

# Law School Preparedness

## Fall 2023

**Bloomberg Law surveyed more than 2,700 individuals**—practicing attorneys, law students and others—in the legal profession. This unique survey provides insight into the skills needed for practice and how well law schools prepare individuals for a career in the legal profession. Each group was asked about their experiences and opinions from law school through their professional career, giving Bloomberg Law a unique opportunity to understand and compare a wide swath of the legal industry.

*Note: Most results are rounded to the nearest whole number. Throughout this report, “teachers” includes anyone who teaches law students, including some practicing attorneys. “Attorneys” means attorneys who do not teach law students.*

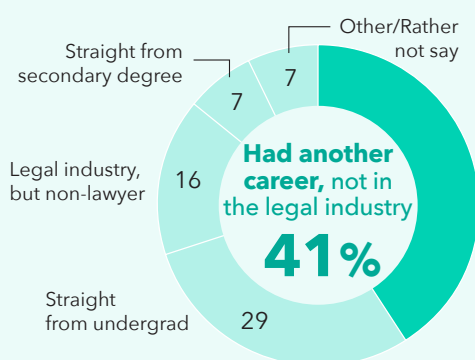


# 1 STARTING THE PROCESS

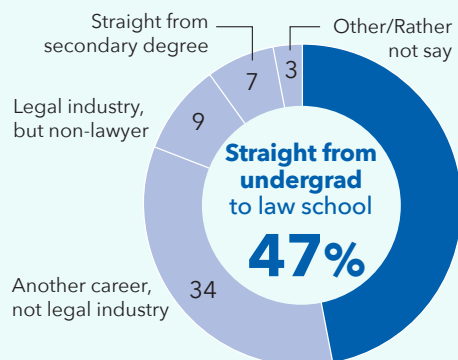
On average, practicing attorneys took 4 years between getting their college (or masters) degree and starting law school; today's students take 6 years. Most current students expect to work as an attorney in a law firm after they graduate—which is also what most attorneys expected when they were in law school. One out of every four students plan to work in public service upon graduation, with 15% planning to specialize in it. Among practicing attorneys, though, only 0.5% cite “public interest/public service” as their current specialty.

## HOW MANY YEARS (on average) after getting your undergrad/masters did you start law school, and WHAT DID YOU DO in the meantime before attending law school?

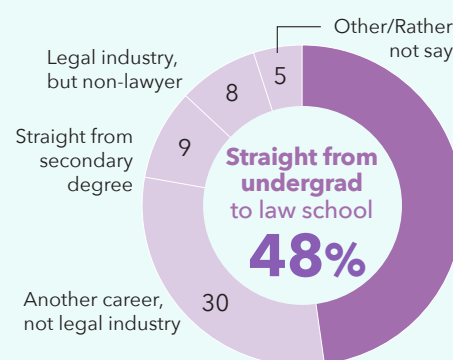
### STUDENTS (6 yrs.)



### ATTORNEYS\* (4 yrs.)



### TEACHERS\* (5 yrs.)



\*“Teachers” includes anyone who teaches law students, including some practicing attorneys. “Attorneys” means attorneys who do not teach law students.

### STUDENTS: “I expect to work...”

...as a practicing attorney at a law firm.	59%
...as a practicing attorney in public service.	24
...as a practicing attorney at a corporation.	6
...in an alternative legal career (law librarian, law professor, faculty, or legal tech)	4
...in some field not listed above	7

### ATTORNEYS: “I expected to work...”

...as a practicing attorney at a law firm.	80%
...as a practicing attorney in public service.	10
...as a practicing attorney at a corporation.	5
...in an alternative legal career (law librarian, law professor, faculty, or legal tech)	1
...in some field not listed above	4

