



Boston College Law School
Office of Career Services

**PRACTISING LAW IN ENGLAND:
RESOURCES AND REFERENCE
MATERIALS**



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PRACTISING US LAW IN A LAW FIRM IN ENGLAND AND WALES

HOW TO BEGIN THE JOB SEARCH

Establish an Interest

Begin by identifying organizations that specialize in the areas of law which interest you, in both the UK and the US. The most comprehensive and up-to-date resources for law firms include www.martindale.com, www.legal500.com, www.rollonfriday.com, www.chambersandpartners.com. Publications and journals include www.thelawyer.com, www.gazette.com, www.legalweek.com, and www.europeanlawoffice.com.

Join organizations and participate in activities that offer practical experience and help to build a network. These can include school organizations (for example the International Law Society) and law reviews as well as national and international organizations. For example:

- American Bar Association, Section of International Law, US Lawyers Abroad Committee; the Law Student, LLM and New Lawyer Outreach Committee; the International Law Students Association – www.abanet.org/intlaw
- American Society of International Law – www.asil.org
- International Association of Young Lawyers – www.aija.org
- International Law Association – www.ila-hq.com
- International Bar Association – www.ibanet.org
- International Law Students Association – www.ilsa.org

Identify individuals who can help give you a better idea of the realities of working and living in London. The greatest resources are often other students, professors, alumni and other practitioners. Networking is key. Look at the ‘Recent Employers’ section of the Job Search Handbook and research previous students summer placements under the ‘International’ section in the binders in the Career Services Office. The Alumni Career Network on the Career Services website is a useful tool to begin to build your network – www.bc.edu/schools/law/services/career/alumni/careernetwork

Choose classes and research topics that relate to international and European law. This will make you more knowledgeable and help you decide whether or not international law is really for you. Your work products may then be used for future writing samples when applying for future positions. It also helps demonstrate a commitment to international law.

Explore grants, fellowships, established summer internship programs and study abroad programs in order to gain practical experience. Boston College operates certain international study abroad programs, including the London Program. Further details can be found on the website at www.bc.edu/schools/law/services/academic/programs/curriculum/international.html

Some of the firms offer an overseas assignment in London as part of their US summer associate program, coordinated usually through the US office. This is a good opportunity to network and gain experience in London both from a legal and cultural point of view. It also demonstrates a commitment to the UK. Practical and local experience in London may be as important to potential employers as your school record. In addition, it will give you the opportunity to decide whether this is something you would want to do for a longer period of time.

Specific Qualifications Required?

Languages and a track record of interest in the world, and more specifically in the UK, will be important in establishing your specific interest. Overseas placements tend to be highly coveted and require a demonstration of commitment and enthusiasm over and above just a desire to travel. Whilst not all firms require fluency in a language to be based in London, it will be a selling point for some firms who are using the London office as their stepping stone into Europe.

Read local newspapers (for example the Financial Times (www.ft.com), the Times (www.timesonline.co.uk), The Telegraph (www.telegraph.co.uk), the Guardian (www.guardian.co.uk) the Independent (www.independent.co.uk)). Keep up to date with current affairs (for example through the BBC News website (www.bbc.co.uk) and Sky News (<http://news.sky.com/skynews/home>)). Talk to people who have lived and worked in London and check the Law Society of England and Wales website (www.lawsociety.org.uk). Understand what it is that will make you invaluable to the UK (for example prior US experience) and will make an employer want a US lawyer over a local one.

Academic achievement, whilst not essential, will be extremely important in getting a position with the large private law firms that have international practices.

US OR ENGLISH LAW?

There are two routes for a US lawyer to work as a lawyer in England and Wales (Ireland and Scotland have their own rules¹): practicing US law in England or qualifying as an attorney in England. The second option is by far the most complicated process - usually lawyers would only consider taking the second route and becoming dual qualified if the move was to be permanent or long-term. If this is something which you are considering, speak to a counselor in Career Services.

Practising US Law in England

Both UK and US law firms hire US trained lawyers to work in their London offices. The lawyers which they recruit practice US law (usually having passed the NY bar exam) but do so based in London. The only legal and professional requirement being that they have

¹ For information on Ireland see www.lawsoc-ni.org or www.barlibrary.com. For information about Scotland, see www.lawscot.org.uk. Students wishing to practice law in Scotland should contact the Scottish Society for more guidance.

passed a US bar exam in the usual way and of course have the relevant work and residency visas.

