A guide to working overseas for UK lawyers
Around the world

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Why work overseas?

In recent years, with the UK recording sluggish economic and jobs growth, lawyers have capitalised on the growth in markets like Asia, the Middle East and Australia to make the move abroad.

There are often tax advantages to a move overseas, with the likes of Dubai and the Cayman Islands having no personal tax. Asia and the Channel Islands also offer tax advantages. With pay at similar or sometimes higher rates than UK bandings and lower tax rates, lawyers can significantly increase their take-home salary.

Lifestyle considerations also play a part. Australia is attractive for its outdoor lifestyle, beautiful beaches and is now, thanks to significant growth, very attractive from a salary perspective too. A number of jurisdictions offer a greatly improved lifestyle relative to the UK in terms of the commute to the office, housing affordability and weather. Most lawyers in Hong Kong live less than 15 minutes from the office, and the same is true in offshore jurisdictions such as the British Virgin Islands and Jersey.

An international move is also a great adventure. It is the chance to discover new places, different cultures and expand your horizons. The fact that you can do this while advancing your career and earning a good salary, makes it very desirable. Most employers also offer a relocation package, making it incredibly easy to make the move.

The main international markets where there is an appetite for UK lawyers are:

• Asia (Hong Kong, Singapore and Tokyo)
• The Middle East (Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Qatar, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia)
• The Caribbean (the Cayman Islands and British Virgin Islands)
• Australia (Sydney, Melbourne, Perth and Brisbane)
• New Zealand (Auckland)
• Continental Europe (Russia, France and Belgium)
• The Channel Islands (Jersey and Guernsey)

This guide gives an overview of each of the above jurisdictions.

Taylor Root has dedicated consultants who cover each of these markets based out of our offices in London, Hong Kong, Singapore, Dubai, Sydney and Melbourne. We recruit for law firms and the in-house legal teams of multinational corporations and international banking groups.

We have developed specialist knowledge of not only the legal markets in which we recruit, but also what it is like to live in these jurisdictions. Most of our consultants are qualified lawyers who have lived or spent significant time in the jurisdictions into which we recruit. For a confidential conversation about a move abroad or to find out how we can assist you, please do not hesitate to contact us. Contact details can be found at the end of this guide.
Australia and New Zealand

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Australia has enjoyed over 20 years of economic growth, making it one of the top performing economies in the developed world.

The buoyant Australian economy has created a wealth of opportunity for UK lawyers to relocate. Together with the obvious advantages like the lifestyle and weather, Australia is highly attractive on both a professional level and cultural level. Salaries have increased significantly in recent years, with lawyers being paid comparable salaries to London ‘Magic Circle’ firms. The stature of the firms and quality of the work they do is also on par with London.

Legal practice in Australia is very similar to that in London, meaning that generally the skills you gain in Australia will be transferable to the UK should you want to return.

Similarly, New Zealand has weathered the 2008 global financial crisis well relative to other developed nations. The top firms in New Zealand are very open to applications from UK lawyers.

LAW FIRMS

Australia has an advanced and sophisticated legal market. The bulk of the high-value work is done by Australia’s top 10 firms, akin to the UK ‘Magic’ and ‘Silver’ circle. With close economic and physical proximity to Asia, as well as a booming domestic economy, the Australian firms have been the subject of many recent mergers with leading UK and international firms. Herbert Smith, Ashurst, Norton Rose and DLA have all entered into mergers with leading Australian firms. In addition, UK ‘Magic Circle’ firms Clifford Chance and Allen & Overy have both launched offices in Sydney and Perth in recent years.

The result is that there are fantastic opportunities for UK lawyers to move to Australia and gain experience with global legal brands.

PRINCIPAL AREAS OF DEMAND

There continues to be strong demand for UK lawyers with two to ten years’ experience across:

- Corporate, M&A, Private Equity
- Banking and Finance
- Construction, Major Projects
- Energy and Resources
- Dispute Resolution
- IP, IT and Outsourcing

There is a strong preference for candidates with top London or leading regional firm experience or the equivalent.

REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

Your salary in Australia will afford you an excellent quality of life. With the buoyant economy and shortage of legal talent, salaries have increased substantially in recent years and are internationally competitive.

Generally, salaries at Australian top-tier law firms are now on par with London ‘Magic Circle’ rates. Living costs in the major Australian cities are similar to London, although tax rates are a little bit lower. You can expect a very similar standard of living to London, but with much better weather, a shorter commute to the office and an enviable outdoor lifestyle.

Salaries in New Zealand are about 25% lower than Australia, but living costs are proportionately less.
THE CITIES AND LIFESTYLE

Sydney is Australia’s largest city with 4.5 million people and there’s no denying it’s a total stunner! Its dazzling harbour and white sand beaches make it a truly unique city that offers an enviable lifestyle. Sydney is one of the busiest commercial hubs in the Asia-Pacific region. It has a cosmopolitan population, lush parks, hip bars and restaurants. Summers are hot (around 26 degrees), and winters very mild (around 16 degrees).

Melbourne, the southernmost major mainland city, is a buzzing arts and sports capital, with a cosmopolitan population and some of the best restaurants, bars and art galleries in the southern hemisphere. With over four million people, the city is the sum of all its parts, with eclectic precincts and, in some parts, a very ‘European’ feel. Melbourne has distinct seasons, with hot summers (26 degrees) and cool winters (14 degrees).

Brisbane is a rapidly growing city of over two million people. It is a big city with a laid back lifestyle. It has an impressive arts and culture scene and is only a 45 minute drive from some of Australia’s most famous beach resorts like the Gold Coast and the Sunshine Coast. Brisbane is warm year-round, with hot summers (30 degrees) and winter sunshine (21 degrees).

Perth leads Australia’s economic growth and is a boom town. No longer an isolated, dull city on the far west of the continent, Perth has become an international hub of investment and playground for millionaires. Perth is now home to 1.5 million people and has all the benefits of a large city. This growth has created opportunities for UK lawyers to gain top-tier experience on some of the biggest deals/projects in the Asia-Pacific. Outside of the office, Perth offers a true beach climate with a pristine natural environment of white sand beach and crystal clear water. It is Australia’s sunniest capital with hot, dry summers (31 degrees) and very pleasant winters (19 degrees). Perth is also very close to Asia, with Singapore and Bali being only a four hour flight away.

Auckland is the largest legal centre in New Zealand and home to all the domestic major law firms. It is the most international of New Zealand’s cities, yet enjoys a relaxed lifestyle with a large, spectacular natural harbour and pristine beaches. New Zealand also has some of the best skiing in the southern hemisphere and the outdoor sports capital of Queenstown is only a 45 minute flight away. Summers in Auckland are warm (23 degrees) and winters mild (15 degrees).
Asia

Hong Kong

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Hong Kong is the main business and financial gateway to China, with multi-Asian and Western elements. It is the biggest and most important financial centre in the region and is still the city of choice for most international businesses. It offers everything from the bustle and crowds of Central and Causeway Bay, to the mountains of Lantau and the beautiful bays of Sai Kung. Culturally and historically, it has a unique place in Asia. It is efficient and well run with a first class transport system. Everything is within an easy distance and a commute to work is typically a five minute taxi ride. Diverse in many ways, it provides professional and personal opportunities that few places in the world can match.

PRINCIPAL AREAS OF DEMAND

Private Practice

Despite the increase in the requirement for Chinese language skills, there is still demand for high quality UK lawyers in the following areas:

- Corporate
- Banking and Finance
- Project Finance
- Securitisation
- Capital Markets
- Construction
- Energy
- Dispute Resolution
- Shipping

In-House

Hong Kong is headquarters for a large number of major investment banks and international corporations. Lawyers within these organisations tend to have regionally focused responsibility resulting in a diverse and interesting workload. Mandarin language skills are in demand, particularly with the following experience:

- Structured Finance & Securitisation
- Debt Capital Markets
- Derivatives & Structured Products
- Compliance, both investment banking and funds related

REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

Salaries tend to be generous in Hong Kong, affording lawyers a good level of income and a comfortable lifestyle. There is a similarity in Hong Kong and London salaries, but taxation makes Hong Kong more attractive. Taxation levels are very low and are capped at 16%, much lower than UK tax rates. In addition, most firms structure it so that you can deduct rent from your taxable salary so as to reduce your tax bill.

