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# INTERNATIONAL SUPPLEMENT

## TO THE PUBLIC INTEREST JOB SEARCH TOOLKIT

Prepared by the Office of Public Interest/Public Services Law and Careers

For the exclusive use of Columbia Law School students and graduates

# HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

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The Office of Public Interest/Public Service Law and Careers (the PI/PS Office) created this supplement to assist in your exploration of international public interest law. It is intended to be used with our [Public Interest Job Search Toolkit](#) and, if applicable, the [LL.M. Toolkit Supplement](#). Both documents, as well as additional career guides and tools, can be found on our [job search tools web page](#).

Students are encouraged to learn more about the PI/PS Office and available resources on the [Law School website](#). Our advising staff are available to speak with you about your job search.

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COLUMBIA LAW SCHOOL

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2025-2026

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# INTRODUCTION

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## *Embarking on Your Exploration of International Public Interest Law...*

The international public interest job search process is exciting, but some find it a bit overwhelming. The Office of Public Interest/Public Service Law and Careers (the PI/PS Office) is available to work closely with you and provide support and advice. The PI/PS Office provides information and guidance on an array of topics through one-on-one counseling, group information sessions, and year-round international public interest programming, as well as on our website. Consult with a [PI/PS adviser](#) to discuss academic-year internships in New York and summer internships both in the U.S. and abroad. Doing pro bono work and taking an externship are excellent ways to gain relevant experience and skills and to build your network, and we can help you choose which projects and offerings are best for you. In addition, the PI/PS Office provides guidance to students about courses, clinics, journals, student organizations, and other opportunities at Columbia Law School, so that each student can carefully develop their plan. We also work closely with students seeking postgraduate fellowships and permanent public interest law jobs. After you graduate, the PI/PS Office will continue to work with you, especially as you face career transitions. All students and graduates are welcome to consult any member of our full-time staff or one of our part-time career advisers, who include Columbia graduates both in New York City and around the country, and who all have a wide range of professional public interest experience and expertise.

Whether your ultimate career is in the public or private sector (or will include both), we are here to help you chart a rewarding path that includes international public service.

## *What Is International Public Interest Law?*

We use the term “international public interest law” to mean legal work that is international in scope and pursued on the basis of individual or group concepts of justice, fairness, and advancement of the public good, rather than solely for commercial, personal financial, or other gain. It is a deliberately broad definition that includes a variety of practices (e.g., human rights, humanitarian law, transitional justice, climate change, business and human rights, sustainable development) and settings (nonprofits, regional organizations, courts and tribunals, and intergovernmental organizations). The kind of work that international public interest lawyers might do covers a broad range of activities requiring a variety of skills and includes researching and documenting of human rights abuses, engaging in strategic litigation or advocacy, advising impacted communities and community organizations, drafting legislation, and working in refugee and migrant protection. Lawyers also engage in many areas of international public service that do not involve traditional legal practice, such as journalism, community organizing, academic or policy research, and foundation work.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Some of these less traditional practices may require additional documentation to be covered by the Columbia Loan Repayment Forgiveness Program (LRAP). Consult online resources from the [Financial Aid Office](#) and the [PI/PS Office](#) or PI/PS Office adviser Grace Shim at [ghc2102@columbia.edu](mailto:ghc2102@columbia.edu) for more information.

## *Why Pursue International Public Interest Law?*

Students pursue opportunities and careers in international public interest law for a variety of reasons. Whether they decide to try an international public interest internship or to devote their career to international public interest law, many individuals are satisfied knowing they are making meaningful societal contributions to the world. Below are testimonials from Columbia Law School graduates explaining why they chose to work in international public interest law.

*I find this work fulfilling in ways I never imagined. It is intellectually stimulating—I feel that I deepen and broaden my knowledge of international law on a daily basis. More than that though, I learn so much from the people I interview in terms of their strength, their commitment to justice despite the immense hurdles standing in their way, and their experiences. And while the wins are often rare and minor compared with the abuses, I am grateful for the opportunity to be working toward them.*

**—Jessica Evans, LL.M. '07, Human Rights Watch**

*I get to be a part of a group of people who are working to change social, economic and racial injustices around the world. Working in international public interest allows me to use my legal training to try to solve these problems. It's deeply rewarding to be able to have a legal career doing work that is challenging, makes a positive impact, and is meaningful to me.*

**—Holly Stubbs, J.D. '15, Center for Economic and Social Rights**

*...This work changes people's lives. I love watching clients grow, transformed from traumatized victims into resilient survivors. Working with these men and women is inspiring.*

**—Martina Vandenberg, J.D. '00, Human Trafficking Pro Bono Legal Center**

*I can't imagine doing anything else. Rights violations and injustices are so pervasive, we each have a responsibility to use our own status, education, and tools to pursue change. I feel very strongly that it's a privilege to work on social justice advocacy.*

**—Bassam Khawaja, J.D. '15, Human Rights Watch**

*...I've had the opportunity to travel the world and support communities who are fighting for justice. In this field, I am engaged in dynamic, challenging, and gratifying work. I also feel that I am a part of a global network of advocates and organizations who work together to promote a more humane world.*

**—Morenike Fajana, J.D. '13, European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights**

*...When I was growing up, I always had that niggly feeling that some things just weren't right in this world. I found that this feeling never went away and only got more intense as I learned more about the world. Through studying international human rights and other public international law subjects at university, I came to understand how law can be used as a vehicle to either ensnare or remedy these*

*problems.*

—Anna Marie Bulman, LL.M. '15, Adviser to the U.N. Special Rapporteur

*Knowing that my job has a positive impact is a critical driver for me. My work helps shape the institutions and structures that promote and ensure justice, across a variety of countries around the world. I particularly enjoy the face time that I get in my travels, with people who are committed to making a difference. Whether it is a judge in Guatemala who is taking a firm stand against corruption; a group in Nicaragua that is fighting against human rights violations; or a civil society organization in Brazil working tirelessly to help people in prison, I always come home feeling intellectually stimulated and rewarded.*

—Jaime Chavez Alor, LL.M. '18, Cyrus R. Vance Center for International Justice

*Pursuing a career in international public interest law allowed me to turn my legal skills and personal interests into tools to promote fair and inclusive investments that benefit communities in the Global South. Working in different jurisdictions from Brazil to Papua New Guinea is professionally challenging and intellectually fascinating. International public interest law gives me legal instruments to help level the field for all stakeholders involved in sustainable investments.*

—Pedro Villegas, LL.M. '18, International Senior Lawyers Project

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## Exploring International Public Interest Law at Columbia

*How Do I Explore International Public Interest Legal Opportunities (and Build My International Credentials)?*

During law school, there are many opportunities to explore international public interest. As 1Ls, students can attend international public interest [programming](#) presented by [the PI/PS Office](#), the [Human Rights Institute](#) and other Columbia Law School [centers and institutes](#), [student groups](#) such as RightsLink and the *Human Rights Law Review*, other Columbia schools (especially the [School of International Public Affairs](#) and the [Mailman School of Public Health](#)), and by other organizations around New York City. Students also can participate in [student organizations](#) and start exploring [pro bono opportunities](#). In addition to providing substantive information, all are opportunities to network with other students, professors, PI/PS staff, and experienced lawyers.

