of a bar association, or work for a multinational corporation's legal department. The author’s best tip is to be patient and get a foot in the door—this will eventually lead to the arena of international law practice.


Written by a female partner of a law firm, this short essay discusses the special challenges facing female lawyers in international practice. These generally relate to dealing with the biases of clients and attorneys from other cultures in which females are not viewed as having authority. The author suggests that the female attorney must be impeccable in her work, not only with foreign clients but also with her colleagues; never get defensive or angry; and be a people-oriented person.


A law partner and taxation expert talks about what international tax practice is like and how it differs from domestic tax work. He also offers tips on how to become an international tax lawyer. One path is through working for a specialist, another is by working for a specialized law firm, and a final approach is seeking jobs in government agencies (e.g., Internal Revenue Service). Good preparation for international tax practice includes learning a foreign language, understanding foreign cultures, and earning an LL.M. degree in taxation.
This essay describes the international LL.M./internship degree program at McGeorge School of Law in California.

The author uses his personal experience as an attorney to discuss what one should know about working in another country.

Written by a Los Angeles attorney, this essay describes three issues related to international civil litigation (i.e., international commercial arbitration and domestic litigation with international elements): (1) what international civil litigation is like; (2) what firms on the West Coast offer international litigation practice and where they are concentrated geographically; and (3) what law students can do to improve their chances of finding employment in this field. The author advises that the best way for law students to find jobs in international civil litigation is to focus on firms in the cities that are most likely to have international disputes arising in the ordinary course of business.

A law professor with extensive experience in international law recounts his own successful career path and offers practical advice to aspiring young attorneys. The essay is witty and lively, and the advice is sound. Tips for law students include: write a strong résumé, join a student group, invite a prospective employer to speak, network, join a bar association committee, volunteer to teach English to foreign lawyers, and write for publication.

**Membership Organizations**

¶4 There are many specialized associations and organizations devoted to international law issues, practice, advocacy, and scholarship. These organizations represent excellent sources of information and present numerous opportunities for professional growth, networking, and career development. Anyone seriously interested in a career in international law practice or scholarship should take advantage of these benefits by joining one or more such organizations. Law students can often join as student members at reduced membership dues. The following are a few of the major international law associations.¹ Information on state and local

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bar associations, including the existence of international law sections, is available on the FindLaw Web site.\(^2\)

**American Bar Association, Section of International Law and Practice**, 740 15th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005; (800) 285-2221; fax: (312) 988-5528; e-mail: intlaw@abanet.org; Web site: http://www.abanet.org/intlaw/home.html.

The ABA’s Section of International Law and Practice is involved in a wide range of international legal activities. It sponsors programs, workshops, publications,\(^3\) and meetings. The section runs the International Legal Exchange Program, which places attorneys from the United States with foreign law firms. In addition, the section periodically takes on international projects. For example, since 1990, it has undertaken the Central and East European Law Initiative (CEELI) to assist in building the legal infrastructure in Central and Eastern Europe and the newly independent states of the former Soviet Union. Another project undertaken by the Section is the Latin American Telecommunications Regulation Project (CITEL), which provides legal and technical assistance to the International Telecommunications Commission of the Organization of American States. Benefits of membership include networking and information about international placement opportunities. Applications for membership can be submitted from the section’s Web site.

**American Society of International Law**, 2223 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20008; (202) 939-6000; fax: (202) 797-7133; e-mail: info@asil.org; Web site: http://www.asil.org.

ASIL exists “to educate and engage the public in international law, and to expand its frontiers as a vehicle for resolving disputes and international conflict.” The society has thousands of members in more than one hundred countries. It sponsors programs, conferences, and various activities. Benefits of membership include free subscriptions to the *American Journal of International Law* and the *ASIL Newsletter*, plus discounts for its annual meeting, programs, and publications. Application for membership can be made from ASIL’s Web site.

**International Law Students Association, ILSA Executive Office**, 1615 New Hampshire Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009; (202) 299-9101; fax: (202) 299-9102; e-mail: ilsa@iamdigex.net; Web site: http://www.ilsa.org.

