

## TEMPLE UNIVERSITY LAW SCHOOL JAPAN PROGRAM

### JOB HUNTING GUIDE – SPRING 2011

We recognize that many students who attend the Temple University School of Law Spring- Semester Program in Japan (“**Japan Program**”) do so hoping to intern at a law firm or company in Tokyo to enhance their resumes or cover expenses. Upon application to and approval by the Immigration Office here in Tokyo, you may work in Japan on your student visa in a legal or non-legal (English teaching, business, etc.) position. Naturally, many students hope to work in a legal position while attending the Japan Program. We cannot guarantee anyone a law-related job in Tokyo; however, the Japan Program office does all it can to assist students in securing law-related employment.

Throughout this process, please remember that the internship process is very similar to that at your law school in the United States. We line up interviews with firms, corporations, and organization interested in student services. If these interviews do not lead to employment, law students must use their own efforts and ingenuity to find an internship. You should be aware that internships are still relatively uncommon here in Japan, particularly paid internships during the school year. In past years, students attending the Japan Program tended to get some type of internship (either paid or unpaid); however, *internships are not certain or guaranteed.*

Please think very seriously about whether an internship is really appropriate for you. If you do not ordinarily work during the school year, consider the effect of the extra demands on your academic performance. In addition, because the semester is short and because most employers require a full commitment to the internship once hired, many students who accept internships cannot travel within Japan or elsewhere in Asia during Spring Break. Lastly, the Japan Program sponsors a number of extra-curricular activities such as educational excursions to places of legal significance and a weekend trip outside of Tokyo. The one regret consistently expressed by past Japan-Program students is that they failed to take full advantage of the special opportunities presented by these excursions.

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## **I. THE LEGALITIES OF WORKING IN JAPAN**

Every country has the right to control and limit the extent to which foreign nationals work within its borders. Usually this control is exercised through the visa status that one is granted upon entry into the country.

Most students will enter Japan on a student visa that permits employment up to 28 hours per week so long as they receive prior clearance from the Immigration Office. Please note, however, that A.B.A. regulations restrict full-time law students to working no more than 20 hours per week during the academic year. With a student visa and the permission of Immigration, you can work almost anywhere in Japan. At the Internship Orientation, which is mandatory for all students interested in participating in the Internship Program, we will explain the paperwork necessary to apply for a letter of permission for employment.

## **II. TOKYO AS A JOB MARKET**

Tokyo is not a large market for legal internships or part-time law-related jobs. In spring and summer 2010, approximately 40% of students secured a law-related position. But you should know that many jobs are for fewer than 10 hours per week and might not offer compensation. In addition, the global recession has affected job availability and, the internship program has been affected accordingly. Jobs usually involve working with transactional documents and using your legal communication skills; they often require extensively rewriting or correcting English-language legal documents. The greatest value of the job is often simply the opportunity to work for an international firm or company, to learn the dynamics of the international work place, and to distinguish yourself and your resume from your peers.

The principal employers are Japanese law firms, Japanese patent firms, foreign law firms, corporations, and NGOs. Because employers offer jobs only on the basis of their need for a part-time employee and the students' abilities to fill that need, the number of jobs and the employers offering them vary from year to year. In addition, a growing number of employers have stated a desire to review only resumes of students who are fluent in Japanese or who are enrolled in certain classes. For example, one employer seeking an intern to assist with employment-related matters asked to see only resumes of those interested students enrolled in Comparative Employment Law. In any event, understanding these employers, their needs, and their limitations is very important.

### **a. Law firms in Japan**

Japanese lawyers have no tradition of employing law students as law clerks on a full- or part-time basis. Also, as many firms with cross-border practices--those most likely to have work meaningful to a U.S. law student--already employ at least one American lawyer, they may have insufficient work for a student. Japanese law firms, however, have participated in our internship program. A Japanese law firm may also be interested in having a law student work in its office on an unpaid basis. This arrangement is probably more common because many law students are willing to work on this basis, especially during the summer months, to gain some meaningful experience and to set them apart from others. Japanese law firms tend not to require Japanese language skills since they seek the English language abilities of students.

### **b. Multinational corporations**

Many American multinational corporations maintain their Asia-region legal counsel in their Tokyo offices. As a result, a lot of meaningful legal work may be done in Tokyo. Depending on the work, many of these corporate offices find it useful to employ a law student. But because the decision-making process is often administered in Japanese fashion, the hiring process can often be slow.

