

INFORMATION ON INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC INTEREST CAREERS

This hand-out draws from my own experience in international legal work. It does not cover, therefore, the full breadth of this field of work. Indeed to map all the possible international public interest careers and the multiple entry points would be a mammoth endeavour.

Getting into public interest work, perhaps particularly in the international field, may seem incredibly daunting. Unlike corporate law, there is no clear path and no established order of things one must do in order to become employed. That said, I don't know anyone who really wanted to work in this field who didn't manage to break in and, as HLS students, you do have advantages both in terms of your educational background and your ability to access funding for internships.

In short, don't get too stressed. Rather, take time to consider what you like working on, reading about, and listening to and as a first step, apply in that general direction. The internship likely isn't the thing that determines the future course of your life but it is a chance to figure out what you enjoy (and what you don't) and the opportunity to make contacts and find mentors.

General tips for getting started:

1. If you are really stuck as to your starting point for looking for internships, spend some time mapping possible organisations who work EITHER (a) on specific theme that you are interested in (e.g. prisoners' rights) OR (b) in an area of the world in which you are interested.
2. Remember you aren't applying for the perfect job, or even the perfect internship. You're just trying to get some experience to find out a bit more about what you like or don't like in a certain career. The entirety of your future happiness probably does not ride on your first venture into the world of international work.
3. International work is not more rewarding or more valuable than domestic work. There are amazing local NGOs in the US and abroad that do great work. Working with civil society activists/ people working on lawfare campaigns can be very inspiring and interns in the organisations often get much more responsibility than those interning in larger, more bureaucratic organisations.
4. United Nations work is not more rewarding or more valuable than working in NGOs. There are pros and cons to both but it would be a mistake to think that working at the UN is the pinnacle of an international career. At internship level, my own view is that you're likely to get more interesting work in an NGO than in the UN but that may well depend on where you do your internships and who your supervisors are.

5. Do try to spend one summer 'in the field'. How often are you going to get funding to go anywhere you want to work? Try to work in a different region than those in which you may have worked before. Take yourself out of your comfort zone and broaden your CV.
6. The field does not mean Geneva or New York. Get a range of views on this but I personally feel that being an intern in these places means you end up embedded in an intern social scene and that the quality of work you get given is quite low. If you're able to get an internship in Myanmar or Zambia or Argentina, take it. If you're seen as good, you're likely to get more responsibility than you would do as an intern in Geneva. You're also more likely to get exposure to more senior people and to therefore have the opportunity to build relationships with them.
7. No one has got anywhere in international work without being advised and, sometimes, being pointed in the right direction by others. Be fearless and speak to people: your professors, guest lecturers, clinicians, former Wasserstein Fellows, really anyone who does work you find interesting or who works in an organisation you find interesting. Most people are sympathetic to how difficult it is to figure out how to get into this type of work and can at least give some pointers, if nothing else.
8. Languages are always useful. If you have them, make that apparent on your CV. If you are learning them, make the time in law school to keep them up. If you're not great at languages (like me), it won't prevent you having a solid career in the international field but it does make you less marketable. If you have a deep interest in a particular geographic area, you'd do well to prioritise learning the most widely-used language there.
9. Finally, if you feel that for personal, intellectual or financial reasons, you want to spend a few years working in private sector law, this can provide a solid foundation for so many aspects of legal practice, legal advice and interaction with clients. But if you go this route, (i) have a clear idea of how long you intend to stay, (ii) save money and (iii) make sure that you continue to keep in touch with the world of the work you'd like to do – continue to network, try to be involved in pro bono projects if possible, go to see people speak on human rights issues at film festivals etc.

A note on the breadth of possible careers in this field

Careers in the international field are varied – both in what the subject matter is and how you work on it. For example, you may be interested in courtroom advocacy in the international or regional tribunals. Or you might prefer to work on anti-corruption efforts, children's rights, attacks on journalists, access to health, and violations against women during conflict... You may want to specialise in a geographic region: the Middle East or Central America. Within this, you might want to work in a small NGO running a strong on-the-ground campaign, or with a larger NGO such as Human Rights Watch or one of the UN agencies. What work

interests you and what capacity you want to work in depends on your interests, personality and what opportunities come your way. Don't go into it with very fixed ideas: it may well be your starting point is the thing that does little more than point you in another direction entirely.