ILSA exists to promote awareness, study, and understanding of international law and related issues. Comprised of 10,000 members (law students and lawyers) around the world, ILSA serves as an umbrella organization for its individual members and chapter members, known as International Law Societies, at

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2. **LEGAL ASSOCIATIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS: STATE AND LOCAL LEGAL ASSOCIATIONS**, at http://guide.lp.findlaw.com/06associations/state.html (last visited Apr. 10, 2001) (selecting an individual state will produce a list of links to that state’s local bar associations).

3. Two well-known publications produced by the Section are: *International Lawyer*, a quarterly journal for practicing attorneys, and *International Law News*, a quarterly newsletter for Section members. In addition, the Section publishes books of interest to the practicing bar. *E.g.*, ABA GUIDE TO INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS NEGOTIATIONS: A COMPARISON OF CROSS-CULTURAL ISSUES AND SUCCESSFUL APPROACHES (James R. Silkenat & Jeffrey M. Aresty eds., 2d ed. 2000.)
universities worldwide. ILSA sponsors the annual Philip C. Jessup International Law Moot Court Competition, with participation by law students from around the world. In addition, the association sponsors publications, conferences, programs, and law student foreign exchanges in the form of internships and traineeships. Benefits of membership include free publications as well as participation in programs sponsored by ILSA. The membership application can be printed from the association’s Web site.

International Law Studies

Increasingly, American educators, administrators, and practitioners recognize the value of specialized academic training for international legal practice. One of the best routes to such educational preparation is through a specialized program of study beyond one’s J.D. program, such as a master’s degree in international financial law. Besides formal study programs, some law schools sponsor summer study abroad programs. Both the master’s degree and study abroad opportunities may prove invaluable to preparation for a career in international legal work. The following resources can help those interested in pursuing a graduate program or study abroad experience.

Graduate Law Programs

Annual Directory of Graduate Law Programs in the United States. West Hartford, Conn.: The Graduate Group, 1990–.
Published annually, this comprehensive listing of graduate law programs at American law schools is alphabetically arranged by school. The following information is provided for each program: program description, tuition, application deadlines, and contact information. However, there is no subject index.

This annual guide to international LL.M.s “provides program and contact information for a variety of graduate legal degrees intended to help domestic and foreign lawyers to expand their knowledge. The American Law category includes programs intended for foreign law school graduates. The Comparative Law category includes programs intended for both American J.D. graduates and graduates of law schools in other countries. The guide also has listings for other specialized international LL.M. degrees, including human rights, economic, environmental, property, and tax law” (from home page).

Summer Abroad Law Programs


4. See also infra Appendix: Graduate Programs in International and Comparative Law.
Published each spring, this guide contains relevant information on all the summer abroad programs sponsored by American law schools. It describes each program's subject, its location, length of study, tuition, and registration process. The guide is also available at http://www.nationaljurist.com/guides/abroad.html. On the Web version, the programs are divided geographically by region (Africa, Asia, Southeast Asia, and Europe) and then by individual country. The description of each program includes the location, subject of the course, tuition and fees, and contact information.


This is the best Web site for summer abroad law programs regardless of whether you want to spend a summer or a semester studying law abroad. It gives a basic overview of the whole range of foreign law studies programs approved by the ABA, including summer programs, cooperative programs, and semester programs. The information on summer programs is arranged by country, with listings of American law schools offering programs in that country. Selecting a particular law school, the user is linked to the school's Web site where descriptions of the program's location, subject matter, and tuition and fees are provided, as well as contact information.


Short profiles by students who participated in a summer study abroad program. The articles describe why the authors chose a particular program; the academic, cultural, and personal aspects of the program; and tips and tidbits about the program and study abroad in general.


This essay gives tips and advice about how to choose the right study program for both professional and personal benefits.

**Job-Finding Sources and Tools**

 washington There are a wide variety of tools and resources available for job hunting in the international law market. While the standard printed directories and manuals are still useful, the role played by job-related databases and online services is growing rapidly. The following section provides information on both print and Web-based sources for finding jobs.
Print Resources


This guide from the American Society of International Law provides detailed information and descriptions of more than one hundred internships relating to international law and explains the procedures for applying. It also offers advice on internships and career paths in public and private international law areas, such as human rights, international trade, environment, telecommunications, banking and finance, and dispute resolution.