Upper-class J.D. students and LL.M. students can also attend international public interest programming, participate in [clinics and externships](#), do [pro bono work](#), work on international public interest [journals](#) (such as the *Human Rights Law Review*), lead or work with [student organizations](#), work for professors on international human rights issues, or publish an article or note on a human rights topic.

Speaking a second language is important for international public interest work. Practice and build your

language skills. Upper-year students can receive academic credit for certain language courses at the university.

First- and second-year students can work in international public interest positions over the summer through the [Human Rights Internship Program](#) and use the opportunity to start planning for postgraduate fellowships and employment by doing well and by networking. First- and second-year students can also consider joining an international law [moot court](#), such as the [Jessup International Moot Court](#) (arguably the most prestigious moot court competition in the world).

# INTERNATIONAL JOB SEARCH BASICS

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## *How Should I Start?*

The first step is to meet with a [PI/PS adviser](#) to construct an internship or job search plan. It is important that we know who you are! We have several advisers who specialize in international public interest and can provide valuable advice.

Further steps you should take early include the following.

- If you are a 1L or 2L, apply for a summer internship in international public interest law through the [Columbia Summer Funding \(CSF\) Program](#) or [Human Rights Internship Program](#), depending on the kind of work you want to do and the location in which you want to do it.
- Upper-year students and LL.M.s should strongly consider doing a [clinic or externship](#) focused on an international or human rights topic or a substantive issue closely related to their international interest or a fall and spring semester internship with a New York-based international public interest organization.
- Reach out to recent Columbia Law School graduates and schedule informational interviews.
- Get to know your J.D. and LL.M. colleagues who share similar interests in international careers
- Consider working on a [human rights journal](#) and/or publishing a note or article on a human rights or international topic.
- Consider serving as a research assistant for Columbia Law School's Human Rights Institute or for a professor who specializes in human rights.
- Enroll in a language class to learn or become proficient in a relevant language.
- If you are seeking a full-time job, apply for [fellowships](#) as a 3L.

## *Term-time Internship and Pro Bono Work*

Unless you already have extensive international public interest experience prior to beginning your J.D. or LL.M., you should seriously consider finding a term-time internship if you are interested in securing an international public interest position following graduation. Most successful applicants for these jobs will have had extensive internship experiences. Employers frequently hire individuals who have previously interned with them or similar organizations. Making use of the variety of New York-based international public service organizations to develop your expertise and increase your contacts is an important advantage of studying at Columbia Law School. The PI/PS Office posts part time pro bono and internship opportunities in a weekly email to all students. However, many New York based international public interest employers would be happy to take on Columbia interns during the year so feel free to contact employers that interest you. If you are interested in an internship with the United Nations, see the information in the U.N. section in this supplement. You also should consider taking Columbia's United Nations Externship.



Not all international public interest law internships will satisfy the [50-hour pro bono requirement](#) for admission to the New York State Bar. Many, but not all, will count towards Columbia's [mandatory pro bono requirement](#) for J.D.s. A full list of Columbia's [in-house pro bono projects](#) is available online. The website also provides information on what counts for pro bono credit and where to find projects, as well as forms required for documentation. For more information, meet with our pro bono staff and attend relevant programs. An alternative to using your term-time internship to meet the pro bono requirement is to apply to receive academic credit for it as a Supervised Experiential Project (L6695).

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## Planning Questions

### *What Strategies Should I Use for an Internship or Job Search Outside of the United States?*

The best advice is to apply broadly. You should try for your “dream” job, but you should realize that your goals might be accomplished by being flexible and applying to jobs “outside the box” and in broad geographic areas. There is no limit on the number of jobs you may apply for, and there is no stigma to being offered a job and declining it (as long as you do so in a professional manner). A successful search takes creativity and persistence. Use [Simplicity](#) job postings and sites that include international postings, like [Idealist.org](#), [Reliefweb.int/jobs](#), [globaljobs.org](#), [devex.com](#), [devnetjobs.org](#) and those listed on our [job search tools page](#). Networking is especially important for a job search. Ask PI/PS advisers, professors, and former supervisors if they have ideas or contacts. Many international jobs will not be listed in U.S. job databases, so you should also regularly visit the job listings pages of the websites of any international organizations in which you are interested.

### *International Job Search Online Resources*

- [This document's appendix](#) includes a list of selected sources of information on international public interest opportunities. You should also monitor the social media of organizations you are interested in and subscribe to their newsletters. Please speak to a [PI/PS adviser](#) about additional resources. This list is by no means the only resource for searching for international public interest jobs, but will serve as an important guide to start your job search. It is important that you continue to meet with PI/PS Office advisers to discuss job search strategies, as well as begin to make important connections with individuals who are currently working in your desired field.
- [Simplicity](#): This internal website contains job postings that are sent specifically to Columbia by outside employers. All domestic and international public interest, government, and human rights announcements that the PI/PS Office receives are housed there. Simplicity is also where you can find student internship evaluations from summer 2018 on.
- [PSJD.org](#): This is a comprehensive job search database that lists internships, jobs and fellow-ships from all over the world.
- [Careers.un.org](#): This is a great resource to navigate internship and job opportunities at the U.N. and related agencies and to submit an application.
- [Reliefweb.int/jobs](#): This is a leading humanitarian information source on global crises and disasters

and is a specialized digital service of the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). It is also a great resource for job listings and training programs.

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## International Public Interest Employers

### *How They Hire, and How to Break into the Field*

International public interest employers look for, among other things, field experience/specialized subject-area knowledge (e.g., international criminal law and justice, human rights law, humanitarian law, economic development, etc.), language skills, and the ability to communicate with various audiences. It also helps to be flexible about where you are willing to live. Keep in mind, however, that many countries have restrictive policies when it comes to granting non-citizens the right to work. Being in continuous dialogue with potential employers and remaining open to alternative work arrangements will be important as you negotiate the best option for you.

Finding international public interest work can be a challenge. It is important for students to use their time at Columbia strategically by doing internships and clinics, publishing something on a timely human rights topic, improving language skills, etc. This may position students to compete for more advanced positions upon graduation. Networking is also incredibly important as many international public interest jobs are found through personal and professional connections. Joining and maintaining a membership in professional organizations, such the relevant sections of the New York City Bar Association, the American Bar Association, and the American Society of International Law, can help develop your networks. Some students decide to work in a foreign country after graduation to gain on-the-ground experience<sup>2</sup> working with target communities, usually starting as a postgraduate fellow with a local NGO and networking to position themselves for paid employment.

Many jobs in the international public interest field, for example, but not exclusively, with the United Nations and some development agencies, are consultancies for limited periods. Obtaining one consultancy can often lead to others, or to longer-term paid work. The downsides of contract work include lack of employer-paid benefits, instability, and lack of information, as many consultancies are not posted and are only communicated within professional networks (which makes networking all the more important—no one will send you a job notice if they do not know who you are).