**c. Foreign law firms**

Foreign law firms have been permitted to have offices in Japan since 1987. A few have significant presence. The majority of offices, however, employ only a few lawyers. These smaller offices are unlikely to seek interns as they send much of their work back to the U.S. The larger firms tend to be more willing to offer jobs to qualified students. Most of these firms are the large American law firms who have quite high standards for hiring. They generally apply the same standards in Tokyo as they do when hiring in the United States. These firms also tend to require very strong Japanese language ability.

**d. Accounting firms**

The major international accounting firms in Tokyo maintain a large foreign staff. While part-time employment is unusual for these organizations, appropriate work and projects may occasionally arise for law students. Students with tax or finance backgrounds are particularly attractive to the accounting firms.

**e. Public Interest Groups**

There are a number of public interest groups in Tokyo; however, most public interest groups we have contacted require at least a basic understanding of the Japanese language. In the past our students have engaged in activities such as researching legal issues to assist in preparing English-language literature about the work of the organization. Students interested in interning at public interest organizations should contact organizations on their own as many students have prefer particular types of public interest work. See here for links to websites for various NGOs and volunteer groups:

<http://web-japan.org/links/society/ngo/development.html>.

**f. Japanese corporations**

Most Japanese corporations maintain legal departments that handle legal documentation and sometimes even supervise the firm's litigation. The managers in these companies may have studied in the U.S. and, therefore, understand how to use law students. The largest impediment to employing a law student seems to be the organizational decision-making process, which often takes a very long time.

**III. THE IMPORTANCE OF JAPANESE LANGUAGE ABILITY**

Students are often concerned about whether their language ability is sufficient to make them employable in Japan.

Some law-related jobs are available for which the employer does not seek or require Japanese language ability. At the opposite end of the spectrum, law-related jobs are available for which the employer requires near-fluency in Japanese or translation experience (surprisingly, these jobs are often with American firms or corporations). Somewhere in between are employers who like having students whose Japanese understanding enables them to communicate on a daily basis, but who don't require Japanese

reading or writing skills because the student will work only on documents in English.

Ultimately, whether and to what degree Japanese language skill is required depends on the needs of the employer.

#### **IV. THE PROCESS OF FINDING A LAW-RELATED JOB IN JAPAN THROUGH THE LAW PROGRAM**

The Japan Program has a long history of working with law offices and corporations likely to employ law students. We work hard to convince employers of their need for law-student interns and then to place appropriate students with each employer so that both the employer and the student find the venture worthwhile. The process by which we connect employers and students is as follows:

1. The Japan Program office learns the needs of each potential employer.
2. Students submit their resumes\* and Employment Registers\*\* during November.
3. Students attend the Internship Orientation in Tokyo which is mandatory for students wishing to intern during the semester.
4. Students then sign up for the internships in which they are most interested. Depending on the number of internships available, we may limit the number of places you sign up for.
5. Resumes are matched with the needs expressed by employers. If any employer wishes to have someone as soon as possible, we will notify by e-mail students whose resumes we have on file. If you are interested in starting an internship in January, your chances are greater if you send us your resume during the registration period. Otherwise, many students begin working in February.
6. Employers examine the resumes and decide whom they would like to interview. Sometimes, employers reject all resumes or ask for additional ones. Occasionally, the employer decides that none of the students possess the skills required and, therefore, doesn't hire anyone.
7. Interviews are set up and conducted (usually in late January or in February; in rare cases, earlier--i.e., immediately upon arrival in Japan--or later, in March or April).
8. The employer notifies either the Japan Program office or the student directly of its hiring decision.
9. Temple works with the student to file a work permit application. Once the application is filed, the student may start work, although the student may not be paid until the permit is issued, a process that generally takes 2-4 weeks.

\* Please note that the Japan Program office will print resumes in A4 size paper. If you send us your resume in MS Word, please be sure to **select A4 size paper** when formatting your resume to ensure the most professional look. The Japan Program office will not reformat or review any resumes.

\*\* The Employment Register referred to in item 2 appears at the end of this Job Hunting Guide. We strongly encourage all students hoping to work in Japan to complete it according to the instructions provided and to return it together with a resume before **Friday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>**.