This annual publication lists more than 22,000 openings in law firms, corporations, public interest organizations, and government agencies. Employers are organized by state, practice area, office size, and name. Employer profiles provide detailed information about each employer, number of openings projected, hiring criteria, hiring officer, compensation, and interview schedule. To search for international employers, the user should consult the “All Employers Listed by Practice Area” index. An electronic version is available on LexisNexis.


This is one of the best information resources for those seeking employment in public international law. Separate chapters describe employment opportunities within the United Nations, intergovernmental organizations, the U.S. government, and international nonprofit organizations. International fellowships and grants are also covered. A short introduction about the nature of the employment and job search strategies is provided for each type of agency or organization, along with contact information (often including e-mail and Web URL).


An annual, comprehensive guide to assist attorneys and law students search for employment in the public interest sector. Two separate chapters are devoted to the types of positions available from public interest fellowships and public interest and government employers. International jobs are described under Public Interest Organizations and Government Employers. Under public interest organizations (which are divided by categories such as human rights, immigrants/refugees, and international) the employers listed include Lawyers’ Committee on Human Rights, National Immigration Law Center, and World Bank. Under government employers (which are divided by categories such as federal government, federal honors program, state government, and local government) the employers listed include International Trade Commission, U.S. Department of Justice, and Attorney General of California. Each employer listing has a short description of the organization, its areas of specialization, office composition,
and contact information. The book also addresses topics such as job search strategies, résumés, and cover letters.

Web-Based Resources

 ¶7 There are numerous Web sites that function as “virtual” self-help career services offices. Typically these sites announce job openings, offer job-hunting advice (such as résumé writing and interviewing strategies), allow job seekers to post their résumés online for potential recruiters to view, and maintain career development tools and resources. While these sites grow daily, their quality varies widely depending on the creator of the site. The following list describes two types of job sites: those dedicated to law-related employment, and those that, though directed at a more general audience, can still be useful for law students as well.

Web Sites Dedicated to Law Jobs

This free Web site lists positions for attorneys, student summer clerks, and other legal professionals. Jobs are listed by state; within each state they are listed in reverse chronological order. Listings can be searched by keyword and can be printed and e-mailed. Salary and other information is included.

This free, excellent Web site provides attorney job listings almost nationwide. Created by the American Lawyer Media company, the site calls itself “the most comprehensive and current listing of attorney jobs anywhere—in print or online.” Updated daily, the listings represent current job openings at law firms, corporations, and government agencies all over the country. Jobs can be searched by geographical location and by practice area. There are links to search firms’ profiles that include links to all positions currently being announced by that firm. Job listings may be printed and e-mailed.

This site seems to be created mainly as a marketing tool for small-to medium-sized law firms, but it does offer listings of legal jobs for attorneys and legal secretaries. Job searching can be done either by location (i.e., state) or practice area (i.e., attorneys, bookkeepers, legal secretaries, paralegals), but these elements cannot be combined in a single search. This site does not compare favorably to Lawjobs.com, Lawyer’s Weekly Job Bank, and some other career sites because of its small number of listings, narrow geographical coverage, and lack of sophisticated search capabilities.

This free Web site lists various attorney jobs, searchable by keyword. Listings can also be browsed.

Maintained by Lawyers Weekly, Inc., this free Web site has many job listings for both attorneys and paralegals. The information is updated daily with a “Job of
the Day” announcement. Positions can be located by browsing all listings or searching by keyword and geography.


The Career Center provides career advice and related information. Two databases, National Association for Law Placement (NALP) and EmplawyerNet, provide comprehensive law job postings across the country; both are updated frequently. A LexisNexis password is required to use these databases.


Similar to the LexisNexis Career Center, Westlaw provides career related advice, services, and information. In particular, the AttorneyJobsOnline database, provided by Federal Reports, Inc., lists attorney and law-related job opportunities in the United States and abroad. It also contains information on judicial clerkships, fellowships, and government contract opportunities. Searching AttorneyJobsOnline requires a Westlaw password.

General Job-Related Web Sites


This free Web site boasts one of the largest job databases in the country. Job listings include more than law jobs. The powerful search engine allows the user to search by job title, zip code, and other criteria.