Qualifying as an Attorney in England²

There are two different types of lawyer in the UK, solicitors and barristers. The basic difference between the two is that barristers have 'rights of audience' which enable them to go before the courts. Solicitors in general do not have these rights (although the law is changing slowly in this respect). US qualified lawyers are able to qualify as a lawyer in the UK

Solicitors. Assuming that a candidate has a US law degree, they must have passed a US state bar exam. In addition they must do the following:

- prove that they have gained 2 years of common law practice experience within the past 5 years. Such experience must have been undertaken in 3 areas of common law and must have covered both contentious (for example, advocacy, litigation or dispute resolution) and non-contentious areas of practice;
- demonstrate that they are suitable for admission as a solicitor in England and Wales by declaring all convictions and other relevant matters;
- obtain a disclosure record from the Criminal Records Bureau;
- take the Qualified Lawyers Transfer Test in Property, Litigation and Professional Conduct and Accounts (each exam is 3 hours)

Doing all of the above with satisfactory results will enable them to be admitted to the Roll of Solicitors in England and Wales. For detailed information, see

<http://www.lawsociety.org.uk/becomingasolicitor/outsideenglandandwales>

Barristers. Only certain legal practitioners are eligible to apply to the Qualifications Committee for Call to the Bar without complying with all of the usual requirements (undergraduate degree in law, completing the Bar Vocational Course, complete a One Year Pupillage). Those eligible must be either a solicitor of England and Wales or be a qualified legal practitioner in another common law jurisdiction. Even then, they must have regularly exercised rights of audience in that jurisdiction for at least 3 years and will have to complete an Aptitude Test and a period of pupillage. It is therefore extremely difficult for a US qualified lawyer to practice as a barrister and most chose to convert once they are solicitors, if at all. For detailed information see

<http://www.legaleducation.org.uk/careers/thebar>

US OR UK LAW FIRM?

A lawyer should decide carefully whether or not to go with a UK (local) firm or a US firm in London. They should consider things such as: will there be a sufficient US law support network? Will I be trained and supervised properly? How large is the office? Does the office only practice US law or does it also practice local law? Does the office take on UK trainees? Is my long-term goal to return to the US to practice law? Do I want

² Up-to-date information should be sought from the Law Society

to become dual qualified? Do I require fluency in a local language? What would happen if there was a downturn in the market?

US Law Firms

Much of the demand for US attorneys in London is driven by foreign companies obtaining capital in ways which require familiarity with the American legal system. Both native London law firms and London offices of American firms recruit US lawyers however the best opportunities exist for those attorneys already working in US offices. One or two years of experience places an attorney in a much more marketable position and most US law firms require this experience before transferring attorneys abroad. Recruiting law students direct to the London office of a firm does happen but it tends to be market dependent.

Many large US firms practice in international law and have branch offices in London. In fact, there are over 80 US firms in London. The law firms who have a need for US lawyers tend to be the larger corporate law firms since these have the international network and capabilities. Two good links which highlight the US firm, history in the UK, worldwide profile, size in the UK and the main UK activities are:

www.chamberandpartners.com/ChambersStudent/pdf/USfirmsinUK.pdf?id=2

and

www.legalweek.com/assets/getAsset.aspx?uiAssetID=474f9645-f2db-44a3f-8804f6151e7d

London practices of US firms are however far from homogenous – firms planning to increase headcount range across a wide range of practice areas which shows that US firms are increasingly looking to play on their domestic US strengths. Whilst there is no general rule, they tend to be specialized in M&A, US securities, capital markets, banking, tax, and, to a lesser extent, anti-trust and IP law - these are the areas where there is a need for US law advice abroad. There are however boutique firms offering specialized advice in areas such as immigration, customs and international estate planning and family law.

Students should consider what would happen in a downturn in the market – a US firm which specializes in private equity and M&A is all very well in a buoyant market, however students should consider what work they would be doing in a down turn, or indeed whether or not they would be required to go back to the US. Questions to be asking US firms include the effect of the dollar exchange rate, what are their contingencies for a downturn in the market, what their plan is to create and maintain and reliable client base (without the UK firms poaching them), how they are intending to create a European network (by merger with a UK firm?).