OUTSIDE THE OFFICE

With its renowned work-hard, play-hard spirit, the city is one of phenomenal energy. You may be required to work late, but there will always be plenty to do once you leave the office. The bars are generally open seven days a week and stay open very late. The choice and quality of restaurants, cafes, and shops which are open all hours is equally impressive. The image of the city as a pulsing urban jungle seems only too real, but there is more to Hong Kong than this.

There are beautiful beaches at Sai Kung and fantastic walking in the new territories. Stanley and Repulse Bay provide a haven from the bustle of Central and there are clubs and leisure facilities that provide opportunities for participation in a wide range of sports and activities.

Hong Kong has hot, humid summers (31 degrees) and very mild, dry winters (18 degrees).

You are also well placed to travel throughout Asia and Australasia.
Singapore

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Singapore is a city, a country and one of the world’s most important financial centres. Founded by Sir Stamford Raffles, it still retains a colonial feel and is renowned for its world-class infrastructure, easy going lifestyle and friendly environment. Whilst having a reputation for being ultra modern, it retains a wide range of Chinese, Malay and Indian traditions and it offers a superb blend of Asia and the West.

LAW FIRMS & IN-HOUSE

Singapore has been long established as a premier financial centre and is the South East Asia base for a number of UK and US law firms. Whilst not as big a market as Hong Kong, it does not have the same requirement for Asian language skills and firms usually look overseas for their lateral recruits.

PRINCIPAL AREAS OF DEMAND

Private Practice
The market has recovered remarkably from the downturn in 2002 and 2003, and weathered the 2008 crisis well. Law firms have grown significantly in the last two years and the outlook remains positive. Areas in demand are principally:

- Corporate
- Banking and Finance
- Project Finance
- Capital Markets
- Energy
- Arbitration
- Shipping

In-House
Whilst roles are relatively scarce, lawyers with skills in the following areas are of interest:

- Structured Finance & Securitisation
- Debt Capital Markets
- Derivatives & Structured Products
- Compliance, both investment banking and funds related

REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

Salaries in Singapore have moved away from the traditional ‘ex-pat package’. Whilst the occasional role may offer housing and cost of living allowances, most law firms and banks now pay a local Singapore dollars salary. Salaries are still relatively high, similar to the London rates, and tax is low at 15%. The cost of living in Singapore is lower than London or Hong Kong and lawyers tend to live in houses or large apartments where gardens and swimming pools are common. The overall financial result, after taxation and cost of living, is that lawyers take home a greater percentage of their salary than in the UK.

OUTSIDE THE OFFICE

Singapore has something to offer everyone. There is a superb range of bars, clubs and restaurants, great shopping, fantastic parks and great beaches. It offers a wide range of sporting facilities, including a number of top golf courses. It is vibrant and social for younger lawyers, but provides a superb environment for families at the same time. The climate is excellent (30 degrees year round), the air is clean and there is far more space than in most Asian cities! Based in Singapore, you will have some fantastic travel opportunities across the region. Indonesia is a stone’s throw away, as are some of the region’s most beautiful islands. Australia is extremely easy to visit, being a four hour flight away.
Tokyo

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Come with an open mind and be prepared to be surprised! Tokyo is a remarkable city full of contrasts. It is a bustling city with plenty of attractions and a vibrant culture. It boasts an extraordinary variety of museums, galleries, shrines and temples. It has great parks and the most remarkable array of bars and restaurants. There is a large and flourishing expat community and as you travel through Japan, you will discover an even wider range of cultural, natural and historical wonders.