### STUDENTS: “I plan to specialize in...”

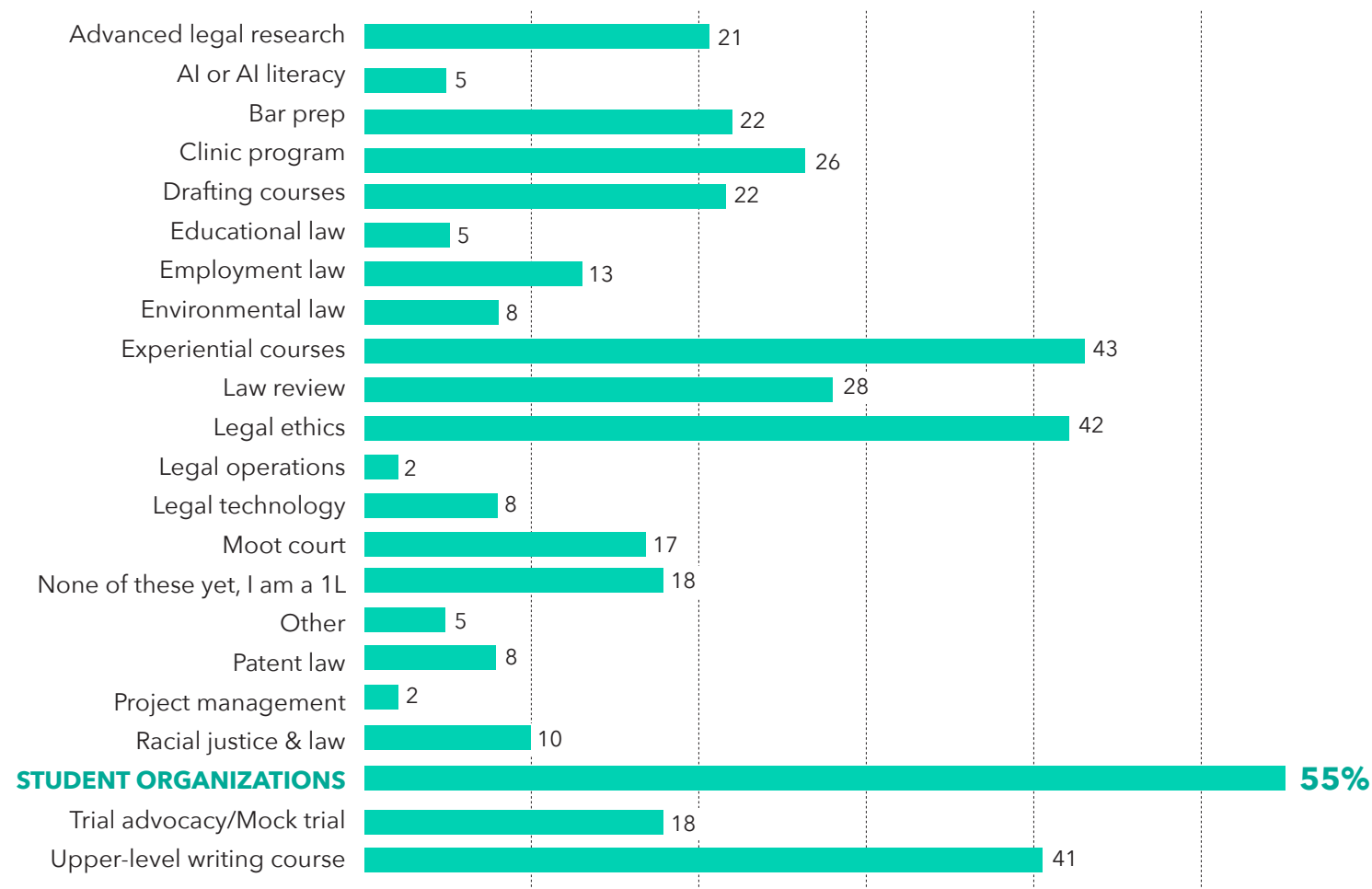
Corporate/Transactional	30%
Litigation/Dispute resolution	29
Public interest/Public service	15
Prosecution/Enforcement & criminal defense	10
Regulatory/Compliance	10
Other	4
Academia	2

### ATTORNEYS: “I now specialize in...”

Litigation/Dispute resolution	42%
Corporate/Transactional	33
Other	13
Regulatory/Compliance	10
Prosecution/Enforcement & criminal defense	2
Public interest/Public service	<1

While at law school, more than half of current students have participated in student organizations. Other well-attended programs include experiential courses, legal ethics, and advanced writing. For current students, 41% had another non-legal career before starting their legal education. Of those students, one out of five reported that their career was in the educational field.

**STUDENTS** Which programs/courses have you **PARTICIPATED IN** as a part of curriculum?



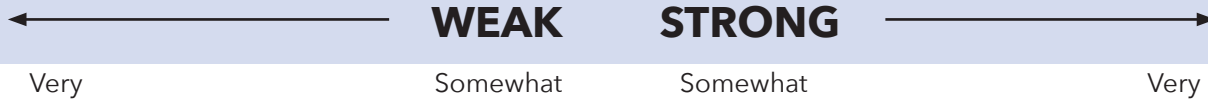
**STUDENTS** Which best describes the **KIND OF WORK** you did before starting law school?