Finally, a word on timing. Outside of fellowships, international public interest organizations hire primarily when they have an opening: when someone quits or when they get a new grant. Hence, they typically seek to hire someone who can start right away. Compared with other legal hiring, this can be late in the cycle and there is no guarantee that students will get a job before graduation or before the bar exam. It is worth noting that even experienced international lawyers in this sector may find themselves stringing together a series of fixed-term contracts and may experience gaps in employment throughout their

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<sup>2</sup> On-the-ground experience generally means direct contact and experience working with relevant issues or communities.

careers.<sup>3</sup> You should consider whether you are comfortable with this lifestyle.

[The appendix](#) contains descriptions and examples of six primary settings of international public interest:

- The United Nations and its specialized agencies
- Intergovernmental organizations other than the United Nations
- International development and relief work
- Business and human rights
- International law and justice
- Nongovernmental organizations

#### NOTE:

J.D.s seeking permanent employment should confirm that the job would qualify for [Loan Repayment Assistance Program \(LRAP\)](#) support before accepting a position, as some work may be considered non-legal in nature. Information about LRAP can be found on the [Financial Aid website](#). Speak to [PI/PS adviser Grace Shim](#) or a financial aid officer if you have questions about LRAP.

### *International Work with U.S. Government Agencies*

Multiple federal agencies and departments use international law or provide development aid and humanitarian assistance. [The appendix](#) provides an overview of these agencies. Columbia Law School's Externship on the Federal Government—Semester in Washington, DC provides the opportunity to work full-time at a federal public interest agency while taking two closely related, substantive seminars. It is taught in both semesters. For more information, visit the Columbia clinics and externships page.

### *Postgraduate Fellowships*

Postgraduate fellowships are good sources of funding for entry-level or early-career positions. Columbia Law School has [several](#) exclusively for its graduates, three of which—Leebron, Global Public Service, and Sandler/Human Rights Watch—are focused on international law and/or human rights. They are described on the PI/PS Office website.

For other fellowships that will fund international public interest work, visit [PSJD.org](#) and other websites listed on our [job search tools page](#). Examples of other international fellowships include:

- [Echoing Green's Social Entrepreneurship Fellowships](#)
- [Alan R. and Barbara D. Finberg Fellowship at Human Rights Watch](#)
- [Fulbright Program](#)

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<sup>3</sup> Note that gaps in international human rights resumes are not frowned upon because of the understanding that lawyers move from consultancy to consultancy and often build in time between them or just happen to have gaps before the beginning of the next job.

# INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC INTEREST RESUMES AND COVER LETTERS

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## *Internationalizing Your Resume and Cover Letter*

When applying for international internships and jobs, it is important to ensure that your language is appropriate for a non-U.S. reader. Here are a few tips on tailoring your resume and cover letter.

- Include “United States” after your city, state, and zip code.
- When listing your telephone number, precede it with “+ 1”, the international convention for indicating your U.S. country phone code. So, “+1 212 555 5678.”
- WhatsApp-compatible phone number, as that is the way most international employers chat and call employees (especially NGOs) so they do not incur fees.
- Since most non-Americans do not know U.S. state abbreviations, consider writing out the full state name, such as “Chicago, Illinois.” If the city was small and might not be well known, settle with the state. For example, if you worked in Salem, Oregon, list simply “Oregon, United States.”
- Convert your cover letter and resume into PDF files. Most of the world uses a different size of paper, known as “A4,” from the United States, and if the recipient prints your documents, they may look strange. This will also preserve your formatting.
- “Fall” is the season known as “autumn” in international English. Moreover, it occurs in different months in the southern hemisphere, and it isn’t even usually referred to in certain countries around the equator that divide their seasons into parameters such as “wet” and “dry”. So do not write “fall,” or looking for “summer” internships. Rephrase using months.
- The terms “freshman,” “sophomore,” “junior,” “senior,” “1L,” “2L,” and “3L” are not used in international English. Consider using terms such as “first year,” “second year,” etc., instead.
- In some countries, “college” refers to high school. Also, in most places law degrees are undergraduate, not graduate, pursuits. So consider some variation of, “I am a first-year law student studying for a Juris Doctor [rather than “J.D.”] degree at Columbia University School of Law in New York. I completed my undergraduate degree in international relations at Tufts University.”
- The country where you study is best referred to as the United States, as it is only one of many countries to be found on the two continents that make up “America.”
- In any cover letter or resume, you should minimize use of acronyms. This rule applies doubly for applications being sent overseas, where people are even less likely to know acronyms that refer to U.S. organizations or government agencies.
- Many legal terms and concepts are unique to the U.S., are not used with much frequency in many other countries, or mean different things in different countries. Examples include: “direct services,”

“affirmative action,” “impact litigation,” “antitrust,” “clerking,” and “legal methods.” If you wish to discuss your course work or interests beyond “criminal,” “civil,” or “constitutional law,” use the internet to search whether the term is used outside the United States, and, if it is not, use more common phrases to describe what you are discussing.

- Be realistic about your language competencies. Non-English speakers tend to have higher expectations about language competencies than English speakers do. So an “intermediate” could be expected to be fairly functional in a language.
- Most other countries list the date before the month: “20 January 2019.”

### *Tailoring Your Resume to a Specific Public Interest Position*

Once you have updated and reformatted your resume, you should tailor it to highlight the experiences, skills, and knowledge you will bring to the public interest role(s) you seek. To ensure that your application presents you in the best possible light, you should create a new resume for each public interest position you apply for. Here are a few questions to get you started:

**What does this employer do?** (Review the “About Us” section of the employer’s website, the information provided in the job description, press releases, current projects, evaluations written by former student interns, the employer’s social media feeds, and information from networking contacts who are familiar with the organization’s work.)

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**Which advocacy tools does the employer use?** (Does this organization litigate, build coalitions, campaign, conduct fact-finding investigations, draft reports, organize communities, conduct trainings, advocate for policy change, provide direct legal services, or some combination of the above? Check the employer’s website and the job description to assess the tools that you will be using in this position. Are they tools you have used before?)

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**Who will you serve in this role?** (Will you have clients, or would you be advocating for broader policy change? Do you have some connection to the issues this organization works with and/or the population that this organization serves?)

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**Which of your experiences and skills would interest this employer?** (Think about your resume as a marketing tool for that specific employer or job, and make sure it is the strongest statement that you can put forward about yourself, and your specific qualifications and interest in that employer or area of law.)

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**Which skills and experiences are relevant to this role?** (Review duties listed in the job description, as well as the qualifications required, and frame your skills and experience in terms of the language used in the description. Do not exaggerate or misrepresent your qualifications for the role.)

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## International Public Interest Resume Samples

On the following pages, you will find a “Before” and “After” version of a resume for a student seeking an international job with a nonprofit, government institution, or nongovernmental organization.<sup>4</sup> The “Before” version does not reflect the format we recommend to our students and graduates (please see our [Public Interest Job Search Toolkit](#) to learn how to structure and format your resume) and is not written in a way that is appropriate for an international job search. The “After” version has been edited to bring it into line with recommended structure and formatting and revised for an international job search based on the guidelines we provided earlier in this supplement.

