

DEPAUL UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF LAW

International Human Rights Law Institute



GUIDE TO FINDING AN INTERNATIONAL LEGAL JOB

GUIDE TO FINDING AN INTERNATIONAL JOB

Loosely Based on Jean-Marc Hachey's Article: "How Young Professionals Find International Jobs"

The global economy is becoming increasingly international, nearly every discipline now has an international component. The recent law school graduate thus has a wealth of opportunities to work abroad. The steps below outline the process to finding an international position that suits your experience and expertise:

STEP ONE: BEGIN THE PROCESS AS A LAW STUDENT

If you are interested in working internationally or in international law, you may begin by:

- [Studying abroad](#)
- Traveling or interning internationally during a summer
- Learning a second language
- [Taking an international law course](#)
- Befriending a foreign student at home or abroad
- [Joining international organizations and associations](#)
- Joining the [American Society of International Law](#) and attending conferences
- [Publishing research in an international law journal](#)
- Working with a center or the [International Human Rights Law Institute](#)
- Networking with foreign or international law experts
- [Specializing in International & Comparative Law](#)
- Meeting with your career counselor.

STEP TWO: CHOOSE A SECTOR

Students tend to begin their international job search by focusing on a specific country. This approach is problematic because the majority of international jobs that are currently available are sector-specific. 85% of American entry-level professionals work abroad with U.S. based firms and U.S. based NGOs, which have a specific mandate and purpose. The employers of these firms are then able to arrange visas and designate the country in which you will work. Thus, the best way to find a job abroad is to identify organizations in your sector with an international mandate.

Examples of private sectors: international trade, international finance, international securities, consulting.

Examples of public sectors: human rights, humanitarian, refugee, criminal, rule of law / governance, environmental, women and children's rights.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF:

- How long do I want to work in this sector? Where do I picture myself professionally in 5, 10, 20 years? Does investing in this sector mesh with that vision?
- What type of work environment would I like to work in?
- What factual information have I gathered about the sector? Is the information up to date?

STEP THREE: RESEARCHING YOUR SECTOR

Start to identify opportunities in your sector by:

1. Identifying the field you intend to work in
2. Deciding on the desired type of organization (a private firm, NGO, government or international organization)
3. Finding the international hierarchy of organizations within your area of professional interest and determining the world umbrella organization in your field (i.e. the World Trade Organization, the States that are a party to the Organization, the Intergovernmental Organizations that have been granted observer status, etc.)
4. Researching the regional, national and institutional members of the umbrella organization
5. Examining the website of the members of the organizations and looking to find opportunities for work or internships. Look for: employers' names and contacts, job boards and job links, experts in your field, lists of firms with specialization, international contracts, consulting opportunities, internships abroad, scholarships and research grants, professional courses and international conferences.
6. Contacting people directly at the organizations you are interested in and set up an informational interview.
7. Beginning to apply to open positions.

STEP FOUR: SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

→**Nationality / Passport:** Your citizenship or visa will have an affect on which jobs you are eligible for or what countries you can travel to. Your immediate family is subject to the same constraints as you if they plan to move with you.

→**Foreign Language Skills:** Some positions require you to be proficient or fluent in a foreign language.

→**Background Checks:** A number of jobs will require you to go through a background check and receive a security clearance before you begin work. You may have to apply much earlier for these jobs to ensure that you are given clearance.

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TIMELINE FOR APPLYING AND SECURING INTERNATIONAL LEGAL POSITIONS

	FALL	SPRING	SUMMER
FIRST YEAR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Attend LCS workshop -Attend conferences and events put on by the International Law Society and IHRLI -Join international organizations -Investigate study abroad opportunities -Keep up with your foreign language skills -Meet with career advisor (starting 11/01) -Prepare resume/CV, cover letter and list of references -Begin researching sector-specific opportunities -Begin applying for opportunities (starting 12/01) -Network with professors and contacts -Join the American Society of International Law -Verify and update your profile on Simplicity -Subscribe to an international law journal and pay attention to current international events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Attend Practice Tracks and LCS workshops -Meet with career advisor to discuss strategy -Research organizations within your sector -Identify businesses and non-profits that specialize in your sector -Begin to apply for internships within your sector -Revise your writing sample -Have a professor or advisor look at your resume/CV and writing sample -Continue networking -Select courses that specialize in international law -Participate in job fairs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Consider going abroad to gain international experience or further your legal education -Work in an international legal position, either in the U.S. or in a different country -Order transcript from Academic Resource Center -Continue to pay attention to current international events and subscribe to international law journals and newsletters -Take the time to learn a new language or study a new culture