<b>EDUCATION</b>	<b>21%</b>	Nonprofit	12
Other*	18	Technology	11
Government/Politics/Policy	15	Law enforcement/Public service/Military	9
Business/Sales	15	Marketing	8
Finance/Tax/Insurance	14	Hospitality/Entertainment	7
Service Industry/Retail/Food	14	Social work	3
Health/Science	12	Journalism	1

\*Top "other" answers include: Engineering, Farming, Construction, Entertainment, Banking, and Human Resources

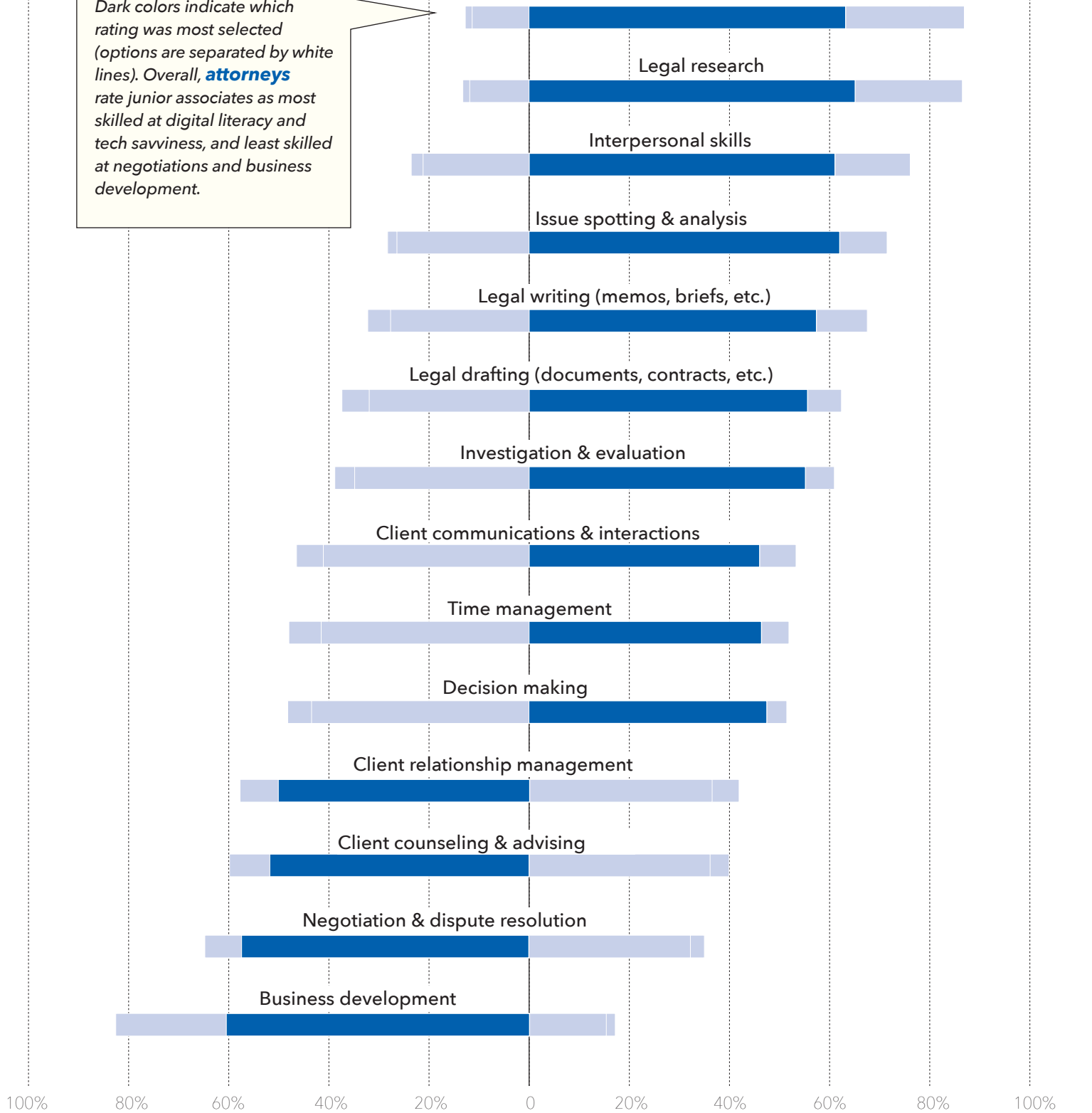
## ATTORNEYS

### How would you rate the skills of the junior associates YOU SUPERVISE?



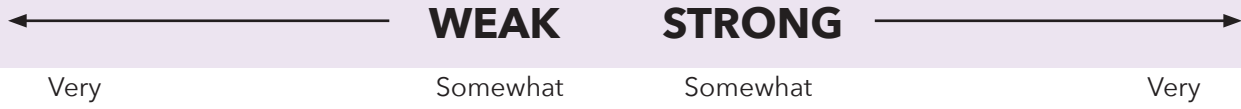
Dark colors indicate which rating was most selected (options are separated by white lines). Overall, **attorneys** rate junior associates as most skilled at digital literacy and tech savviness, and least skilled at negotiations and business development.