A note on the money

You are unlikely to make as much money as you would in private law. Money is not a primary reason for going into this world. That said, no one I know has ever starved doing public interest work and internships will eventually turn into well-paying jobs. You should also bear in mind that money matters as much as the society you are in. During the time I spent in Sierra Leone, I probably saved about as much as one of classmates who went to New York law firm. I earned less of course but I was also living in a place which wasn't particularly consumerist, doing work I enjoyed in a fascinating country. He, on the other hand, was paying insane rents and surrounded by people who were always spending like crazy. Aside from that, money is not everything and you learn that equally as fast whether you are working in a law firm or in a refugee camp.

A. International Criminal Tribunals

Internships are available for law students and young lawyers in the prosecution, chambers and defence office sections of the international criminal tribunals. It may be that you will get more out of this in your 2L summer if you only get a chance to cover international criminal law in your second year.

There is a formal application process. The links are set out below:

International Criminal Court

http://www.icc-cpi.int/en_menus/icc/recruitment/internships%20and%20visiting%20professionals/Pages/the%20internships%20and%20visiting%20professionals%20programme.aspx

Special Tribunal for Lebanon

<http://www.stl-tsl.org/en/jobs/internships/special-tribunal-for-lebanon-internship-programme>

Extraordinary Chambers in the Court of Cambodia

<http://www.eccc.gov.kh/en/dss/interns>

International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia

<http://www.icty.org/sid/113>

Don't forget the defence teams!

Aside from championing the presumption of innocence and protecting fair trial rights, there is far less bureaucracy in defence teams' processes for getting interns/ summer legal assistants.

If you are interesting in being an intern or legal assistant on defence teams (usually distinct from being an intern in the defence office), then you need to go in touch with the lawyers on the team directly. Finding out who they are is not difficult: their names will be on the front page of all the court documents (and for the bigger cases, their names will be in the media). Googling them will take you to their chambers where you can probably locate an email address, if not for them directly, then at least for their clerks. Alternatively, in some instances, interns in the defence offices often work closely with defence teams and may be hired by them if they impress. If defence teams find your work impressive, they likely to keep an eye out for you in the event you want to apply for a paid legal assistantship after graduation.

B. United Nations

There are so many UN agencies that your search time and corresponding stress levels will go down if you spend time first determining where your interests lie. For example, there's UNHCR (Refugees), UNDP (Development), the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Office for the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). Each organisation has its own website, with its own information about jobs and internships. This state department link gives a long list of international agencies and their contact details:

<http://www.state.gov/p/io/empl/125507.htm>

For those of you intent on finding UN internships:

The main links are here:

<https://careers.un.org/lbw/home.aspx?viewtype=ip>

<http://www.un.org/Depts/OHRM/sds/internsh/>

HOWEVER, please note that other United Nations Offices, Funds and Programs have separate internship arrangements. Sadly for you this means an intense mapping process: i.e. checking websites of the myriad of different UN agencies and field missions for information on internships.

Here are a few of them (more searches will yield more results – best to work out either thematic area or geographic region before you start mapping)

UNDP: <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/operations/jobs/internships.html>

UNICEF: http://www.unicef.org/about/employ/index_internship.html

UNHCR: <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646c49d.html>

UNEP: http://www.unep.org/vacancies/default.asp?vac_level=Interns

OHCHR: <http://www.ohchr.org/en/aboutus/pages/internshipprogramme.aspx>

UNV: <http://www.unv.org/about-us/employment/internship.html>

As I said earlier, I would favour pursuing an internship in country missions rather than HQ but speak to others about this. They may feel differently.

For those of you who are looking for jobs:

Job vacancies are posted through the UN job website, which is called the "Inspira" system. It can be found at <http://careers.un.org>. You need to fill out something called a P-11 form (this is also known as a PHP, or "personal history form"). This is an online form that the UN

saves in its database, and when you want to apply for a job, you can just submit it instead of typing the information in all the time. It's much more detailed than a resume/CV, and takes a LONG time to fill out, but it's worth it to have all your info saved in one place. Make sure you emphasize your languages.