\*\*\* Some employers may require a cover letter and transcript along with your resume, so please prepare a generic cover letter and transcript to bring with you to the Internship Orientation.

***VERY IMPORTANT NOTE:*** You are free to independently contact firms and organizations in Tokyo. Particularly, if you have personal connections, we should use them. However, many employers have told us specifically that they do not wish students to contact them directly. Therefore, please consult the Japan Program office before contacting any employer directly. **We don't discourage you from engaging in your own job search, but we don't want to cross our wires.** Please e-mail the Law

Program office at [law@tuj.ac.jp](mailto:law@tuj.ac.jp) with a list of places you would like to contact. We will then inform you whether the Japan Program office has already contacted any employer(s) on your list and whether you should refrain from contacting them. Though this request is unusual, maintaining goodwill among law firms and organizations in this small legal community by acquiescing to their desires is very important. Students who have a personal connection with a lawyer in Tokyo should feel free to contact that lawyer about an internship without checking with us. We appreciate your cooperation.

## **V. OTHER EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

Two university departments may employ law students during the spring semester: the Teaching & Learning Center and the Library. The Teaching & Learning Center usually hires several law students to work a few hours per week tutoring non-native English writers on their writing assignments. Law students who have held these jobs reported that they were highly rewarding for the personal contact and the opportunity to further improve their own writing. The Library usually hires students who can work throughout the year, but may have a position available for law students. Students should inquire directly to the following:

Teaching & Learning Center – Andrew Merzenich [andrew@tuj.ac.jp](mailto:andrew@tuj.ac.jp)  
Library – Mr. Tom Boardman [boardman@tuj.ac.jp](mailto:boardman@tuj.ac.jp)

## **VI. SUMMER EMPLOYMENT**

Some students may be interested in remaining and working in Tokyo throughout the summer. Among the 7 students who stayed for summer 2010, 4 students acquired summer internships. The primary obstacle to summer employment in Japan is your visa. Temple must submit a monthly report to the Immigration Office regarding your enrollment status as a student. If you are working in Japan as a student and have entered Japan on our student visa, you must be enrolled as a student at TUJ. To prevent any problems with the Immigration Office, you must enroll in at least one course at TUJ if you intend to continue working in Japan after the end of May. Many students resolved this problem by enrolling in a 2-credit course during our summer semester.

Many summer jobs are extensions of ongoing internships. Sometimes the student originally employed will remain in Japan; other times that student returns to the U.S. and the employer hires a different student.

Please note that the Japan Program office does not actively engage in summer job placement. However, some employers notify the Japan Program office of summer job opportunities and we pass that information on to students. Generally speaking, summer jobs seem to be available/offered around April. Students interested in working in Tokyo during the summer should consult with the Law Program Director after arriving in Tokyo.

**EMPLOYMENT REGISTER**  
**Temple University Law School Japan Program**

We encourage you to send in your resume and completed Employment Register by **Friday, December 3** if you are interested in being considered by employers seeking to get a head start on interviews.

*Please read the “Job Hunting Guide”, especially Part IV, before completing this form.*

Be sure to attach a copy of your resume to this Employment Register before e-mailing it to the Law Program office: [law@tuj.ac.jp](mailto:law@tuj.ac.jp).

**YOUR NAME:**

**HOME SCHOOL:**

**Year in school:**      \_\_\_\_ 2L      \_\_\_\_ 3L

**Type of position preferred:** (Number in order of preference: 1 = first choice, 2 = second choice, etc. Use a zero for categories you don't want.)

- \_\_\_\_ Japanese law firm
- \_\_\_\_ Foreign law firm
- \_\_\_\_ Corporation
- \_\_\_\_ Accounting firm
- \_\_\_\_ Public interest group

**Will you accept an unpaid position?**      \_\_\_\_ yes      \_\_\_\_ no

**Some employers inquire specifically about Japanese language ability. Please rank yourself (and be honest as employers have been known to test Japanese language abilities in interviews).**

**Speaking/listening:**                      none    beginner    intermediate    advanced    fluent    native

**Reading/writing:**                      none    kana only    100 ji    500 ji    1000 ji    newspaper    more

**Months/years experience speaking/learning Japanese?** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please list ALL potential employers that you intend to contact on your own.** (Please review the “VERY IMPORTANT NOTE” on the bottom of page 4.)

**Written Statement: In one page or less, please describe your long-term career goals and what you seek in an internship position.**