### DIGITAL LITERACY / TECH SAVVINESS

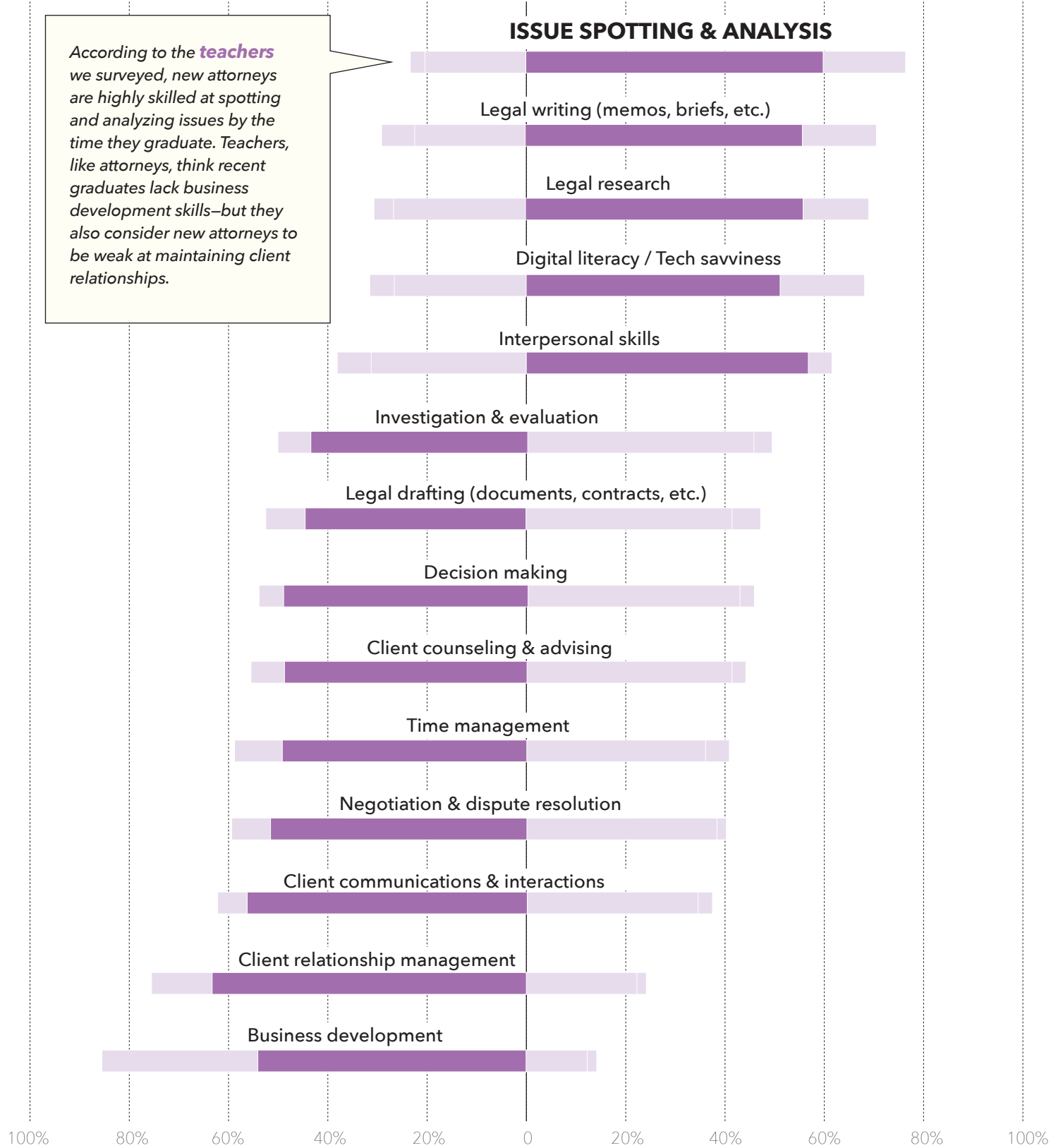


## TEACHERS

### How would you rate the skills of RECENT LAW SCHOOL GRADUATES?



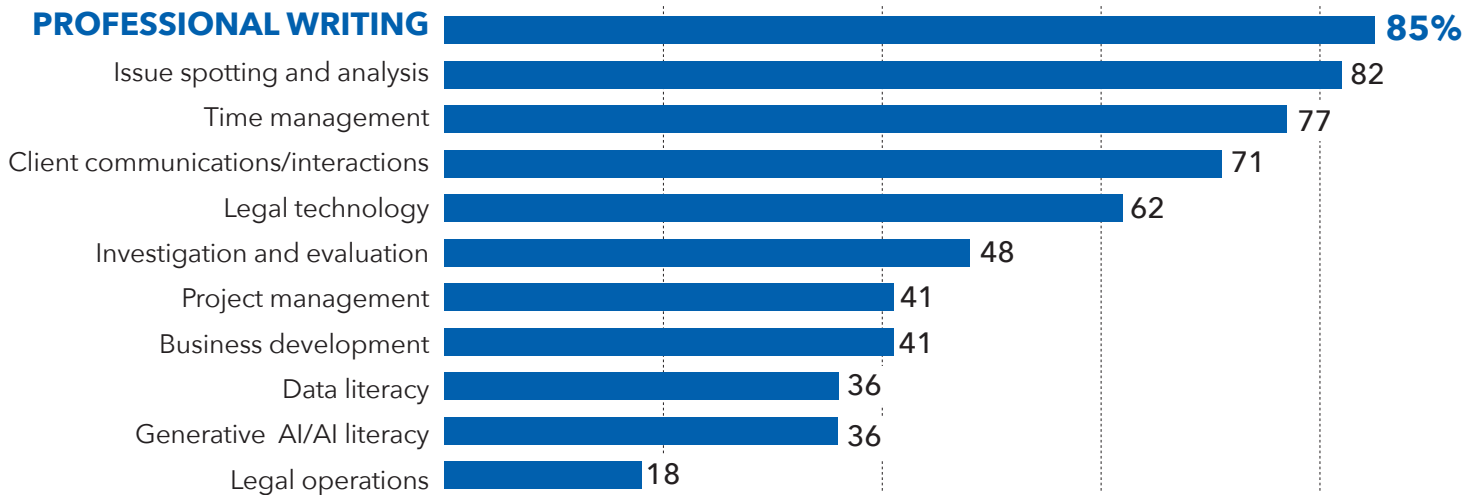
According to the **teachers** we surveyed, new attorneys are highly skilled at spotting and analyzing issues by the time they graduate. Teachers, like attorneys, think recent graduates lack business development skills—but they also consider new attorneys to be weak at maintaining client relationships.



Beyond legal research, most attorneys think junior lawyers need to be skilled at professional writing and issue management. Fortunately, attorneys and teachers rank new lawyers as “somewhat” or “very” skilled in both of these areas (see previous pages). Knowledge of legal tech saw the largest rise in importance for attorneys, with 62% suggesting new lawyers should study legal technology, up from 39% just months ago.

**ATTORNEYS**

Other than traditional legal research, what **SKILLS AND RESOURCES** should new attorneys at least be familiar with before they begin practicing?



**ATTORNEYS**

Of the following, **WHICH TYPES OF CLIENTS** do you work with most often? (Select up to 2)



