The following information will help you to find out more about working in human rights, civil liberties and public international law. Opportunities may arise in law firms, central and local government, the domestic and international courts, pressure groups, campaigning organisations, multilateral and other NGOs, academia/research and more.

The routes to a successful career in human rights are many and varied. The Human Rights world is diverse and you need to be creative in making it work for you. For example, you could move from caseworker in a law firm or law centre to lobbying, writing and policy work en-route to qualifying as a lawyer. There is no right or wrong way. You do not have to be a lawyer but you can be; and some find that having qualified as a lawyer enables them to reach more senior posts within human rights organisations. In some firms/chambers it is unusual to go straight from a degree to a training contract/pupillage without a range of internships or other experience.

This guide also touches on opportunities in government, government agencies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and inter-governmental agencies (IGOs). King’s has a number of events and themed weeks about working for the EU and in policy which will also be helpful to consider.

**Tips!** Seize opportunities to work with NGOs with both hands; meet the type of people who will become your clients – i.e. get some life experience and get involved in the issues that interest you

**Essentials**
There is no clear and guaranteed role to a career in human rights, civil liberties or Public International Law so:

- Explore what you mean by human rights. Human rights are pervasive to many areas of law from employment to immigration and even some areas of corporate law.
- Look at routes into human rights policy and international development without first qualifying as a lawyer and vice versa. You will find there is not necessarily a direct route.
- Consider the UN by all means – indeed this is what many of you ask us about - but also develop a wide knowledge of the vast range of alternative organisations out there. They are often a stepping stone to eventual UN roles.
- Start to demonstrate your interests - choose appropriate academic modules, join the Human Rights Lawyers Association (HRLA), get involved with KCL Pro Bono or any other student society that deals with human rights, and attend talks by international lawyers held at KCL or the British Institute of International and Comparative Law.
- Understand the changes taking place to Legal Aid in England & Wales and the Access to Justice agenda.
- Human Rights Lawyers Association membership is free to students [www.hrla.co.uk](http://www.hrla.co.uk). You can attend careers and other events throughout the year. The HRLA’s work includes helping lawyers at risk through the International Action Team, The Rule of Law and domestic law reform. They also have a Human Rights in Business Group.

**Networking & Alumni**
King’s Law Alumni Mentoring Scheme and King’s Connect
Join the online community, King’s Connect, to meet alumni working in the legal profession. The mentoring programme runs from October to May and includes two annual events and skills workshops.

The Committee of Young Legal Aid Lawyers
[www.younglegalaidlawyers.org](http://www.younglegalaidlawyers.org)
Comprises young lawyers working in legal aid. Contact them to find out about mentoring to current students.

Some recent King’s alumni have worked in a range of work experience, internship and other posts including at Citizens Advice Bureaux, Duncan Lewis, Al Haq, UN internships in Asia and the UNHCR Global Issues Unit.

**Finding Law Firms and Training Contracts**
Firms that specialise in human rights, civil liberties and public international law tend to be smaller perhaps even niche. They often offer a combination of specialist and more general even commercial areas of law as legal aid provision continues to decline. Some firms have worked in very high profile and specialist cases. Their human rights/civil liberties work may include criminal, employment, immigration, judicial review, family, mental health, actions against the police, trafficking and much more.

These firms may recruit up to two years ahead but 18 months, a year or even a month ahead may be more common. They may not recruit every year. You can check some of them on [www.lawcareers.net](http://www.lawcareers.net) but this is an area of law where checking with firms individually will reap benefits.
Some well-known firms in London and the South-East that will allow you to compare and contrast areas of practice are Anthony Gold, Bhatt Murphy, Bindmans LLP, Birnberg Peirce, Duncan Lewis, Fisher Meredith, Hodge Jones & Allen, Irwin Mitchell, Imran Khan, Kingsley Napley, Leigh Day & Co, and Public Interest Lawyers.