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<sup>4</sup> We recommend using a different template when applying to intergovernmental organizations such as the United Nations; please see the next section.

## Sample Resume—Before Revisions

### FRANCESCA SILVESTRI

111 West 121st St #555 New York, NY 10027 212-555-1212 fus1111@columbia.edu

#### EDUCATION

2017–2020 COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY LAW SCHOOL, New York, NY  
J.D. degree anticipated May 2020

2013–2017 UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER, Rochester, NY  
B.A. degree, summa cum laude, awarded May 2017  
Double major in Political Science and Spanish  
Minor in Latin American Studies

2012–2013 COLEGIO VILLA RICA, Veracruz, MEXICO  
Rotary International Exchange Student following graduation from high school  
Attended Colegio Villa Rica for one full year, becoming fluent in Spanish  
Traveled extensively throughout central Mexico and the Yucatán peninsula

#### HONORS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society Member  
Selected Chief Student Marshall, University of Rochester 2017 Commencement  
Golden Key Scholarship, awarded to highest academically ranked junior  
Susan B. Anthony Institute Women's Leadership Award  
U.S. Department of Defense National Security Education Program, David L. Boren Scholar

#### INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Spring Semester 2016 SCHOOL FOR INTERNATIONAL TRAINING, Fortaleza, Ceará, BRAZIL  
*Culture, Development, and Social Justice Scholar.* Participated in a study abroad program focused on heightening social awareness through a seminar on Brazil's history, economics, politics, and culture, including field studies. Completed an advanced Portuguese language course. Conducted original research on Brazilian agrarian reform and the social movements surrounding it.

Summer 2015 U.S. EMBASSY, INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION, Mexico City, MEXICO  
*Office for Latin America Intern.* Utilizing bilingual Spanish-English skills, advised and counseled Mexican and Latin American citizens regarding policies and approaches for completing high school, undergraduate, and graduate studies in the U.S. Conducted group orientation sessions in Spanish. Assisted with the research, editing, and design of the Bilingual Schools in Mexico City publication. Created a law school informational diskette and electronic newsletter.

Summer 2013 AMIGOS DE LAS AMERICAS INTERNATIONAL, Rio Grande do Norte, BRAZIL  
*Health Care Volunteer.* Worked in a rural Brazilian village to improve health and sanitary conditions. Built latrines; planted trees; renovated an elementary school; and provided education in dental health, breastfeeding, and first aid. Became proficient in conversational Portuguese.



## WORK EXPERIENCE

Fall 2018–present

OPEN SOCIETY JUSTICE INITIATIVE, New York, NY

*Legal Intern for the Mexico Migration Project.* Researching the effects of the U.S.’s border management policies on Mexico’s domestic immigration policies and procedures. Comparing Mexico’s policies of migrants’ due process rights to the international standards.

Summer 2016

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY, Minneapolis, MN

*Office of Chief Counsel, Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement Intern.* Attended deportation hearings and provided assistance as needed. Conducted in-depth research on Central American asylum cases, utilizing knowledge of the historical political situations and language skills. Acquired a broad understanding of the Department’s duties through attending seminars on fraudulent documents, attending interviews of applicants for benefits, and observing the U.S. Border Patrol at the Minneapolis International Airport.

Summer 2015

HENNEPIN COUNTY ATTORNEY’S OFFICE, Minneapolis, MN

*Child Protection Division Intern.* Worked in the division filing system and databases, and assisted with the newly developed electronic distribution of reports. Provided Spanish translation for victim-witness staff in the Juvenile Prosecution Division.

UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER, Rochester, NY

2015–2016

*Teaching Assistant for Elementary Spanish and Microeconomics.* Prepared and facilitated weekly recitation sessions, held weekly office hours, assisted with student test preparation and grading. Served as a general liaison between faculty and students.

2015–2016

*Community Assistant & Resident Advisor.* Created residential climate conducive to academic achievement, good scholarship, and intellectual stimulation. Duties included community development; organizing programs and events for residents; serving as an emergency resource, counselor and advisor; and operating as a floor leader.

2013–2015

*Sesquicentennial Student Manager and Fairbank Alumni House Office Assistant.* Provided office support related to marketing the University to alumni and friends. Became proficient with Excel spreadsheets and other databases. Appointed “Student Sesquicentennial Manager” for the University’s 150th anniversary; responsibilities included managing a special account of book orders for the Alumni Department regarding the University’s Pictorial History.

## CAMPUS AND COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

2017–present

*Columbia Society of Immigrant and Refugee Rights.* Attend meetings.

2017–present

*Columbia Society of International Law.* Assist in the coordination of the Friedman Conference, a one-day conference focusing on an issue of Public International Law. This year’s conference is focusing on nation-building.

2015–2016

*University of Rochester Student Government Chief-of-Staff.* Appointed by the President to serve as second-in-command in the Executive Cabinet. Created, coordinated, and executed projects to better the lives of the Rochester students. Collected and provided feedback as an official representative of the student body.

## INTERESTS

Softball, reality television, big cities.



## Sample Resume—After Revisions

### FRANCESCA SILVESTRI

111 West 121st Street, Apt. 555, New York, New York 10027, U.S.A.  
+1 212-555-1212 • fus1111@columbia.edu • skype, wechat: francescasil

#### EDUCATION

##### **COLUMBIA LAW SCHOOL**, New York, New York

Juris Doctor, expected May 2020

Activities: Columbia Society for International Law  
Society for Immigrant and Refugee Rights

##### **UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER**, Rochester, New York

Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and Spanish, *summa cum laude*, received May 2017

Minor: Latin American Studies

Honors: Phi Beta Kappa

U.S. Department of Defense Boren Scholar

Susan B. Anthony Institute Women's Leadership Award

Golden Key Scholarship (awarded to highest-ranked female junior)

Activities: Student Government, Chief-of-Staff (University Presidential Appointment)  
Social Justice Scholar (with fieldwork) at the School for International Training, Fortaleza, Brazil

##### **COLEGIO VILLA RICA**, Veracruz, Mexico

Rotary International Exchange Student, Sept. 2013-May 2014

#### EXPERIENCE

##### **DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY**

Minneapolis, Minnesota

*Intern, Office of Chief Counsel*

Jun.-Aug. 2018

Assisted attorneys in deportation hearings. Conducted research on Central American asylum cases.

##### **HENNEPIN COUNTY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE**

Minneapolis, Minnesota

*Intern, Child Protection Division*

Jun.-Jul. 2017

Updated the division filing system and databases. Provided translation for victims and staff. Prepared and facilitated weekly recitation sessions. Assisted with test preparation and grading.

##### **UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER**

Rochester, New York

*Teaching Assistant for Spanish and Microeconomics*

2016-2017

Prepared and facilitated weekly recitation sessions. Assisted with test preparation and grading.