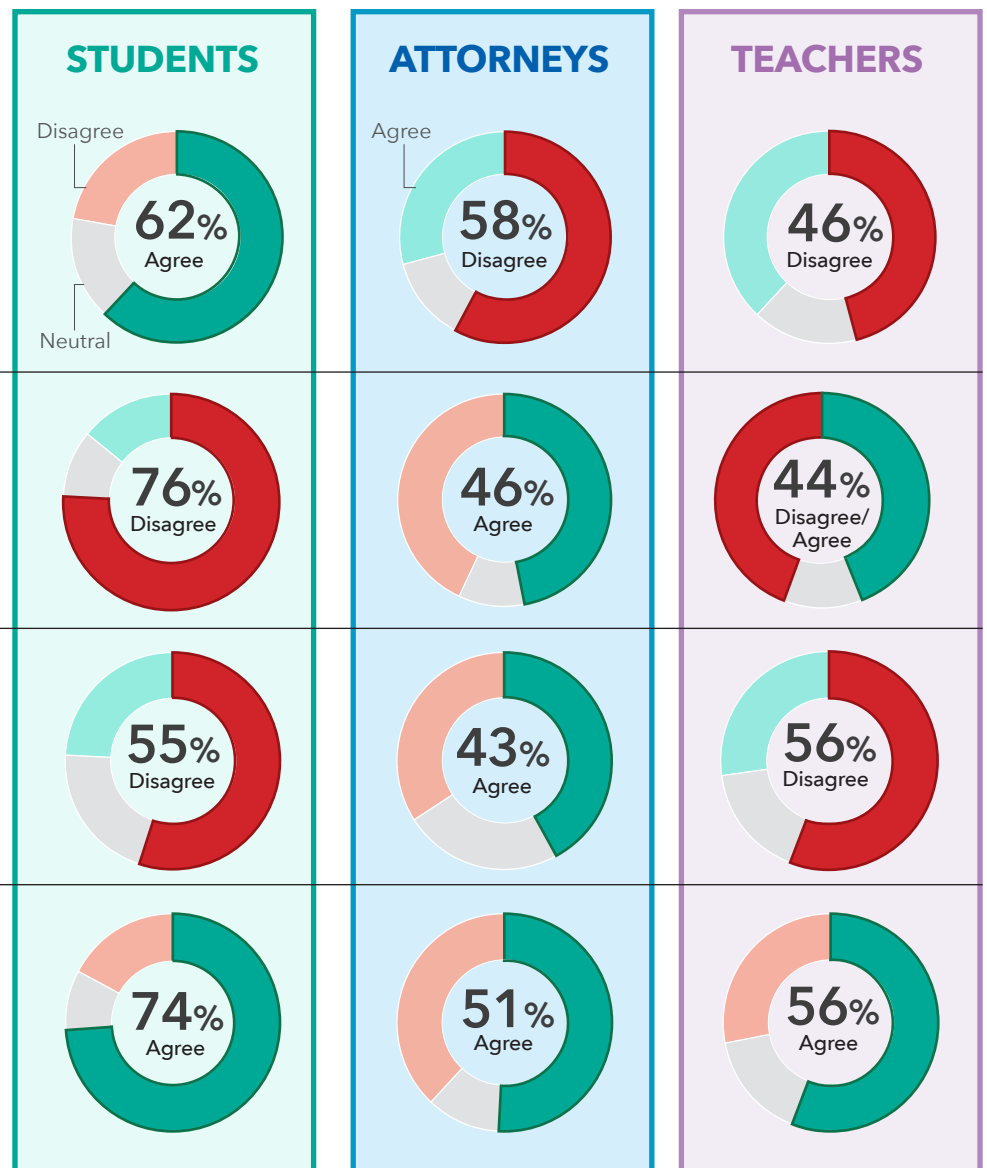
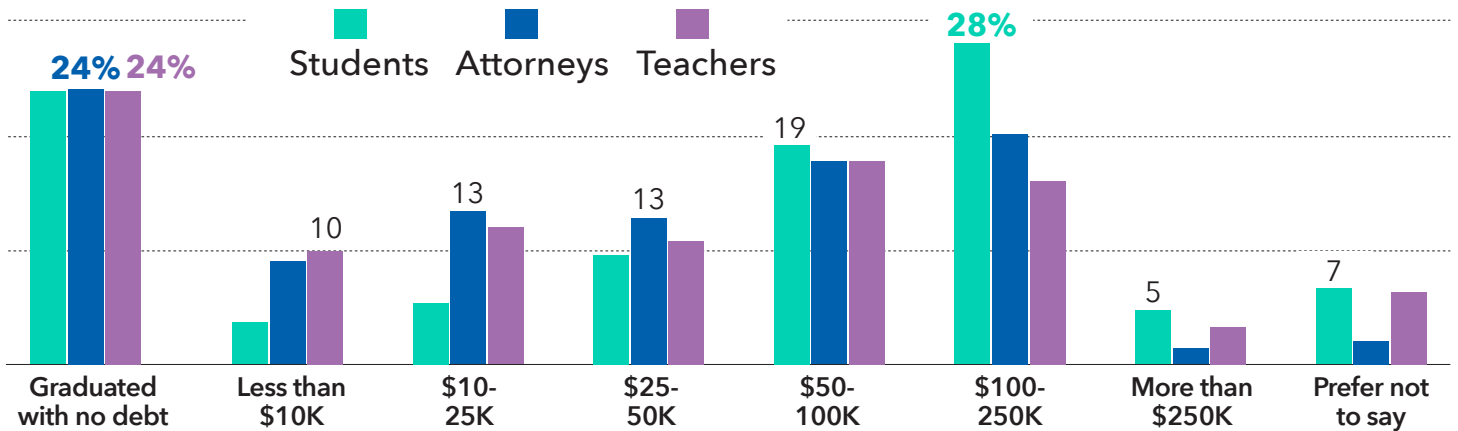
Which of these **DID YOU CONSIDER BEFORE** you took your first job as an attorney?