This free Web site weekly lists hundreds of position announcements across the country and internationally, most of which are for academic employment. However, there are also listings of jobs from government agencies, corporations, foundations, and other employers. Jobs are listed by category, and keyword searching is available as well. There is also useful information related to career development.


Job listings on this free site may be searched by a range of criteria, such as title, company name, location, and description. Most jobs listed are for corporations. There is also plenty of career-related advice and information. To access, go to the Web site and click on “Careers” from the top of the screen.


This is one of the most popular job searching sites on the Web, although it is not tailored to the law job market. It allows the user to limit searches by location (city/state) and practice area. You can also browse job postings by U.S. location (city/state), international location, or company name. It also features career-related resources.


A wonderful, free Web site for job-hunting and career information services, especially valuable for those seeking positions in a multinational company. The site allows searching for job postings by keyword, combined with company, location, or both.
Appendix:
Graduate Programs In International and Comparative Law

This appendix provides a comprehensive list of American law schools that offer an LL.M. degree in international law, comparative law, or both, to persons who already hold a J.D. degree. For each school included, information is provided about the focus of the school’s program(s). The URL of each school is provided for easy access to the school’s Web site for more information.5

American University
  http://www.wcl.american.edu/ilspl

Chicago-Kent College of Law
  International and Comparative Law
  http://www.kentlaw.edu/academics/llm/llm_intl.html

Emory University
  International Commercial Law
  http://www.law.emory.edu/

Fordham University
  International Business and Trade Law
  http://www.fordham.edu/law/llm/index.html

Georgetown University
  International and Comparative Law
  http://data.law.georgetown.edu/graduate/international.cfm

George Washington University
  International and Comparative Law
  http://www.law.gwu.edu/acad/llmdegree.asp

Golden Gate University
  International Legal Studies
  http://www.ggu.edu/schools/law/academic/int_home.html

Howard University
  Private International Law
  http://www.law.howard.edu/info/admissions/llm/index.html

5. Updated as of March 2001. The URL listed for each school should take the user directly to the page describing the international law program. However, if a deep link does not work for a particular school, the user should try to open the school’s homepage first and then navigate to the right pages.
John Marshall Law School (Chicago)
    International Business and Trade Law
    http://www.jmls.edu/AcademProg/LLM.htm

McGeorge School of Law, University of the Pacific
    Transnational Business Practice
    http://www.mcgeorge.edu/summary_of_llm_program.htm

New York University
    International Taxation, International Legal Studies, Comparative Jurisprudence, and Trade Regulation
    http://www.law.nyu.edu/academicprograms/graduatedegree/

Notre Dame Law School
    International Human Rights, and International and Comparative Law
    http://www.nd.edu/~ndlaw/admissions/graduate.html

Regent University
    International Tax (all courses taught online through the Internet)
    http://www.regent.edu/acad/schlaw/llm/home.html

St. Mary’s University
    International and Comparative Law
    http://204.158.207.3/llm/STMLLM.htm

Stetson University
    International Law and Business
    http://www.law.stetson.edu/international/llm/default.htm

Temple University
    Transnational Law
    http://www.temple.edu/lawschool/llmandgraduateframe.htm

Tulane University
    International and Comparative Law
    http://www.law.tulane.edu/admit/brochure/grad/menu.htm

University of Arizona
    International Trade Law
    http://www.law.arizona.edu/depts/llmitl/home.html

University of California–Davis
    International Commercial Law
    http://kinghall.ucdavis.edu/pages/LLM.HTM#llm

University of Houston
    International Economic Law
    http://www.lawlib.uh.edu/llm/
University of Iowa
   International and Comparative Law
   http://www.uiowa.edu/~lawcoll/curriculum/llm.shtml

University of Miami
   Comparative Law, Inter-American Law, International Law, Ocean and Coastal Law
   http://www.law.miami.edu/graduate/ifp/

University of San Diego
   International Law and Comparative Law
   http://www.acusd.edu/usdlaw/grad/master.shtml

University of Virginia
   Public International Law
   http://www.law.virginia.edu

University of Washington
   Asian and Comparative Law, Law of Sustainable International Development
   http://www.law.washington.edu/LawSchool/centers.html