Japan is one of the largest economies in the world and therefore Tokyo can offer lawyers some of the highest quality and most challenging work in the world.

PRINCIPAL AREAS OF DEMAND

Private Practice
International law firms in Japan have grown steadily over the last ten years and now have well-established practices in a number of areas. Japanese language skills are much sought after, but not always essential. It is in the following areas where lawyers are predominantly in demand:

- Banking and Finance
- Capital Markets
- Corporate
- Project Finance
- Energy
- Dispute Resolution

In-House
There are opportunities for outstanding lawyers, particularly with Japanese language skills in the following areas:

- Capital Markets
- Derivatives & Structured Products

REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

Although the cost of living in Tokyo is high, this is reflected in the salary packages on offer. Although most organisations have moved away from traditional expat deals, they still offer a local cash package that is extremely attractive and above London rates.

OUTSIDE THE OFFICE

Tokyo and Japan as a whole offer a phenomenal range of activities and events. Whether your interests be historical or cultural, in sport, in eating and drinking, in shopping or whether you prefer to spend your weekends ‘chilled out’ there are an enormous number of options on offer. Life is equally fulfilling for the single lawyer or a family. A superb transport system allows you to get around Japan and take in magnificent national parks and fantastic cities like Kyoto. The rest of Asia is also on your doorstep.

Summers in Tokyo are hot (29 degrees) and winters are cool (10 degrees).
The Middle East

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In the space of thirty years, Dubai has grown from a fishing village to a global commercial centre. Dubai is now the focus for Gulf-wide financing activity and is now an extremely popular tourist destination. The same can be said for Abu Dhabi. Together, they are the most 'westernised' of the Middle Eastern jurisdictions.

Saudi Arabia is the world’s largest producer of oil and is the largest of the Arab economies, meaning the quality and size of the deals is impressive.

Qatar has a relatively liberal way of life, albeit more conservative than somewhere like Dubai. On a GDP per capita basis, Qatar is the richest country in the world and is going through a phase of tremendous infrastructure development.

Bahrain is the centre for Islamic finance.

The work on offer across the region is generally very interesting and as offices are small by London standards, the firms want lawyers who are client-facing and commercially aware and are prepared to take on responsibility.

LAW FIRMS

All the major UK firms are represented in Dubai, and are opening and expanding across the entire region. US firms are also increasingly more prominent across the region. As with any move abroad, the majority of opportunities exist in private practice but increasingly opportunities do exist in-house with international corporates seeking to take advantage of the free trade zones.

PRINCIPAL AREAS OF DEMAND

- Corporate/Commercial
- Banking & Finance, particularly Projects
- Capital Markets
- Projects and Construction
- Energy and Resources
- Dispute Resolution
- Commercial Property

REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

The major international law firms provide a base salary which is set just above their London net salary. As there is no personal taxation in the region, the salaries on offer are exceptionally attractive. The cost of living is also less (generally about 20% lower) than London, meaning a move to the Middle East is very financially attractive.

OUTSIDE THE OFFICE

Living and working in Dubai offers all the benefits of the Middle East, with none of the potential drawbacks. The city is very modern and high-tech and its beaches, climate, relaxed lifestyle and superb sporting facilities are all big attractions. For the more adventurous, you can try off-roading or dune bashing, camel riding, and sandboarding or perhaps part with your money shopping at the world famous souks and huge modern shopping malls.

Abu Dhabi is similar, but known for being more of a cultural hub than Dubai. In Dubai and Abu Dhabi, an alcohol licence is required to drink within your home, but easily obtained.

In Bahrain, religious and academic freedoms are permitted, as is the right to drink alcohol, while Saudi Arabia is alcohol free with no exceptions.