##### **U.S. EMBASSY, INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION**

Mexico City, Mexico

*Intern, Office for Latin America*

Jun.-Aug. 2015

Advised Mexican and Latin American citizens regarding policies and approaches for completing high school, undergraduate, and graduate studies in the U.S.

**LANGUAGE SKILLS:** Spanish (fluent); Portuguese (proficient).

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## Template for the U.N. and Other Intergovernmental Organizations

As with any resume, a resume for a job with an international intergovernmental organization, such as the United Nations or the Inter-American Commission for Human Rights, should adhere to our international resume guidelines and be cleanly formatted, carefully spell-checked, etc.

An intergovernmental resume is organized differently, however. We have included a template below. Also note: standard intergovernmental resumes are two pages in length, even for student applicants.

**NAME**  
Address  
Contact Information

### KEY COMPETENCIES

*This section summarizes your key skill sets and experiences. Examples might include:*

- X years of human rights experience in various areas: planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, policy, advocacy, partnerships, fundraising.
- Wide-ranging experience managing individuals and teams from varied professional and cultural backgrounds.
- Direct work with at-risk children and families.
- Experience working in x number of countries, including \_\_\_\_.
- Native Spanish and English speaker; proficient in French.
- Strong writing and analytical skills, including human-rights-related publications.

### SELECT EXPERIENCE

*Include select relevant experience; use active verbs that provide concrete information; avoid acronyms; and do not expect the reader to read in between the lines. You want to be clear and to the point.*

**Organization, Title\***

2014-Present

*\*If most of your experience with an employer was as an intern/volunteer, do not include a title.*

- Managed...
- Developed and implemented...
- Represented organization at...

### EDUCATION

*If you went straight from college to law school, consider starting with this section.*

**Columbia University School of Law**

Juris Doctor (J.D.), expected 2020

*Include any honors/recognitions.*

*Include relevant classes, extracurricular activities.*

**X University**

Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) in History, received 2017

*Include any honors/recognitions.*

*Include relevant classes, extracurricular activities.*

**SELECT PUBLICATIONS**

*Include publications, including student-related ones; you may also choose to call this section “Select Research” if that is a strong area of experience for you or is more relevant to the job you are seeking.*

**LANGUAGES**

*Include if applicable.*

**ADMISSION TO THE BAR**

*Include if applicable.*

**SERVICE TO THE PROFESSION**

*E.g., membership in student bodies/advocacy groups*

# APPENDIX

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## International Public Interest Employers

### *United Nations and Its Specialized Agencies*

#### **General Description:**

The United Nations is an international organization whose stated aims include promoting and facilitating cooperation in international law, international security, economic development, social progress, human rights, civil rights, civil liberties, political freedoms, democracy, and the achievement of lasting world peace. It contains multiple subsidiary organizations to carry out its missions. The United Nations system includes the six principal organs of the United Nations (the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council, the International Court of Justice, and the Secretariat), 15 agencies, and several affiliated programs and bodies. U.N. headquarters are in New York—an advantage for Columbia Law Students—and there are U.N. offices all over the world. The official languages of the United Nations are Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, and Spanish. The working languages at the Secretariat are English and French.

#### **Employment Information:**

##### *Internships and Externships:*

Columbia Law School's United Nations Externship, offered in the spring, combines a substantive seminar about the United Nations with field placements at U.N. agencies and affiliates. The class is usually made up of about 15 upper-year J.D. students and LL.M.s.

Interning at the United Nations during law school is an excellent way to learn about the organization and to become an “insider” who is later considered for short-term and, ultimately, long-term positions. Most U.N.-affiliated organizations hire law interns year-round on both a full-time and part-time basis. The Office of Legal Affairs and an increasing number of others offices, however, strongly prefer full-time interns. Some organizations have established intern programs. See their websites for information on eligibility and application processes. You may also be able to arrange an internship with a U.N. organization that does not have formal internship programs by contacting the individual or the department with which you want to work.

Internships at U.N. Headquarters are offered throughout the year. Specifics vary from department to department and often from U.N. funds and programs. The web pages describing these opportunities are complicated, but a good place to start is [careers.un.org](https://careers.un.org).

##### *Careers:*

The United Nations recruits lawyers with a variety of interests and skills. Relevant academic training, international work experience, and fluency in at least one U.N. language with a working experience working in a lower-income country is helpful. Prior U.N. work experience (including as an intern) is also

taken into consideration. While finding a position requires a lot of effort, there are several ways to get your foot in the door. These are not the exclusive routes to a higher position at the U.N. Becoming an expert at the non-U.N. equivalent of the job of interest may help facilitate interest, e.g., legal advising at another international organization or government, international development at an IGO or corporate entity, or human rights at a domestic NGO in a specific field.

The Young Professionals Program (YPP) may be the best way to start a career at the U.N. It recruits young professionals throughout the world interested in launching a career with the U.N. through an annual entrance examination. Initial appointments are for two years at the P-2 level. Applicants must be nationals of a participating country (which vary each year), age 32 years or under by the end of the test year, speak fluent English or French, and hold a first level university degree to be eligible participate. Current law students may apply for the YPP if their undergraduate degree meets the requirements of one or more of the disciplines for which the exam is being offered.

Some programs and agencies, such as the UNHCR, have a similar exam process and maintain their own rosters to fill posts. Students should refer to individual agency websites for more information.

Junior Professional Officer (JPO) and Associate Expert (AE) programs provide a gateway for young professionals to work in a U.N. program or agency. Most of these programs are restricted to citizens of member states that fund them; some governments also sponsor JPO and AEs from developing countries. The exact criteria may vary, but in general, applicants must be under 32, be proficient in at least two U.N. languages, and have at least a first level university degree to be eligible to participate. Students and graduates, other than U.S. citizens, should check with their ministry of foreign affairs for JPO and AE positions. Further information about the JPO and AE positions (including about participating countries) and about informal internship programs is best obtained by contacting the individual or the department with which you want to work.

JPOs and AEs receive identical salaries, as well as most benefits of professionals in their grade, but do not automatically have internal U.N. status. The U.S. Government sponsors AEs for U.S. citizens with the United Nations Secretariat Associate Expert Program, the World Food Program (WFP), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the United Nations Refugee Committee (UNHCR), and the Institute for Migration (IOM), among others. Information about these positions can be found on each organization's website. U.S. citizens can find more information about the JPO and AE positions, including participating countries, on the U.S. State Department website.

The United Nations career portal, [careers.un.org](https://careers.un.org), and individual agency websites post open positions. This can be like buying a lottery ticket as the Secretariat and the U.N. agencies receive thousands of applications in this manner and often have an internal candidate in mind. It is worth trying, however, if you are determined to have a career in the United Nations system.

The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) Program recruits volunteers for short-term assignments in about 130 developing countries to support peace and development issues, including humanitarian relief,

rehabilitation, and electoral and peacebuilding processes. UNVs have proven specialized professional staff. UNVs are not salaried employees but receive compensation, including living and travel expenses, health insurance, and annual leave. For more information, go to [unv.org](http://unv.org).

