

5th Year Career Development Survey Class of 2002

Every spring the Career Development Office solicits information from our graduates five years after their departure from the law school through our 5th year Career Development Survey. We commenced surveying the Class of 2002 in May 2007 and ultimately received a 60% response rate.¹

The purpose of this report is to provide a snapshot of the career experiences of the Class of 2002 in their first five years since graduating YLS. In order to provide a complete picture, this report includes statistics from two sources. The statistics reflected in Section I of this report are based on information provided to CDO from the Class of 2002 upon their graduation from law school or upon completion of a judicial clerkship. The statistics reflected in Sections II – VII of this report are derived from Class of 2002 responses to the 5th Year Career Development Survey.

I. First Employment²

Employer Type

Law firms were the most popular destination of our graduates immediately after law school, followed by judicial clerkships. Smaller percentages commenced their careers in public service, academia, business, or pursued further education.

Because so many of our graduates clerk, it is also relevant to know our graduates' first non-clerkship job choices. Based on those statistics, 70% worked in law firms, while 17% worked in the public service.

Class of 2002	First Job	First Non-Clerkship Job
Total Respondents	193	158
Law Firms	44% (84)	70% (111)
Judicial Clerkship	37% (72) ³	--
Public Service	10% (19)	17% (27)
Academia⁴	4% (8)	8% (12)
Business	2% (4)	2.5% (4)
Advanced Degree	2% (3)	2.5% (4)

¹ Although we received an overall response rate of 60%, not every respondent answered every question. As a result, some statistics reflect response rates less than the overall response rate for the Class.

² The statistics reflected in this section are derived from information provided by students to CDO either upon their graduation from law school or upon completion of a judicial clerkship.

³ This figure reflects the percentage of graduates who clerked in their first job after law school. CDO also tracks judicial clerkships obtained by graduates one or more years after graduation. Based on those statistics, 46% of the Class of 2002 served as a judicial law clerk at some point after graduating from YLS.

⁴ Includes teaching, research, academic fellowships and academic administration.

Gender Differences in Employer Type

Similar percentages of women and men went to law firms and public service upon graduation. More men clerked and more women entered academia.

Class of 2002⁵	Women	Men
Total Respondents	86 (46% of all respondents)	101 (54% of all respondents)
Law Firms	46% (40)	44% (44)
Judicial Clerkship	34% (29)	43% (43)
Public Service	12% (10)	9% (9)
Academia	7% (6)	2% (2)
Business	1% (1)	3% (3)

Reason for Leaving First Non-Clerkship Position

According to the 5th Year Career Development survey, the two most frequently reported reasons for graduates leaving their first non-clerkship positions were professional and career development (25%) and work/life balance priorities (19%).

II. Employment Five Years After YLS Graduation

Employer Type

When comparing first non-clerkship job choices with where the Class of 2002 is working five years after graduation, fewer graduates are with law firms five years after graduation and more graduates are in public service, academia, and business.

Class of 2002	5 Years After Graduation	First Non-clerkship Employment
Law Firms	49% (52)	70% (111)
Public Service	26% (28)	17% (27)
Academia	14% (15)	8% (12)
Business	9% (10)	2.5% (4)
Other	1% (1)	--

Gender Differences in Employer Type

⁵ According to information reported by YLS to the ABA, 55.4% of the Class of 2002 was comprised of men.

Twice as many men work in business five years after graduation, but otherwise men and women are more similarly represented in other fields.

Class of 2002	Women	Men
Total Respondents	52 (50% of all respondents)	52 (50% of all respondents)
Law Firms	52% (27)	48% (25)
Public Service	25% (13)	29% (15)
Academia	17% (9)	12% (6)
Business	6% (3)	12% (6)

Employment Locations

Five years after graduation, almost one-third (31%) of the Class of 2002 resides in New York City. DC and California are slightly less popular, with 17% residing in each of those locations.

Top Three Employment Locations for Class of 2002	5 Years after Graduation
New York City	31% (32)
Washington, D.C.	17% (18)
California (including all cities)	17% (18)

Work Schedules

The most commonly reported range of work hours was 2,000-2,500 hours per year, with 63% of those in law firms, 44% in public service, 45% in academia and 56% of those in business reporting working hours in that range. Academics report the lowest hours, with 46% reporting working under 2,000 hours per year. Only 6% of respondents report working part-time – all of those respondents are in law firms.

Annual Salaries

Not surprisingly, law firm respondents report the highest incomes, with 75% of those in law firms reporting salaries over \$150,000. The majority of respondents in public service (63%) and business (67%) report earning between \$75,000 – 149,999. Among academics, 43% earn between \$30,000 – 74,999 and 50% earn between \$75,000 - 149,999.

Plan to Stay with Current Employer

With regard to how long they plan to stay with their current employer, the most common response from graduates was that they plan to stay for 1-3 more years, with 40% of respondents selecting that option. One-fifth (21%) plan to stay for less than one more year, 12% plan to stay for 3-5 more years and 26% plan to stay for more than five years.