SALARY	75%
Prestige of the institution	52
Types of clients	49
Work-life balance	36
Internal DEI policies*	7
Pro Bono work	7
None of these	5
ESG policies*	4

\*DEI= Diversity, Equity & Inclusion; ESG=Environmental, Social & Governance

About a quarter of respondents did or will graduate from law school debt-free, though most owe(d) between \$50-250K. The Supreme Court ruling against Biden (which halted the federal student loan forgiveness program) added to stress over student debt, though less stress for attorneys than for students and teachers.

## Upon graduating, HOW MUCH DEBT did you (or will you) owe from law school?

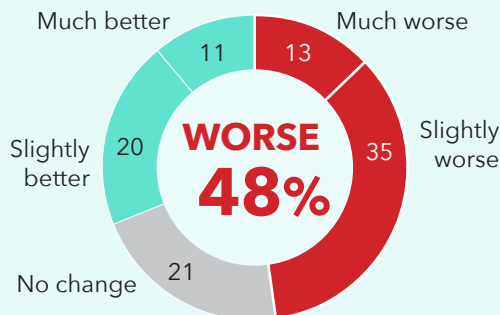




Nearly half of current students describe their overall well-being as having gotten worse since starting law school, with most of them directly relating law school to increased anxiety and trouble sleeping.

## STUDENTS

Since starting law school, how is your **OVERALL WELL-BEING**?



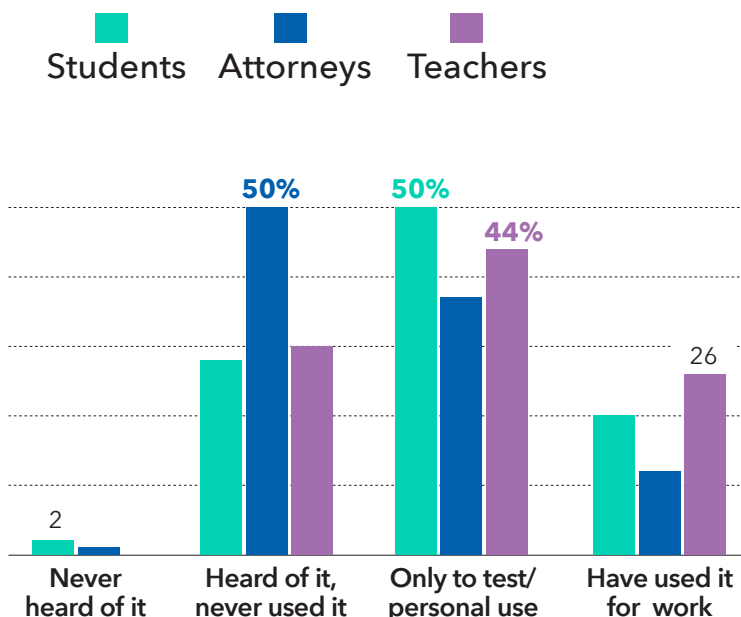
Since starting law school, which of the following **HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED** related to law school issues?

<b>ANXIETY</b>	<b>69%</b>
Disrupted sleep	62
Depression	36
Issues in your personal relationships	32
Physical health issues	29
Increased alcohol usage	21
None of these	14
Thoughts of self-harm	9
Increased drug usage (including meds not prescribed to you)	9
Other/Prefer not to say	5

## ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Not surprisingly, most respondents have at least heard of generative artificial intelligence (Gen AI), and more than 70% support the idea of students learning to use it as part of their legal education. Only 6% of people we surveyed are “strongly opposed” to teaching law students to use Gen AI in their practice.

Which of the following best describes your **EXPERIENCE WITH GEN AI**?



**HOW NECESSARY** is it that students learn AI use during their legal education?  
(All respondents)

<b>I STRONGLY BELIEVE</b> law students should learn AI, as it will benefit their legal career.	<b>42%</b>
I think it's a <b>GOOD IDEA</b> , but not absolutely essential.	30
I'm <b>NEUTRAL</b> ; it's neither necessary nor unnecessary.	9
I'm <b>SOMEWHAT SKEPTICAL</b> about the need for law students to learn AI.	13
<b>I STRONGLY OPPOSE</b> the idea of law students learning to use AI for legal practice.	6