Short-term positions are another way to work for the UN. People have also made their way into permanent U.N. jobs by serving on temporary assignments, interning or working on a consultancy basis. These short-term positions are often obtained by word of mouth, but individual agencies may have more information on their sites and may advertise openings. For example, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the U.N. Development Programme (UNDP) post temporary positions on their respective websites. UNDP also posts consultancies.

The U.S. State Department's Bureau of International Organization Affairs, the U.S. government's primary interlocutor with the United Nations and other international organizations and agencies, actively recruits U.S. citizens for employment in U.N. organizations. Its International Organization Careers website, [iocareers.state.gov](http://iocareers.state.gov), posts vacancies at U.N. and other IGOs biweekly. By law, most U.S. government employees are eligible to be detailed or transferred to designated IGOs for up to eight years. This website explains how U.S. federal agencies can promote U.S. citizen employment in IGOs by detailing or transferring their employees and funding Junior Professional Officer/Associate Expert Programs.

## *Intergovernmental Organizations Other than the United Nations*

### **General Description:**

The term “intergovernmental organization,” or IGO, refers to an entity created by treaty, involving two or more nations, to work in good faith, on issues of common interest. The main purposes of IGOs are to create a mechanism for the world's inhabitants to work more successfully together in the areas of peace and security and to address deal with economic and social questions. IGOs work on a range of matters and involve governments and issues from every region in the world.

IGOs are typically organized by their membership and purpose. The United Nations is the world's largest IGO. Other well-known intergovernmental organizations include:

- Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)
- African Development Bank
- Asian Development Bank
- African Union (AU)
- European Union (EU)
- Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)
- Interpol
- North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)
- Organization of American States (OAS)
- Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)
- World Trade Organization (WTO)

**Employment Information:**

Work within intergovernmental organizations can include negotiating and drafting agreements between member states, serving as a policy advisor and representing bodies in disputes and other claims. Intergovernmental organizations have varying employment requirements that often include fluency in English and at least one other language and citizenship of a member state of the IGO. Visit the organizations' websites for specific internship and hiring qualifications and procedures.

*Business and Human Rights***General Description:**

The process of globalization and other international developments over the past decades have seen non-state actors such as transnational corporations and other businesses play an increasingly important role at the local, national, and international levels. The growing reach and impact of business enterprises have given rise to a debate about the roles and responsibilities of such actors with regard to human rights. The business and human rights field is multi-disciplinary and seeks to address the growing influence and impact corporations and other business enterprises have on individual freedoms and human rights. Actors in this field include community groups and grassroots organizations, NGOs, public interest law organizations, and intergovernmental systems.

Community groups and grassroots organizations (such as Coalition of Immokalee Workers, or CIW, in Florida and Green Advocates in Liberia) employ a variety of tactics, including research and documentation, coalition-building, public education, and protests, to bring attention to the adverse impacts of corporate practices and activities on local communities.

NGOs (such as Human Rights Watch, Global Witness, and Amnesty International) work in a variety of ways, including conducting research and documentation, campaign-based advocacy, and media outreach, to bring attention to the negative impacts of corporate activities.

Public interest law organizations (such as the Center for Constitutional Rights, EarthRights International, and International Rights Advocates) use impact litigation and court proceedings (including domestic and international courts) to adjudicate corporate practices with deleterious human rights impacts.

The U.N. and intergovernmental systems (including the International Labor Organization and Working Group on the issue of human rights, transnational corporations and other business enterprises) work with governments, private actors, and workers' organizations to develop frameworks and standards to address workers' rights abuses.

The private sector has also developed responses to this growing concern. Much of the private sector work in this area is in the field of corporate social responsibility.

**Employment Information:**

Many community-based organizations, NGOs, and public interest law firms have formal internship programs. You can find more information on individual websites. Opportunities for working at a U.N. office are discussed above. Those interested in working in the private sector should consult the Law School's [Office of Private Sector Careers](#).

*International Development and Relief Work***General Description:**

Although traditionally seen as separate and distinct activities, international development and international humanitarian aid and relief are increasingly viewed as interrelated and connected fields of work. Development and relief work is a highly interdisciplinary field, and studies in law—particularly when combined with other studies in fields such as economics or political science—can make a good background for such careers.

Lawyers engage in political development work, which focuses on issues such as democratic governance, political processes, electoral reform, the rule of law, transparency in government, media freedom, conflict litigation, and civil society freedoms. Lawyers also do relief work that occurs in the context of armed conflict and similar situations of insecurity, as well as natural disasters. Lawyers are often engaged in activities such as human rights protection work, human rights monitoring and reporting, children's rights programming, conflict resolution, and women's rights programming.

Academic studies in international humanitarian law (the laws of war) are important for some positions in conflict situations or with employers such as the International Red Cross and Red Crescent.

**Employment Information:**

Career opportunities in the development and relief field can be found in government agencies, intergovernmental organizations, nonprofit implementing partners, and for development, even the private sector. Related jobs can also be found in research and policy institutes.

Formal programs designed to help launch a career in international development include the World Bank's Young Professional Program, UNDP's Leadership Development Program, and the International Finance Corporation's Global Transaction Team Program. All of these programs are highly competitive, and have varying eligibility criteria and application dates. Interested students should begin to familiarize themselves with these programs through the agencies' websites.

Both international NGOs, such as the International Rescue Committee, and U.S.-based NGOs, such as the International Foundation for Electoral Systems, the National Democratic Institute, the International Republican Institute, and the National Endowment for Democracy, are involved in development work. NGOs such as Global Communities (formerly CHF International), Mercy Corps, Save the Children, and International Relief and Development are examples of organizations that frequently cross the traditional barrier between relief and development work.



Some relief agencies—recognizing that sometimes disaster situations require quick deployment of staff—have established a “roster” program, through which they vet potential employees to ensure that a pool of professionally qualified candidates are available to fill new positions in a timely manner. Examples include those run by the International Catholic Migration Commission, the International Rescue Committee’s Surge Protection Program, and the Norwegian Rescue Committee. It may take many months to be approved for a roster. After that, actual job opportunities can begin to become available, but when they do, the requirement to fill the position is usually urgent.

For-profit enterprises also engage in development work through consultations to support international development projects coordinated by larger entities like the World Bank and UNDP. Development consulting firms, such as Chemonics, tend to look for candidates with general analytical and writing skills, rather than individuals specifically with legal expertise.

### *International Law and Justice (Including Courts and Tribunals)*

#### **General Description:**

International law has three principal sources: (1) international treaties, (2) custom, and (3) general principles of law. In addition, judicial decisions and teachings may be applied as “subsidiary means for the determination of rules of law.” Historically, international law has been concerned the conduct between sovereign states. However, it has increasingly come to include the conduct of multinational corporations and individuals, as well as states’ treatment of their citizens.

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations. It was established in June 1945 by the Charter of the United Nations and began work in April 1946. The seat of the Court is at the Peace Palace in The Hague, Netherlands. The Court settles legal disputes submitted to it by states and gives advisory opinions on legal questions to the United Nations organs and specialized agencies. The Court has opined on matters as diverse as consular notification and maritime concerns. The ICJ is composed of 15 judges elected for nine-year terms by the United Nations General Assembly and the Security Council. Its official languages are English and French.