The weather across the entire region can only be described as hot! Summers average 40 degrees, and winters hover around 25 degrees. There is little to no rainfall year-round.
Carribbean
Cayman Islands

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Cayman Islands are a small chain of islands lying 500 miles south of Miami. Grand Cayman is the largest and most populated of the three islands. It is also the centre of business activity and home to all the major law firms and banks. The island itself is 22 miles long and is probably most famous for its “seven mile beach” which is bordered by palm trees and a crystal clear blue sea.

LAW FIRMS

The Cayman Islands is the most sophisticated and successful offshore financial and business centre. The law firms are staffed principally by UK lawyers but also by lawyers qualified in Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Canada. The island has a dozen commercial law firms ranging from about 60 lawyers in the largest to a handful in the smallest. Corporate lawyers usually handle a large number of transactions at any one time, rather than being immersed in a major deal for weeks on end. This is because they are instructed in relation to a specific part of the transaction i.e. the Cayman Islands end.

PRINCIPAL AREAS OF DEMAND

- Corporate Finance
- Funds
- Banking & Finance
- Commercial Litigation
- Trusts

To obtain a work permit, lawyers must be admitted for at least three years in a Commonwealth jurisdiction.

REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

Remuneration in the Cayman Islands tends to be the highest of all the offshore centres but does vary from firm to firm. Some firms pay a straight salary, some a salary plus commission arrangement and others straight commission. Salaries are tax free, making Cayman a very desirable location from a financial perspective. It is also common to receive a pension and health insurance.

OUTSIDE THE OFFICE

The lifestyle enjoyed in the Cayman Islands is unrivalled, combining quality of work with a fantastic way of life. Accommodation is very good and attorneys tend to live in condominium complexes with shared pools, tennis courts, gardens etc. Rents vary according to size and location. Most lawyers live within a 15 minute drive to work. For those with children, the schools up until the age of 14 are excellent. Older children usually attend boarding school in Canada or England. For those who are single, there is a very active social life with a number of fantastic bars, restaurants and a small collection of nightclubs.

Cayman is warm all year, averaging 28 degrees. Short, sharp downpours occur in summer which is the wettest season. Winters are drier with lots of sun.
The British Virgin Islands

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The British Virgin Islands are a collection of 40 islands with beautiful beaches. They are approximately 60 miles east of Puerto Rico in the Caribbean and a two hour flight to Miami. Only a small number of islands are inhabited. The centre of business activity is Tortola, the largest of the islands. The success of the financial sector of the BVI is due almost exclusively to it being the world’s leading jurisdiction for international business companies (IBCs), which are exempt from BVI taxes. The BVI is now one of the top offshore jurisdictions.

LAW FIRMS

The BVI has a small number of law firms and the legal system is based on English common law. The BVI’s status as a business centre has significantly increased over the last few years and has become increasingly popular as a domicile for the incorporation of funds. As a result, most of the major international offshore firms have opened up offices.

PRINCIPAL AREAS OF DEMAND

• Corporate Finance
• Funds
• Banking & Finance
• Commercial Litigation
• Trusts

In order to obtain a work permit you must be qualified in a Commonwealth jurisdiction. Generally the firms won’t take foreign lawyers below three years’ PQE.

REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

Although generous, salaries in the BVI are lower than the Cayman Islands. This is due to the fact that charge out rates and the cost of living are also lower. There is no personal income tax in the BVI, making it a financially attractive jurisdiction.

OUTSIDE THE OFFICE

Perfect beaches, clear blue waters and the gentle trade winds make the BVI one of the finest water sports locations in the world. Of all the offshore locations, the BVI are one of the most unspoilt destinations with friendly people, the best sailing waters in the Caribbean, horseback riding, mountain trails, outstanding diving on pristine coral reefs and a number of golf courses. There are also a variety of pubs and restaurants. The local schools are good for younger children. Accommodation is of good quality and is generally cheaper than the Cayman Islands and Bermuda.