In Legal Weeks' 2007 review of US law firms in London, 91% of these firms said that they are intending to increase headcount, although just 8% say that they are planning to grow by half their size again. Firms such as Squire Sanders & Dempsey, Paul Hastings Janofsky & Walker and Mintz Levin are planning on up to 100% growth. A good sign of long-term growth strategy is the number US firms wanting to raise the number of home-grown associates and trainees they take on.

Examples of US firms with offices in London include the following:

Baker & McKenzie – this office does have specialists in US law who are resident in London and who specialize mainly in banking and finance, capital markets and tax. US based associates can apply for a posting in the London office through the Associate Training Program (1-2 years long). In addition, they have 20 International Clerkships available each summer which consist of 2 six week placements in 2 different countries.

Brown Rudnick – A relatively small office which is looking to grow by up to 50% in the next 18 months. Focuses mainly on corporate, insolvency, finance, international arbitration and litigation.

Bryan Cave – Looking to grow 25-50% over the course of the next 18 months. Focusing mainly on banking and finance, tax, M&A, intellectual property and IPOs.

Cadwalader, Wickersham & Taft LLP – associate positions are sometimes offered to their US associates wishing to travel. For 2007-2008 they are looking to increase the head count in their London office by 10-25%. They focus mostly on capital markets, financial reconstruction/insolvency, litigation, corporate/M&A, global finance and tax.

Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton – US lawyers wishing to work in London must submit their applications through the NY office. Their London office is intending to increase head count in corporate and M&A, finance and capital markets by 10-25% over the next 18 months.

Covington & Burling LLP – there is specific US capability for US M&A and other corporate transactions, international tax planning and US food and drug regulatory matters. Most US lawyers have relocated on a long term basis from the US offices.

Davis Polk & Wardwell – this firm does not practice any English law and the office staffs its lawyers from its three US offices – New York, Silicon Valley and Washington. Hiring is coordinated from the New York Office. Full time lawyers have to be NY admitted and are a mix of those who want to be in London for the long term and those who rotate for 2 or more years between the US offices. US based summer associates are offered the opportunity to spend up to 4 weeks in London during their summer.

Dechert LLP – They have a 4 day trip to London as part of their summer associate program but in general they do not allow splits between international Dechert offices as part of this program. Their international offices are organized along practice group lines and offer associates geographic flexibility within each practice group. If an associate wants to relocate to another office, usually he or she can do so as long as the associate's practice group is active in that office. The London office also hires directly. It recruits US lawyers directly mainly in the field of corporate and financial work with varying degrees of experience required.

Dewey Ballantine LLP – They provide US law advice for finance work, particularly tax. While most associates in the US offices are hired through the summer associate program, the London office relies on lateral hiring. Lateral recruits must have professional experience at another top firm or in a very specialized field. The merger with

LeBoeuf Lamb Greene & MacRae will give the firm's London office a combined total of 190 lawyers, including 50 partners which will make it one of the largest US law firms in London.

Kirkland & Ellis – hiring relies on lateral hires from both the UK and the US and they are looking to increase their headcount by 10-25%. Focusing on private equity

K&L Gates – growth is continuing in this office with them focusing on M&A work and IP and IT in London.

Hogan & Hartson – this office has grown in recent years and is intending to increase its head count by 25-50% over the next 18 months.

Mintz Levin – this office is very small at present but they have said that they are intending to grow the office by at least 75-100% over the course of the next 18 months.

Paul Hastings – They are intending to grow their London office by 50-75% over the course of the next 18 months.

Proskauer Rose – London office is going to open in Mayfair, close to the clients they are targeting such as private equity funds, hedge funds and other alternative asset management. Their strategy is to focus on a niche and become exceptional in it.

Shearman & Sterling LLP – Lateral hires must have prior US experience. They are looking to grow project finance and leveraged finance.

Sidley Austin – structured finance driven practice but looking to grow insurance.

Simpson Thatcher & Bartlett LLP - the London office originally was staffed mainly by US lawyers on secondment from the NY office. The firm considers its summer program the primary focus of recruiting efforts and some US associates may be assigned to the London office with rotations ranging from 2 to 6 weeks. The firm gives preference to lawyers able to speak any of the other major non-European languages. This office does hire directly as well as through its NY office.