In the 1990s, the U.N. Security Council set up international criminal tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and for Rwanda to prosecute individuals responsible for genocide and other serious violations of international humanitarian law in those conflicts. Both the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) were scheduled to finish their work by the end of 2014, so the Mechanism for International Criminal Tribunals was established in 2010 to carry out a number of essential functions of the ICTY and ICTR after the completion of their mandates. The MICT is located in the Hague, Netherlands. Its work includes tracking and prosecuting remaining fugitives, retrials, appeals proceedings, and assistance to national jurisdictions. In addition, the U.N. has also been party to the establishment of the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL), the Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STLJ), and the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC), among others.

These special tribunals gave impetus to the formation of the International Criminal Court (ICC), established in 2003. The ICC is a permanent tribunal and has jurisdiction over crimes listed in the Rome Statute—genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and the crime of aggression—committed either by a national of a state party or on the territory of a state party. The Security Council can also refer a situation to the Court under its binding powers, thus granting it jurisdiction. The ICC is the first permanent, treaty-based, international criminal court established to help end impunity for the perpetrators of the most serious crimes of concern to the international community. The ICC is an independent international organization and is not part of the United Nations system. Its seat is at the Hague, Netherlands.

Lawyers work in almost all parts of these tribunals. At the ICC, lawyers can be found in judges' chambers, the office of the prosecutor, the registry, the office of public counsel for victims, and the office of public counsel for the defense. Many ICC defendants also hire private counsel.

There are also regional tribunals—such as the European Court of Human Rights, Inter-American Court of Human Rights, and the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights—that solely adjudicate human rights concerns. The European Court of Human Rights hears applications alleging that a state party has breached one or more of the human rights provisions concerning civil and political rights set out in the European Convention on Human Rights and its protocols. An application can be lodged by an individual, a group of individuals, or one or more of the other party states. The court is based in Strasbourg, France.

The Inter-American Court of Human Rights and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights comprise the human rights protection system of the Organization of American States (OAS), which serves to uphold and promote basic rights and freedoms in the Americas. The court sits in San Jose, Costa Rica, while the commission is based in Washington, DC. The African Court of Human and People's Rights was created to make judgments on African Union states compliant with the African Charter on Human and People's Rights. The Court sits in Arusha, Tanzania and the Commission in Banjul, the Gambia.

A growing area in international justice is transitional justice. Transitional justice refers to the set of judicial and non-judicial measures implemented in order to redress the legacies of massive human rights abuses. Such measures may include criminal prosecutions, truth commissions, reparations programs, and various kinds of institutional reforms. Transitional justice may or may not incorporate aspects of criminal justice. Transitional justice measures are often carried out through truth commissions—commissions tasked with discovering and revealing past wrongdoing by a government (or, depending on the circumstances, non-state actors), in the hope of resolving conflict left over from the past. There have been truth commissions following conflicts in Chile, El Salvador, and South Africa, to name just a few places.

Over the years, several attempts have been made to codify international law, both public and private. The International Law Commission (ILC) was established by the U.N. General Assembly in 1948 for the promotion of the progressive development of international law and its codification. The ILC is charged with (1) promoting the codification of international law and (2) solving problems within both public and private international law. The commission consists of 34 members elected by the General Assembly.

Members act as individuals and not as officials representing their respective states. The ILC holds an annual session at the United Nations headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland.

### **Employment Information:**

Internships and permanent positions in these international law and justice institutions are quite competitive. Knowledge of international law, human rights, international criminal law, international humanitarian law, and other specialized courses is required. Additionally, many of the courts and tribunals require knowledge of French or another language in addition to English.

Most courts and tribunals, as well as the ILC, offer internships. Columbia annually nominates students for the nine-month traineeship program of the ICJ. Students selected by the ICJ are awarded the Parker Fellowship, which provides a stipend to cover expenses. More information is available on the Law School website. For the other internships, however, the process can be quite informal. Many interns are selected based on professors or other contacts that have a connection to a court. Therefore, networking is highly important in obtaining an internship position. With respect to more permanent positions, the ICJ, tribunals, and the ICC have clerkship programs. Information on how to apply for internships as well as permanent positions is available on their websites.

It is important to note that the International Criminal Court gives preference for filling positions to nationals of a state party to the ICC statute or of a country that has signed and is engaged in the ratification process or which is engaged in the accession process. The United States is not a state party to the ICC statute, but nationals from non-state parties may be considered.

Lawyers who work at the ICC will generally have taken specialized coursework in international criminal law. Many, if not most, lawyers who work at entry- and lower-mid-level positions at the ICC have previously interned there or at similar tribunals. Often individuals will spend a long time doing internships and consultancies before getting a permanent position. Some individuals spend time working in “general service” positions, which are generally more administrative, pay less, and offer fewer benefits than internationally-recruited staff positions, to get their foot in the door.

Experience working internationally—particularly in countries relevant to the work of the ICC— can be an advantage. Solid clerking experience can be helpful for positions working in the Court’s chambers, and experience doing prosecution or defense work in domestic settings can be an asset for similar positions at the court.

Work in transitional justice can include working directly for a truth commission—job opportunities are generally posted on truth commission websites—or working for NGOs, such as the International Center for Transitional Justice, or academic programs that specialize in this field. Job opportunities can be found by going to individual websites.

## *Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs)*

### **General Description:**

International NGOs work in a variety of international public interest fields, including human rights, humanitarian relief, business and human rights, and development work. They engage interns and hire lawyers or people with legal backgrounds. The broad subject matters of NGO work include (but are not limited to):

- Children's Rights
- Environmental Rights
- Indigenous and Minority Rights (including LGBTQ rights)
- Refugee, Migrant and Immigrant Rights
- Right to Education
- Right to Food
- Right to Health (including physical and mental health)
- Right to Housing and Participatory Development
- Right to Political Freedom (including freedom of expression)
- Right to Water and Clean Sanitation
- Right to Work with Dignity
- Women's Rights

Many international NGOs have less stringent requirements for years of previous work experience and fewer concerns for nationality quotas than intergovernmental organizations. Many NGOs have nimbler hiring capacity and less bureaucracy.

They can often provide junior employees with better training and hands-on experience, and a quicker progression to positions of supervision and management, than work in the private sector or other jobs in public international work. It is important to also keep in mind a broad range of possible employers—and apply for a variety of jobs, with a variety of organizations, and in a variety of locations. Do not feel tied to one ideal role or one ideal organization.

Individuals interested in going into some areas—refugee rights work, for example—with limited experience working in lower-income countries or emergencies should be open to considering related paths to get that experience. For example, a job in program implementation that focused on a legal aid program, or rule of law activities, or women's empowerment, might be a good stepping-stone to burnish credentials. Someone interested in child protection might wish to consider program implementation related to education or child survival. Someone interested in women's rights advocacy might get good initial experience working in program implementation related to women's empowerment. Any foot in the door helps.