The climate is similar to the Cayman Islands.
Europe

The Channel Islands

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Jersey and Guernsey are major international financial centres and, as such, the major law firms service that industry. In terms of geography, they are extremely close to the UK; only thirty minutes by air to London and only one hour from the French coast by ferry. The islands have a very European flavour in terms of culture and the restaurants and bars are excellent. Around 160,000 people live on the islands and enjoy the outdoor lifestyle on offer.

LAW FIRMS

Five law firms tend to dominate the commercial legal scene, most of which have offices in other jurisdictions including the Cayman Islands and London. They are made up of lawyers who mostly have worked with the larger London law firms or leading law firms from other common law jurisdictions. The quality of your peers and the work is excellent so the professional impact of making the move to the Channel Islands is second-to-none.

PRINCIPAL AREAS OF DEMAND

• Structured Finance
• Banking
• Securitisation
• Funds
• Capital Markets
• Corporate/Commercial
• Dispute Resolution

The firms will generally consider very junior (newly qualified) candidates as well as more senior applicants. They do not impose an ‘up or out’ policy.

REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

Salaries on offer are typically London rates. The other major benefit is a lower tax regime imposing a flat rate of 20% income tax. Therefore, once taxation is taken to consideration, lawyers are typically in a better position financially than in London.

OUTSIDE THE OFFICE

If you are the type of person who enjoys sport or generally leading an active healthy lifestyle, the Channel Islands are ideal. If you prefer not to spend your time travelling to and from the office in traffic jams or on crowded public transport, the Channel Islands offer a much easier way of life. It will allow you more time to do what you like to do. The improvement in the quality of life enjoyed by lawyers, and their families, who have made the move is very favourable. It is a location easy to settle into, with less rain and more sunshine than mainland UK.
**Russia**

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

From the domes of St. Basil’s Cathedral to the art exhibitions, diverse nightlife and international restaurant scene, Moscow has a unique feel and an exciting edge to it. Plentiful oil resources have meant that the economy is booming. Inward investment continues to flood into the country, creating prosperity, economic development and an ever increasing need for good legal advisers.

**LAW FIRMS**

Moscow is a key international business centre and most of the global law firms have invested heavily in their Russian practices. There are approximately 20 UK/US law firms with long established Moscow offices which easily compete with national firms for local market dominance. The majority are staffed with high profile partners and a combination of local and UK/overseas-qualified lawyers.

**PRINCIPAL AREAS OF DEMAND**

- Corporate
- Banking and Finance
- Energy and Resources

Russian language skills are generally advantageous but not a pre-requisite for common law lawyers.

**REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS**

Salaries for ex-pat lawyers in Moscow are generous, amongst some of the best in the world. Most firms pay the equivalent or better than a UK salary plus a housing allowance. Taxation is minimal, capped at 13%. Moscow is therefore an excellent financial choice for lawyers.

**OUTSIDE THE OFFICE**

Moscow is a dynamically growing business and cultural centre for the whole of Eastern Europe and the CIS, which is a region full of new opportunities. Living and working there is an exciting adventure and a new learning experience, which will expand your horizons. The culture is rich and diverse. The nightlife is anything but dull! The food is hugely varied, often excellent and generally inexpensive. The supermarkets in Moscow are generally cheaper than in London and offer a good range of food and products. There is a good variety of travelling options outside Moscow available to make your weekends more interesting. Western-style accommodation in Moscow is on the expensive side, but your salary package more than compensates you for this.

Moscow summers are warm (23 degrees), and the winters notoriously cold (up to -41).
A guide to working overseas for UK lawyers

France

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Paris has the most opportunities for UK lawyers. It is an exciting and vibrant city recognised the world over as offering an unrivalled lifestyle and culture. It is one of the largest, if not the largest European legal centre and is regarded as a major hub for pan-European business. Much European cross-border trade and finance generally will involve a French aspect making it an essential business jurisdiction. The quality of commercial legal work on offer is therefore excellent. Most of this work is in English. While French language skills will ease an ex-pat recruit into the language of the corridor and the multitude of cafes and bars, it is not essential to the practice of law. That said, most firms require some level of knowledge of French.