Job Satisfaction

Respondents were asked to indicate their overall satisfaction with their current employment. Half of the class is “very satisfied” with their current position and 32% are “satisfied.” As in prior years, law firm respondents are less likely to state that they are “very satisfied” with their jobs as compared to those in other sectors. Only 19% of those in law firms are “very satisfied”, as compared to 86% of those in public service, 80% of those in academia, and 70% of those in business.

Class of 2002	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Not Satisfied
Overall Satisfaction	50% (53)	32% (34)	11% (12)	6% (6)
Law Firms	19% (10)	50% (26)	19% (10)	12% (6)
Public Service	86% (24)	14% (4)	--	--
Academia	80% (12)	13% (2)	7% (1)	--
Business	70% (7)	20% (2)	10% (1)	--

Men express slightly greater job satisfaction than women – 84% of men are either satisfied or very satisfied with their current positions as compared to 81% of women.

Respondents were also asked to rate their level of job satisfaction with regard to 12 specific aspects of their work. Overall, respondents are most satisfied with the collegiality of their colleagues, with 58% of respondents indicating that they are “very satisfied” with that area of their work.

Among those in law firms, 33% indicated that they are not satisfied with their ability to balance work and life. In the Classes of 1996-2000, an average of 40% of law firm respondents stated that they were not satisfied with their work life balance. Other areas of dissatisfaction among law firm practitioners are advancement opportunities (19% not satisfied) and control over work (19% not satisfied).

Public service respondents expressed the greatest dissatisfaction with their compensation (18% not satisfied).

III. Public Service Employment

Not factoring judicial clerkships, almost one-third of respondents (32%) have worked for a public service employer at some point in the five years since graduation.

IV. Job Changes

On average, respondents have changed jobs twice in the five years since graduation, not including judicial clerkships. While 30% are still in their first non-clerkship job, 48% are in their second job, 16% are in their third job, and 6% are in their fourth job.

Among graduates whose first non-clerkship position was with a large law firm, 75% left that position at some point within the first five years after graduating. Of those 75%, 42% accepted work with another large firm, 23% went to federal government, 10% went into business, 10% went to a smaller law firm, 8% went into academia, and 4% went to a non profit.

V. Pro Bono

Respondents were asked to report their average pro bono hours per year in their current employment. Among those in law firms, 35% devote over 100 hours to pro bono per year and 19% devote 51-100 hours.

Class of 2002	Law Firm Respondents	Business Respondents
over 100 hours	35% (17)	12.5% (1)
51 - 100 hours	19% (9)	--
26 - 50 hours	6% (3)	12.5% (1)
1 - 25 hours	23% (11)	25% (2)
0 hours	17% (8)	50% (4)

The survey inquired about the factors that have contributed to and limited respondents' *pro bono* hours. Respondents ranked personal satisfaction, followed by employer encouragement and a sense of professional obligation as the factors most contributing to their *pro bono* hours. Workload demands and employer billable hour expectations were selected as the two most important factors that have limited their *pro bono* hours.

Respondents were also asked to select the activities at Yale Law School that positively influenced their *pro bono* commitment. As with all prior class years surveyed, the clinics had the most positive influence.

YLS Activities Positively Influencing <i>Pro Bono</i>	Class of 2002
clinics	44% (33)
summer or term-time public interest work	19% (14)
public interest lectures and programs	19% (14)
public service student organizations	19% (14)

Finally, respondents were asked the following question: "Has an employer's strong *pro bono* policies and commitment contributed to your decision to work for that employer?" Two-thirds (67%) responded yes.

VI. Debt

At graduation, half of the Class (51%) reported a debt burden of more than \$75,000. Twenty-nine percent reported using the Career Options Assistance Program (COAP) at some point since graduation. Over a third of respondents (35%) believe that the need to pay off their debt affected their legal career choices.

Debt Burden at Graduation	Class of 2002
less than \$5,000	24% (26)
\$5,000 - 24,999	4% (4)
\$25,000 - 75,000	21% (23)
over \$75,000	51% (54)
Percent of respondents who used COAP	29% (32)
Percent of respondents who said the need to pay off debt affected their legal career choices	35% (38)

VII. Retrospective

Respondents were asked to indicate why they decided to attend law school. The three most popular choices were to create career options, to engage in the intellectual challenges of law, and to enter a career in public service.

Why did you attend law school? <i>(Select as many as apply)</i>	Class of 2002
To create career options	32% (71)
To defer making a choice about my career	10% (22)
To engage in the intellectual challenges of law	29% (66)
To enter a career in public service	17% (37)
To establish a lucrative career	9% (20)
Other	3% (8)

The survey asked respondents, “When you began law school, in what area(s) did you envision working five years after you graduated?” Respondents were able to select one or more choices. Close to half the class (48%) selected public service, 18% selected academia, 16% selected law firm practice and 8% selected business. Comparing these responses to where graduates actually work five years after graduation demonstrates that more graduates are in law firms and fewer graduates are in public service than what they planned.

Class of 2002	Where will you work 5 years after graduation? <i>(Select as many as apply)</i>	Actual employment 5 years after graduation
Law Firm	16% (26)	49% (52)
Public Service	48% (80)	26% (28)
Academia	18% (31)	14% (15)
Business	8% (13)	9% (10)
No Idea	10% (17)	N/A