Consider the kind of clients you want to represent. This will help you identify other niche areas; e.g. if interested in trade unions, you’ll want to look at firms like Thompsons.

These search tools are helpful:

**Chambers Guide**
[www.chambersandpartners.com](http://www.chambersandpartners.com)

Gives information on the leading human rights law firms in the UK. Click on “Search Chambers UK” and select the search term “Civil Liberties.”

**Find a Solicitor**

Use the Pro-Search function and select human rights
[www.justicedirectory.co.uk](http://www.justicedirectory.co.uk)

**Legal Aid**
Legal Aid is a source of funding towards the cost of legal representation. The number of firms taking on this work is in decline, and there this area is undergoing major change, so consult these sources to find out more.

The Legal Aid Practitioners’ Group
[www.lapg.co.uk](http://www.lapg.co.uk)

Law Society information on Legal Aid and Access to Justice
[www.law society.org.uk/a-z/legal-aid](http://www.law society.org.uk/a-z/legal-aid)

The Ministry of Justice

Interview with Gareth Peirce, Legal Aid solicitor.
[http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b04cbn6](http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b04cbn6)

This Radio 4 interview gives a good insight into the legal aid and human rights landscape.

Official Government information on legal aid
[www.gov.uk/legal-aid](http://www.gov.uk/legal-aid)

Client-facing site providing further details on the regulation and provision of Legal Aid Services.

**Related Practice Areas**
You may also wish to consider local and national government as potential employers, because of the breadth of practice areas.

**Solicitors in Local Government**
[www.slgov.org.uk](http://www.slgov.org.uk)

**Government Legal Service (GLS)**
[www.gls.gov.uk](http://www.gls.gov.uk)

The following public bodies
- The Legal Services Commission
- The Law Commission
  [www.lawcom.gov.uk](http://www.lawcom.gov.uk)
- The Ministry for Justice
  [www.justice.gov.uk](http://www.justice.gov.uk)

**Finding Chambers and Pupillages**
High profile chambers such a Doughty Street, Essex Court, Matrix and 20 Essex Street deal with public law, inquests, immigration, detention, and international disputes. You can search using [www.legalhub.co.uk](http://www.legalhub.co.uk) and all the more specialist links in our Barrister hand-out.

**Work Experience and Internships**
As human rights is highly competitive to get into you will need to show a commitment to this area through involvement in related organisations whenever possible and in any capacity. The type of work on offer may not necessarily be legally-related but will still be highly valued. It may also be useful to consider activities and work experience that are recognised as significant achievement legal research positions at The Legal Commission. You can also train for specialist roles such as an Advocate for the FRU (useful if you would like to become a barrister) or a representative for the Police Accreditation Scheme (useful if you are considering criminal law). Some prominent organisations, many with offices in London and NGOs covering human rights in the UK, Europe, and internationally offer volunteering, internships or permanent positions. Many are unpaid as charities in the UK are exempt from National Minimum Wage legislation. Some organisations may require you to be studying law.

**Court and Tribunal Work**
The opportunities arrange from marshalling a Judge (in England & Wales) to clerks and structured programmes overseas, including traineeships and visiting professional programmes. Some courts provide instructions on how to apply or have detailed application forms whereas others do not. For some overseas opportunities you may be able to apply for a travel or research grant e.g. through Fulbright [http://www.fullbright.org.uk/news-events/news/fullbright-awards-for-uk-citizens-now-open-for-opportunities-in-the-US/](http://www.fullbright.org.uk/news-events/news/fullbright-awards-for-uk-citizens-now-open-for-opportunities-in-the-US/)

You can find out more at:
- Her Majesty’s Court Service
  [www.hmcourts-service.gov.uk](http://www.hmcourts-service.gov.uk) or
  [https://www.justice.gov.uk/about/](https://www.justice.gov.uk/about/)
- The Royal Courts of Justice
- The Supreme Court only encourages students to sit in on cases and view the educational exhibition.
- [www.venice/coe/int/site/dynamicsN_court_links_ef.asp?L+2](http://www.venice/coe/int/site/dynamicsN_court_links_ef.asp?L+2) and [www.worldlii.org](http://www.worldlii.org) which also lists international tribunals.
- If you are interested in marshalling you are advised to contact your local Crown Court and ask if any Circuit Judges are taking on a marshal or, if you are affiliated to one of the Inns of Court, you should approach a judge through them. It is worth noting that applicants are usually expected to have completed either the Legal Practice Course or the Bar Vocational Course before they apply for marshalling.