<p>SECOND YEAR</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Attend LCS workshops -Meet with career advisor to discuss career strategy -Update your resume/CV and cover letter -Secure a school year legal position at an international firm OR volunteer for a non-profit international organization -Apply for federal government programs (Sept.-Oct.) -Continue networking -Continue attending ILS and IHRLI events, become more active in each organization -Select classes that fit your sector interest area -Consider clinics and externship positions -Begin researching opportunities abroad in your sector specific area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Contact small/mid size firms -Search for opportunities that will allow you to get hands on experience abroad -Participate in job fairs -Meet with your career advisor as necessary -Begin to apply for leadership positions in student run organizations -Consider submitting material to the DePaul Rule of Law Journal -Compile application material for your international job search -Keep up on your foreign language skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Work in an international legal position -Update your resume/CV and writing sample -Ask for references from your employer -Research fellowships (consult DePaul's Resources for Finding an International Job or Internship) -Begin to research post-graduate positions
<p>THIRD YEAR</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Meet with your career advisor regarding your post-career job search -Participate in FERP and job fairs -Apply for entry level federal government and honors programs (consult DePaul's Resources for Finding an International Job or Internship) -Apply for positions at international tribunal and truth commissions -Confirm bar application and review process -Submit papers to writing competitions (there are a number geared towards international issues) -Select classes based on your international interests -Confirm graduation requirements with the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Participate in job fairs -Apply to small and medium sized firms -Apply to non-governmental organizations -Continue your job search for a post-graduation position -If your job requires it, submit to a background check -Check to make sure your passport and visa will allow you to travel to the countries necessary for your job -If you are moving to a different country, begin to make arrangements for your move 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Begin work -Keep in touch with DePaul -Use DePaul Alumni Services if you need additional assistance

THIRD YEAR CONT'D	Dean of Students -Participate in clinics and externship positions -Attend IHRLI, ILS and ASIL events -Apply to inter-governmental organizations		
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FINDING A JOB WITH AN INTER-GOVERNMENTAL AGENCY

There are various ways to approach working for an inter-governmental organization (IGO). They depend upon the time and field that you would like to enter. Positions in these organizations are generally creative and thus your application to the process should involve persistence, creativity and networking.

For the purpose of this handout, we will divide the positions in an IGO into internships, entry-level programs and contract and consulting work.

INTERNSHIPS

Most IGOs recruit interns and volunteers; a few of these internships are paid, a few others provide a stipend. IGOs typically have a rule that their interns cannot be hired as employees in the 6 months following the completion of their internships. However, it is still useful to pursue an internship because it is a great addition to your resume and can be a useful way to make contacts, get to know the agencies and gain experience.

ENTRY-LEVEL PROGRAMS

Many UN agencies and other IGOs have organized entry-level programs for 'young' and 'junior' professionals. These include programs for young lawyers and other professions that focus on development, human rights, refugee protection, etc.

Some organizations, such as the [UN Secretariat](#), offer competitive recruiting exams. The exams are held annually in certain fields for nationals of certain countries. People hired through the exam process can get permanent employment contracts.

The UN also sponsors a UN Volunteer (UNV) program that often hires young lawyers. Volunteers generally receive stipends and generous per diems.

A number of governments also sponsor two-year JPO programs for young professionals. This information is generally available through sponsoring governments. The US Department of State often has information about JPO programs on their website.

Entry level IGO positions are usually highly competitive and many require a minimum of two years of experience. When researching programs, be sure to check the age limits and the nationality restrictions on applying. The application process can be lengthy, so be sure to be patient and persistent.

CONTRACT AND CONSULTING WORK

IGOs often hire professionals on a fixed-term or short-term contract basis. Networking is often the best way to find out about these opportunities; however, there are some consulting firms that may place you internationally. [DPK Consulting](#) is an example of one of these firms; they offer [long-term](#) and [short-term](#) placement opportunities on their website.

NOTE ON APPLYING

Make sure to follow all of the instructions on IGOs websites carefully. In addition to consulting the IGO's website, check to see if they have region or country-specific websites where they often post jobs that do not appear on their central websites.

Networking can be one of the most crucial ways to land a job with an IGO. When applying, it is best to go through the formal channels listed on the organization's website and also to use your networking channels to make sure that they consider your application.