

## *I want to go abroad – what are my options?*

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As a recruiter at a company that does international placements, I get frequent inquiries from U.S.-based attorneys who are intrigued by the prospect of going abroad. This is understandable, because going abroad and being an international attorney sounds romantic, exotic, prestigious, etc. Unfortunately, on too many occasions the dream does not reflect the reality of the attorney's actual prospects at landing a position in another country, and I have to let them down with the bad news (I certainly do not want to discourage anybody from trying, but I have always found that the best approach to my job as a recruiter is to be as candid as possible).

While there are no rules in the job search process that hold true 100% of the time, the reality is that you will likely have little success in an international job search without being able to check off at least one or more of the following:

- You have **corporate experience**, particularly in the areas of debt/equity, capital markets, securities, project finance, and M&A. This is because experience in these areas translates well internationally, whereas litigation experience is almost universally particular to the jurisdiction, and does not translate well, if at all (the one exception is extensive experience in international arbitration, often in the reinsurance sector, but this is extremely rare for the typical attorney to have). On occasion, patent prosecution experience may also translate internationally if you are fluent in the language of a country where your client is attempting to prosecute their patents.

- You are **licensed in the country/jurisdiction** you are trying to relocate to. [If you are a law student thinking about a potential international career, you should immediately start looking into the requirements of becoming licensed in a foreign jurisdiction.](#) If you are an experienced attorney and practice in the areas mentioned above, being locally licensed is not always necessary, but it will exponentially increase your potential opportunities. If you are not sure where you would like to practice, becoming U.K.-licensed is a safe bet, as that will often allow you to practice in other foreign jurisdictions.

- You are **fluent in a foreign language**. It is also helpful if you have experience or familiarity with interpersonal and business customs of the foreign jurisdiction. Merely being fluent is not sufficient, but combined with one of the two prior factors, it will definitely increase your chances.

- You **have top credentials**, both in your legal education and your current work history. The international legal market is highly attractive and, as a consequence, fiercely competitive. Just as in a domestic job search, the better your credentials and current work history (top schools, top firms), the better your chances.

That's it. Those are the basics. Without at least one of the first two factors, your chances of landing an international legal position are, frankly, not so hot. But if you got through the list and it applies to you, that perfect international job may be waiting just around the corner...