The following overseas courts may offer formal internships:
• The Court of Justice & Court of First Instance of the EU [www.curia.europa.eu]
• The European Court of Auditors [www.eca.europa.eu]
• The European Court of Human Rights [www.echr.coe.int]
• The International Chamber of Commerce International Court of Arbitration [www.iccwbo.org/court/arbitration]
• The International Court of Justice [www.icj-cij.org]
• The International Criminal Court [www.icc-cpi.int]
• The International Tribunal for The Law of the Sea [www.itlos.org]
• The Permanent Court of Arbitration [http://www.pca-cpa.org/]
• The Special Court for Sierra Leone [ww.sc-sl.org]
• The World Bank International Centre for Settlement of Disputes [www.worldbank.org/icsd]
• The World Intellectual Property Organization Arbitration & Mediation Center [www.wipo.int/amc]

Court-related work experience
You may wish to consider
• Fair Trials Abroad [www.fairtrials.net] welcomes volunteer applications. You may undertake translations, basic research, legal analysis, case summaries and general administration.
• Free Representation Unit [http://www.thefru.org.uk/] Volunteering for FRU gives you the opportunity to represent clients in front of Social Security and Employment tribunals. Once trained it is important that you take on cases. Becoming FRU qualified may be particularly useful if you are considering a career at the Bar.

Governmental and Intra-governmental Organisations
• The European Union [http://europa.eu] – entry level and possibly human rights positions
• The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) [www.icj.org] is an NGO dedicated to legal promotion and protection of human rights and the rule of law.

Institutes, Foundations and Think Tanks
• The Association of Human Rights [http://www.ahri-network.org/about-ahri] consists of 43 member institutions that carry out research and education in the field of human rights.
• The British Institute of Human Rights [www.bihr.org.uk], based in London, takes on interns and volunteers in their offices or for help with one-off tasks or projects. There is a volunteering section on their website.
• British Institute of International and Comparative Law – particularly the Bingham Centre [http://www.biicl.org/internshipbingham]
• Centre for Justice and International law (CEJIL) [http://cejil.org/en/front]. Internships are usually for law students.
• Federation Internationale des Lieues des Droits de l’Homme [www.fidh.org]
• The Institute for Human Rights and Development in Africa [www.africaninstitute.org]. Internships are usually offered to law students.
• The International Anti Corruption Academy (close to Vienna): [http://www.iaca.int/about-us/vacancies]

Charities & NGOs & etc
• Aide a Toute Detresse (ATD) Fourth World [www.atd-uk.org]. A few paid vacancies but mainly volunteering.
• AIRE centre (Advice on Individual Rights in Europe) [www.airrocentre.org] in Geneva welcomes applications from prospective volunteers and interns.
• Amicus [www.amicus.org]. KCL Pro Bono may be able to advise on caseworker opportunities at King’s but also check out caseworkers in the US.
• Article 19 [http://article19.com] - Global Campaign for Free Expression offers regular internships and is a frequent advertiser at King’s
• Association for the Prevention of Torture [www.apt.ch] welcomes interns and volunteers.
• British Irish Rights Watch [www.birw.org]
• Committee on the Administration of Justice [www.caj.org.uk], dealing with the conflict in Northern Ireland and based in Belfast.
• Derechos Human rights [www.Derechos.org]. The site includes a link to NGOs, directories, international organisations and volunteering opportunities.
• International Federation of Human Rights [www.fidh.org/news.php]
• Human Rights Interest [www.hri.ca]
• Human Rights Watch [www.hrw.org]
• Global Rights [www.globalrights.org]. Offers legal and other internships.