Skadden Arps Slate Meagher & Flom LLP – it is very helpful to demonstrate a commitment to a career in Europe. The firm wants to know that you are willing to live in London, not just spend a summer vacation there. Most hiring goes through the NY office.

Sullivan & Cromwell LLP – more than two thirds of the office are US qualified. They currently anticipate that 6-8 lawyers will join the London office after graduating from a US law school and will be assigned to the general corporate group. It is expected that a significant portion of US lawyers that begin their careers in the London office will have spent time in the London office as a summer associate (there are usually 10-12 in London for 6 weeks). Hiring for US trained attorneys is coordinated out of the NY office. **(BCLS Alum: Dinesh Banani)**

Richard Goldsteil – specializes exclusively in US immigration and consular law and offers 3 or 6 month internships

Weil Gotshal – private equity specialists but well integrated within the UK market. Restructuring and litigation departments growing to cater for a downturn if necessary. Aim is to break the UK market for complex transactions.

UK Law Firms

UK law firms do occasionally recruit US qualified attorneys although they do tend to require some US prior experience. The advantages of working in a UK law firm include the fact that they are firmly established within London and Europe and have a good established client base. The London legal market is so well established that it is difficult for foreign branch offices to grow. At the moment, one of the advantages would be earning British Pounds as opposed to US Dollars. There are also concerns with working for a UK law firm and these include how easy it is to transfer back to the US and the level of US legal support.

Examples of UK law firms who take on US associates include:

Allen & Overy LLP –The US lawyers principally operate from NY, London and Hong Kong and it is expected that they will be picked primarily from those students who completed the Summer Associate Program in NY.

Ashursts –has added its own US law team to its London office but is unlikely to take candidates without prior experience.

Clifford Chance – has a US Securities and US Banking practice in London mainly fed by experienced lateral hires and attorneys from its US offices. **(BCLS**

Alumni: Meredith Szwed and Orville Thomas)

Herbert Smith – whilst this law firm does not have any offices in the US, its London base is home to the US securities law team which is a group within the corporate department. It specializes in cross-border mergers and acquisitions, international capital markets, securitization and private equity matters. The US summer program is the primary vehicle for the recruitment of attorneys. For those seeking a position in London, fluency in a foreign language is highly desirable.

Linklaters – US summer associates can spend time at each of the London and Hong Kong offices and there are distinct ‘US’ desks in each of these cities where lateral US hires are made directly or associates can transfer from the NY office on secondment.

DIRECT OR INDIRECT ROUTE?

Upon passing the bar exam, a US trained lawyer has three avenues to pursue experience in London. Which one is taken will depend on the law firm and how long they are intending to stay for.

- *Apply directly to the US office of a law firm and then pursue a secondment or posting overseas after having gained some US experience.* A secondment opportunity is widely recognized in Europe and is used to post employees either in-house or, in this case, overseas for a temporary period of time. Generally there is a defined task and time period and the employee will return to their original job at the end. For many businesses, the availability of such a secondment will depend on business demand and good appraisals. The advantage of this route is that the law firm/agency/company is likely to take care of moving expenses, work permits and other related issues and there will be a full support network available to the lawyer. In addition, there will a job available in the US at the

end of the secondment. Some law firms in particular will only consider this course of action – they do not want to spend time and money on someone who will not return to them with the experience they have gained abroad. Secondments can last anywhere between 6 months and 5 years, depending on the market, the country and the assignments.

- *Apply to work in the overseas office through the NY office.* Most US based law firms prefer to manage their overseas recruitment needs through their NY office as opposed to applying directly to the office concerned. This may also be easier than initially dealing with the overseas jurisdiction because of time differences, cultural differences and distance. Applications direct from law school students have mixed receptions depending on the firm, since some will only consider applicants who already have US experience.

- *Apply through the local office in the country concerned.* There are exceptions, but generally the market has to be buoyant for the local offices of private law firms to consider direct applications for candidates wishing to practice US law. Candidates would be expected to demonstrate a real commitment to their country of choice with solid reasons and in many instances knowledge of the local language to a high standard is a must. In addition, many places expect prior US legal experience in a large international commercial firm before the candidate would be considered. There is more flexibility where summer associate programs are concerned.