LAW FIRMS

The international firms, principally the English and American firms, lead the way and have been in the French market for decades. However, there are a number of very good French firms who have offices abroad as well. Although there are some resident ex-pat partners in the Paris offices, the majority of partners and fee earners will be French advocates.

PRINCIPAL AREAS OF DEMAND

The most significant areas of demand are in finance and international arbitration.

The other practice groups tend to be dominated by the local lawyers. The key finance groups are: banking; capital markets; structured finance; project finance; asset finance; and securitisation. Sometimes there will be interest in corporate finance lawyers; however, these roles tend to require local law capability.

REMWNURERATION AND BENEFITS

Incomes in Paris for ex-pat lawyers follow London rates. There is a tendency for rates to be slightly lower but after taking into account the lower cost of living, the financial package is attractive.

Law firms will take on lateral lawyers either as employees or as independent contractors (with ‘profession libérale’ status). ‘Employees’ are a more expensive hire for the firms because there is an ensuing liability on the part of the firm to pay additional taxes and social security contributions. On an independent contractor basis, the lawyer picks up the tab on these expenses and is usually paid a higher rate as a result. Once lawyers have taken the Paris Bar and become locally qualified, there would be an expectation of moving to this status of independent contractor, which is really the norm across continental Europe. Independent contractors are able to claim many expenses against their taxable income, thereby reducing their tax bill.

OUTSIDE THE OFFICE

While you should expect to work hard, the enjoyment associated with living and working in this beautiful city is difficult to overstate. Professionals tend to live in the heart of Paris, so after hours they take advantage of the restaurants, nightlife, shopping and culture.

Paris has a similar climate to London, albeit with slightly warmer summers.
Belgium

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Brussels is a vibrant city in the heart of Europe. English is widely spoken but its mother-tongues are Flemish and French. Around a quarter of its inhabitants are ex-pats from across the globe. The quality of legal practice in Brussels is second-to-none, being at the cutting-edge of anti-trust and competition law.

LAW FIRMS

The dominant firms are the UK and US international firms. There are some local law firms and other European outfits present, however, it is the UK Magic Circle and New York white shoe firms which lead the way. As an evolving and dynamic jurisdiction, the landscape relating to who’s who regularly changes with US firms opening up new offices from time-to-time.

PRINCIPAL AREAS OF DEMAND

Principal demand is for EU/Competition Law. The work on offer tends to include a mix of general competition, anti-trust, cartel, state aid, ‘whistleblower’ cases and merger matters. There is some lesser demand for International Trade Law, IP/IT and Life Sciences.

Various European languages are desirable, however, for most positions, perfect written and spoken English skills are essential.

There are almost always opportunities for high calibre candidates. These can vary from newly qualified to partner level. Some experience with the Commission may be helpful, as will post-graduate study (LLM) in the field.

REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

For a common law lawyer, salaries in Brussels are generally equal to those in London.

As in Europe, generally lawyers can expect to be paid on a self-employed basis whereby they submit monthly invoices for the agreed rate. There are tax advantages associated with being employed as an independent contractor.

The cost of living is considerably lower in Brussels than London. In particular, accommodation is particularly cheap compared to London and the overall cost of living is typically around 20% below that in London.

OUTSIDE THE OFFICE

As a major European capital, you can expect a variety of after-hours pursuits on your doorstep. On the basis of significantly shorter commute times alone, you will definitely have more time on your hands to enjoy them. There are excellent restaurants and bars and an entertaining nightlife. Shopping and travel are also well catered for.

The weather is very similar to London.
Established in the 1980s, Taylor Root is now widely recognised as being one of the world’s leading legal recruiters. Operating out of offices in the UK, Dubai, Asia and Australia, we are ideally placed to assist law firms, banks and companies with their legal recruitment on an international basis. Taylor Root has a strong track record in the recruitment of: Heads of Legal and legal advisers; law firm associates and partners; contract/locum lawyers; paralegals; company secretaries and compliance professionals.

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