UN and UN-related
UN headquarters are in New York but the UN has offices all over the world. Significant operations are carried out at the regional economic commissions. The official languages of the UN are Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish. The UN family or organisations comprises the Secretariat, UN Programs and funds such as UNEP (UN Environment Programme) and UNFIP (UN Fund for International Partnerships) that have their own governing bodies and budgets. There are additionally various subsidiary bodies dealing with legal or related issues.

Internships are available within the Secretariat, programs and specialist agencies and are of various durations. Graduate Employment is open to candidates with extensive international backgrounds. Successful applicants are likely to have travelled widely, lived in several countries and are fluent in at least two UN languages. Prior work and established networks are important in obtaining positions and 3 – 5 years experience is...
typically required. Those with legal backgrounds work as specialists in a variety of substantive areas in addition to law and are likely to require expertise in public international law, human rights, refugees law, labour law, patent and copyright law or international criminal law. A masters degree in international law or international relations is usually required.

The paths in are varied with fixed contracts, competitive examinations, short-term consulting positions.

- United Nations [www.un.org](http://www.un.org). Specific UN agencies related to human rights are UNICEF, UNIFEM, OHCHR and UNHCR to name just a few. Internships are competitive, unpaid and require languages (English, French, Spanish, Russian, Arabic or Chinese).

- The UN Young Professionals Programme is the international civil servant scheme [http://tinyurl.com/42929my](http://tinyurl.com/42929my).

- Global Policy forum [www.globalpolicy.com](http://www.globalpolicy.com) offers internships. It scrutinise the work of the UN and global policymaking.

**And more..**


- Justice is an all-party reform and human rights organisation and a frequent advertiser at King’s [http://justice.org.uk/](http://justice.org.uk/).

**Legal Advice Clinics and related**

- The Citizens Advice Bureaux offer a range of voluntary adviser roles as well as specialist training to do this [www.citizensadvice.org.uk/](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/).

- Law Centres Federation [http://www.lawcentres.org.uk/](http://www.lawcentres.org.uk/) Law Centres have both paid and unpaid positions, for those who want to make society more just and equal. They deliver advice through lawyers and qualified caseworkers but they also employ a variety of other professionals, such as managers, administrators, community outreach workers and volunteer co-ordinators.


- Law Works [http://www.lawworks.org.uk/](http://www.lawworks.org.uk/) supports lawyers to volunteer their professional skills to assist individuals and community groups who cannot afford to pay for legal help and who are unable to access legal aid or other forms of financial assistance.


- Media Legal Defence Initiative [http://mediadefence.org/about-us](http://mediadefence.org/about-us)

- Peace Brigades International [www.peacebrigades.org.uk](http://www.peacebrigades.org.uk/) mainly accepts volunteers/


**Pressure Groups and Campaigning**


- Interights [www.interights.org](http://www.interights.org), sometimes seeks volunteers to recruit and monitor human rights developments and assist in drafting reports and engage in advocacy and lobbying.

- Liberty [www.liberty-human-rights.org.uk](http://www.liberty-human-rights.org.uk), regularly seeks volunteers for information line and admin work. Liberty lobbies parliaments and exposes laws that undermine civil liberties and human rights. They also take test cases.

- The Public Law Project [http://www.publiclawproject.org.uk](http://www.publiclawproject.org.uk) has three main objectives: increasing the accountability of public decision-makers, enhancing the quality of public decision-making; and improving access to justice

- Survival [www.survivalinternational.org](http://www.survivalinternational.org) works for tribal peoples’ rights through education, advocacy and campaigns.

**More sources of work experience**


- Law Works [http://www.lawworks.org.uk/](http://www.lawworks.org.uk/) - has a jobs page with links to external organisations offering a range of work.