JOB SEARCH TECHNIQUES

Students should be prepared to adjust their resume and job search technique to take local customs into account. Useful websites are as follows:

<http://workabroad.monster.com>

www.cyborlink.com

www.executiveplanet.com

www.bspage.com/address.html

Don't forget when applying to a UK law firm/company, spelling differences (see: **http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/User:SpNeo/Spelling_Guide**). Also see the separate handout entitled 'Converting Your Resume to a Curriculum Vitae and Vice Versa' for more information.

The Career Services Office encourages you to make an appointment to discuss any international career related questions with a counselor.

RESOURCE AND REFERENCE MATERIALS

Associations

- American Bar Association, Section of International Law, US Lawyers Abroad Committee; the Law Student, LLM and New Lawyer Outreach Committee; the International Law Students Association – www.abanet.org/intlaw
- American Society of International Law – www.asil.org
- International Association of Young Lawyers – www.aija.org
- International Law Association – www.ila-hq.com
- International Bar Association – www.ibanet.org
- International Law Students Association – www.ilsa.org
- Center for International Legal Studies - www.cils.org
- Law Society of England and Wales – www.lawsociety.org.uk

Legal Publications and Newspapers

- www.legal500.com
- www.martindale.com
- www.chamberandpartners.com
- www.thelawyer.com
- www.europeanlawoffice.com
- www.gazette.com
- www.legalweek.com
- www.legaleducation.org.uk
- The Financial Times – www.ft.com
- The Times – www.timesonline.co.uk
- The Telegraph – www.telegraph.co.uk
- The Guardian – www.guardian.co.uk
- The Independent – www.independent.co.uk
- BBC News – www.bbc.co.uk

Jobs and Networking

- International Career Employment Weekly – www.internationaljobs.org
- Public Policy – www.policyjobs.net
- Human Rights – www.humanrightsjobs.com
- NALP's Public Service Law Network Worldwide - www.pslawnet.org
- International Clerkships - www.worldlii.org
- International Clerkships - www.venice.coe.int/site/dynamics/N_court_links_ef.asp?L+2
- <http://workabroad.monster.com>
- Symplicity – <https://law-bc-csm.symplicity.com/students/index.php?au=&ck=>
- Alumni Database - www.bc.edu/schools/law/services/career/alumni/careernetwork
- BCLS Summer Vacation Binders

Business Culture Guides

- www.cyborlink.com
- www.executiveplanet.com
- www.bspage.com/address.html

Recommended Reading

- **Career Preparation and Opportunities in International Law** – American Bar Association, Section of International Law and Practice
- **Careers in International Affairs** – 7th Edn, Georgetown University School of Foreign Service
- **Careers in International Law** – 2nd Edn, Mark W Janis and Salli A Swartz, American Bar Association Section of International Law and Practice
- **Public Service and International Law: A Guide to Professional Opportunities in the US and Abroad** – 3rd Edn Yale/Harvard Career Development & Public Interest Offices
- **International Opportunities Resource Guide** – National Association of Law Placement
- **Serving the Public: A Job Search Guide (International)** – 6th Edn, Harvard Law School
- **Harvard Guide to International Experience**
- **Careers in International Law: A Guide to Career Paths and Internships in International Law** – American Society of International Law, 2005-2006 Edn
- **International Jobs: Where They Are And How To Get Them** – 5th Edn E Kocher and N Segal
- **Careers In International Law: Your Indispensable Guide to Career Paths and Internships in International Law** – 4th Edn ASIL
- **Directory of Foreign Firms Operating in the United States** – Uniworld
- **Directory of American Firms Operating in Foreign Countries** – Uniworld
- **‘Practical Career Advice for Young International Lawyers: How to Build a Killer Resume, Network Effectively, Create Your Own Opportunities, and Live Happily Ever After’** – by M Wojcik, 5 ILSA Journal of International and Comparative Law 455-66
- **‘Launching Your Career in International Law’** – by W McElwain, 24 Student Lawyer 24-28
- **Guide to Foreign Law Firms** – James Silkenat and William Hanney
- **International Career Employment Weekly**
- **International Public Interest Law: A Guide to Opportunities in the United States and Abroad** – Harvard Law School