### **Employment Information:**

A willingness to begin your career based in hardship locations can increase your attractiveness to NGOs. However, in emergencies, many NGOs will be looking for individuals with relevant experience.

Again, it is important for individuals considering this field to be realistic about the lack of job security in the early years of your career. Many jobs are short-term contracts. This can have its disadvantages and advantages: the anxiety of never knowing how long you will be employed versus the fact that you can build your experiences, skills, and knowledge with a variety of issues and organizations.

International NGOs advertise many of their open positions on their websites, which requires regular, methodical checking. Develop a list of the NGOs you would consider working for, and make sure you check their employment listings on a weekly basis. Some NGOs, such as Save the Children UK and MercyCorps, have now implemented job alerts where you can be notified when positions relevant to your interests become available.

Some international organizations reach out to potential employees who have been vetted and placed onto certain “rosters,” such as those run by the International Catholic Migration Commission, the International Rescue Committee’s Surge Protection Program, and by the Norwegian Rescue Committee. The approval process to get onto these rosters may take many months. It is only after that when actual job opportunities can begin to become available—but when they do, the requirement to fill the position is usually urgent.

In addition, some U.S.-based NGOs also do international public interest legal work or use international norms in the U.S. context. Their hiring preferences and procedures are more similar to other domestic public interest organizations. The list on the international public interest career websites includes a number of these organizations where Columbia Law students and graduates have worked.

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## International Work with U.S. Government Agencies

### *U.S. Department of State*

The Office of the Legal Adviser employs about 200 attorneys to negotiate, draft and interpret international agreements and resolve international issues involving a wide range of matters, including humanitarian crises, human rights, political and military affairs, international environmental affairs, trade agreements, legislation, and interpretation of treaties and foreign judgments. The office is organized into twenty-three sections that roughly correspond with the Department of State’s various bureaus, including offices in Washington, DC, the Hague, Geneva, Brussels, and New York. The office hires 2Ls as summer interns, externs, and entry-level attorney-advisers (limited to U.S. citizens). The Office of the Legal Adviser hires Columbia law students for summer and postgraduate jobs through the Public Sector On-Campus Interview Program, which overseen by the PI/PS Office. Interviews happen in late August, but you must apply in July. State Department work provides both overseas placement and domestic work on international is-sues. The office also coordinates U.S. government recruitment efforts for the United Nations, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Organization of American States, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). More information about the various options for working with the Department of State can be found at [state.gov/job-seekers](https://state.gov/job-seekers). Internship opportunities can be found at [careers.state.gov/intern](https://careers.state.gov/intern).

## *Other Agencies Using International Law or Providing Humanitarian/Development Aid*

- The Legal Section of the U.S. Mission to the United Nations provides counsel and service on all matters of an international legal character arising in the course of U.S. participation in the United Nations. Members of the Legal Section represent the United States in the U.N. Legal Committee of the General Assembly, the Security Council and its subsidiary bodies, and other U.N. bodies.
- The Office of the Chief Counsel for International Commerce provides legal advice and support to the International Trade Administration on international trade, investment, export promotion and antitrust matters. This agency works closely with the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, the State Department and other government agencies, and the private sector.
- The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Office of the General Counsel is an independent legal agency that provides legal advice and services to the Secretary of Agriculture and to all other officials and agencies of the Department with respect to all USDA programs and activities. There is also an Office of the Inspector General that investigates allegations of crime against the department's program and promotes the economy and efficiency of its operations.
- While the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) is primarily a national security agency, students interested in infrastructure development can find interesting work there. According to the DOE website, its mission is "to ensure America's security and prosperity by addressing its energy, environmental and nuclear challenges through transformative science and technology solutions."
- The U.S. Department of Justice Office of Overseas Prosecutorial Development Assistance and Training (OPDAT) specializes in international legal development and works with foreign justice departments to implement judicial and prosecutorial development systems around the world.
- The Overseas Private Investment Corporation, according to its website, "is the U.S. Government's development finance institution. It mobilizes private capital to help solve critical development challenges and in doing so, advances U.S. foreign policy and national security objectives."
- U.S. Trade and Development Agency (USTDA), an independent foreign assistance agency, helps companies create U.S. jobs through the export of U.S. goods and services for priority development projects in emerging economies. USTDA links U.S. businesses to export opportunities by funding project planning activities, pilot projects, and reverse trade missions while creating sustainable infrastructure and economic growth in partner countries.

## *International Trade*

Students interested in international trade can pursue opportunities in the White House, with federal agencies, and on Capitol Hill.

The Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, part of the Executive Office of the President, is responsible for developing and coordinating U.S. international trade, commodity, and direct investment policy, and overseeing negotiations with other countries. It offers internships throughout the year, which may be in any of four offices (Washington, DC, Geneva, Brussels, and Beijing). Information about permanent employment can be found at [usajobs.gov](https://usajobs.gov).

The U.S. International Trade Commission makes determinations in proceedings involving imports claimed to injure a domestic industry or violate U.S. intellectual property rights; provides independent tariff, trade, and competitiveness-related analysis and information; and maintains the U.S. tariff schedule.

The U.S. Commercial Service, the trade promotion arm of the U.S. Department of Commerce's International Trade Administration, hires both career and non-career foreign service officers. Career foreign service officers must pass the U.S. Commercial Service Assessment (comprised of an oral and written examination). Limited non-career foreign service officers are hired as foreign commercial service officers for specific duty stations and tours of duty based on their specialized skills or experience. Limited non-career foreign service officers' first tours of duty are limited to two years.

Student volunteer internships are a means to learn more about the Commercial Service and gain valuable insights into international trade and business development.

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## Select Online Job Search Resources

### *General*

[NYC Bar Association Vance Center for International Justice](#)

[American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative](#)

[American Society of International Law](#)

[DevNet Jobs](#)

[Idealist](#)

[ReliefWeb](#)

[PSJD](#)

### *Nongovernmental Organizations*

[Accountability Counsel](#)

[Amnesty International](#)

[Center for International Environmental Law](#)

[Center for Justice and International Law](#)

[Center for Reproductive Rights](#)

[EarthRights International](#)

[Global Witness](#)

[Human Rights First](#)

[Human Rights Watch](#)

[International Center for Transitional Justice](#)

[International Commission of Jurists](#)

[International Legal Foundation](#)

[International Rescue Committee](#)

[Robert F. Kennedy Center for Human Rights](#)



## *Regional Organizations*

[African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights](#)

[African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights](#)

[African Development Bank Careers](#)

[Asian Development Bank Careers](#)

[Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank Careers](#)

[European Commission Careers](#)

[European Court of Human Rights](#)

[Inter-American Court on Human Rights](#)

[Inter-American Commission on Human Rights](#)

## *International Organizations*

[Information on the U.N. Competitive Exam](#)

[U.N. Careers](#)

[U.N. Young Professionals Program](#)

[UNCTAD Careers](#)

[U.N. Development Program Careers](#)

[UNEP Careers](#)

[U.N. High Commission for Human Rights Careers](#)

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## *International Courts*

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