- [www.idealist.org](http://www.idealist.org) – a very long list of not-for-profit and community organisations across the world which you can search by name, location or mission for volunteering, jobs and internships.

- [www.i-probono.com](http://www.i-probono.com) iProbono is a non-profit online network connecting civil society organisations and social businesses across the world in need of legal assistance with lawyers and students who want to use their legal skills for the public good.


**Fellowships and Further Study**
Fellowships give advanced level (often PhD) students the opportunity to further their knowledge and research in a specific area. They are often offered by universities, companies with an interest in furthering research in a field and by some of the larger NGOs. Multilaterals also offer fellowships though these are less common. Fellowships can be paid or unpaid/may offer a stipend. Good starting points are Human Rights First, Human Rights Watch, The Institute for Human Rights and Development in Africa, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Reprieve and The Carr Centre for Human Rights Policy and Fulbright.

If you decide that a postgraduate course specialising in human rights or a related field would be beneficial to you, there are many available. Universities offering highly regarded Masters in human rights or international law include: University of Essex (human rights), LSE, Oxford, Cambridge, University of Geneva (human rights and dispute settlement), Leiden University (international criminal law, peace and justice), NYU, Columbia University and Georgetown University.

A search on the “Postgraduate Study” section of the Prospects website, www.prospects.ac.uk, lists over 50 masters courses in London alone when using the keyword “Human Rights”.

Other websites that include search facilities for postgraduate courses include www.postgrad.hobsons.com and www.findamasters.com. More information, including searching for courses overseas, is available from the Careers Service.

Blogs, Journals & Current Awareness

The UK Human Rights Blog aims to provide a free, comprehensive and balanced legal update service. Its intention is not to campaign on any particular issue, but rather to present both sides of the argument on issues which are often highly controversial. http://ukhumanrightsblog.com/about/

The Human Rights Brief, free online at www.wcl.american.edu/hrbrief, is published by the Center for Human Rights and Humanitarian Law at the Washington College of Law. It reports on developments in international human rights and humanitarian law and provides concise legal analysis of cutting edge human rights issues.

Law, Social Justice and Global Development (LGD), also free online at http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/law/elij/lgd/, covers a range of legal topics, such as human rights, social justice, democratisation, and constitutionalism, which relate to the impact of globalisation on social development.

EJIL: Talk! - Blog of the European Journal of International Law
www.ejiltalk.org

Opinio Juris - http://opiniojuris.org/

iLawyer – A blog on international justice
http://ilawyerblog.com/

http://www.lawgazette.co.uk

The Careers Group also offers two active blogs that may be relevant:

Getting into Development
http://www.careers.lon.ac.uk/blog/development/ and

Peace, policy & politics
http://www.careers.lon.ac.uk/blog/ppp

Finding out More

King’s & The Careers Group - please see our handouts on

- International Economic Development
- Think Tanks
- EU Institutions & Multilateral Organisations
- Solicitor
- Barrister

Yale have produced a very detailed guide to Public Interest Law:
www.law.yale.edu/documents/pdf/CDO_Public/CDO_PI_Careers_PUBLIC.pdf

- Human Rights Internet www.hri.ca is a Canadian-based online resource, information and documentation centre for human rights activists and organizations. Also offers internships.

- This human rights resources list is very helpful
http://bubl.ac.uk/link/h/humanrights/htm

The Careers Centre

King’s Careers & Employability have a small selection of books concerning careers in this area. A particularly good read is:


King’s CareerConnect

www.kcl.ac.uk/careerconnect

King’s CareerConnect is our exclusive online career portal enabling students and recent alumni to engage with our services. Once logged in, you can access our vacancy board and search hundreds of part-time roles, placements, internships and graduate-level opportunities, book one-to-one careers or application guidance appointments, apply for exclusive King’s Internships and view our full events calendar to book attendance at our many events throughout the year.

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