UN jobs are ranked in different levels, from P-1 (lowest) to P-5 (highest). Generally, someone just graduating law school is only going to be eligible for P-1 or (maybe) P-2 positions. It's not worth it to try to apply for something for which you don't have sufficient experience.

Most of these UN agencies have satellite offices based in other countries, some of which have region or country-specific websites - e.g. UNHCR mission in Sri Lanka, International Organization for Migration Mission in Jordan, or the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in Bosnia (NB: the US is a member of the OSCE) where they may post jobs that do not appear on the central websites.

A good way to get hired by the UN Secretariat (the main UN HQ) is through the Young Professionals Program (formerly the UN National Competitive Recruitment Exam). People hired through this channel get permanent employment contracts. The exam is offered annually in certain fields for nationals of certain countries – but the nationalities and fields change each year. In recent years, Americans have occasionally been eligible to sit for the exam in Legal Affairs, Political Affairs, Human Rights, and Economic Affairs. For details see <http://careers.un.org/YPP>. Also note that some other agencies have separate examination programs – check out their websites.

United Nations Volunteers remains a good first step into the UN world. <http://www.unv.org/about-us/employment/internship.html>

A number of governments also sponsor two-year JPO Programs for young professionals from their countries (or in some cases developing countries) to work with certain agencies; information about JPO programs is available from sponsoring governments. Opportunities for US citizens are limited, but can be found at <http://www.state.gov>. It can't hurt for US citizens to reach out to their elected representatives' offices, who can put a word in for you. Usefully, each UN agency seems to have its own link to information on JPOs – best to google and they will come up:

<http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646c49a.html>

<http://unctad.org/en/Pages/About%20UNCTAD/JPO.aspx>

There are a number of unofficial websites which do an excellent job of compiling UN vacancies: www.unjobs.org, and www.unjobmonster.com. There is also a great person on Twitter who collates all this info, and is definitely worth looking through. @UNjoblist. (Again, not "official," but really thorough.)

C. International NGOs

Here are the more obvious ones:

- a. International Committee of the Red Cross and Red Crescent: www.icrc.org
(Its Legal Traineeship program is highly recommended)
<https://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/job/current-vacancies/internships-legaldiv.htm>
- b. International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent societies: www.ifrc.org
- c. International organization of Migration: www.iom.int
- d. Human Rights Watch: <http://www.hrw.org/jobs/volunteers.htm>
- e. Amnesty International: <https://careers.amnesty.org/category/7/39/description/>
- f. Save the Children:
<http://www.savethechildren.org/site/c.8rKLIXMGIpI4E/b.8631185/k.9CAE/Internships.htm>
- g. International Rescue Committee: <http://www.rescue.org/irc-fellows>

D. Europe-based missions*European Union*

This may seem counter-intuitive but, in fact, EU Rule of Law Missions often have international internships, some of which were paid. It's best to search around on the EU sites for links to various projects. Here is one to give you an idea of what's out there:

<http://www.eulex-kosovo.eu/en/jobs/internships.php>

Council of Europe

<http://www.coe.int/en/web/jobs/traineeships>

Organisation of Security and Cooperation in Europe

<http://www.osce.org/employment/91>

E. US Domestic NGOs

There are hundreds of thousands of domestic NGOs working on issues from criminal defence to environmental law to gay rights. Take the time to search for those who focus and approach appeal most to you. .

For those of you who are graduating, I wanted to draw your attention to Equal Justice Works. Each year the Equal Justice Works fellowship competition selects qualified and passionate lawyers who have developed new and innovative legal projects that can impact lives and serve communities in desperate need of legal assistance.

<http://www.equaljusticeworks.org/post-grad/equal-justice-works-fellowships>

Also if you go to the pdf for the employers who registered for their conference, it provides the website addresses for many NGOS doing public interest work in different parts of the US and may prove a useful shortcut for your searches.