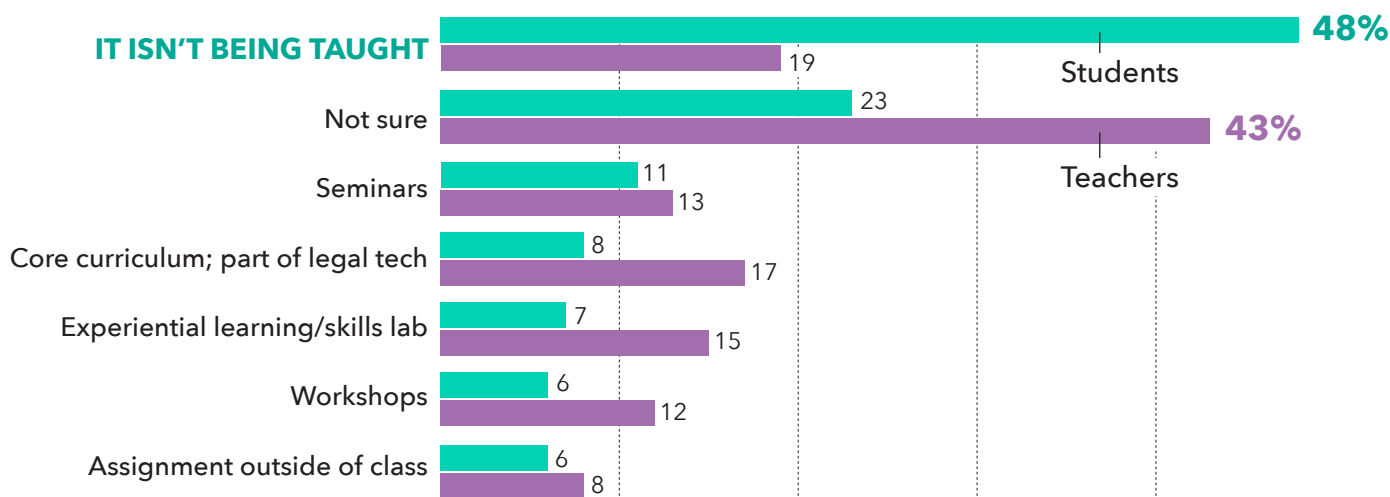


About half of practicing attorneys think law students should learn to use AI for legal research, but most students and teachers don't know whether their school teaches any AI use at all (or are sure that it doesn't).

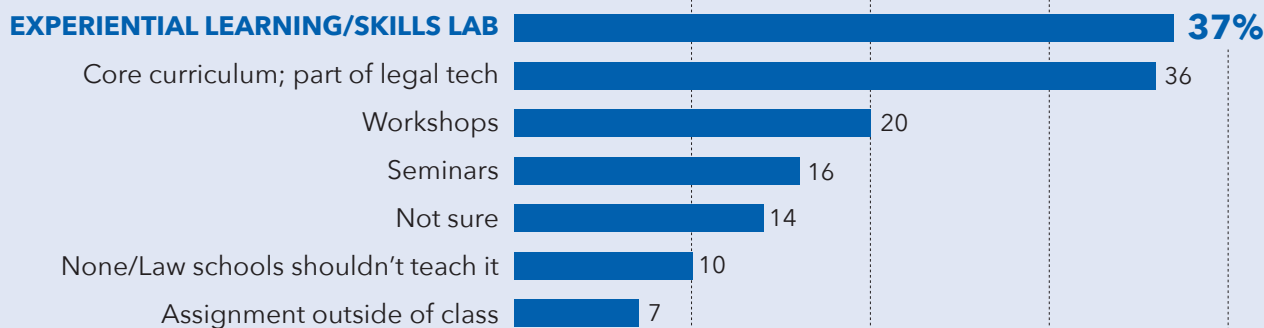
## ATTORNEYS WHICH TASKS should students learn to use AI to help accomplish?

LEGAL RESEARCH IN GENERAL	51%
Review discovery	44
Draft/templating legal contracts	41
Due diligence	38
Drafting/templating correspondence (e.g. memos, emails, correspondence to opposing counsel, etc.)	35
Review legal documents	35
Summarize legal narratives	31
Negotiating/redlining contracts	24
Drafting case filings (pleadings, motions, jury instructions, etc.)	23
Estate planning (wills, trusts, etc.)	17
None of the above	15
Securities filings	11

## HOW IS AI TECH USAGE BEING TAUGHT as part of legal education at your institution?



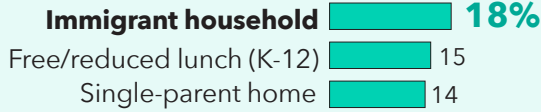
## ATTORNEYS HOW SHOULD AI TECH USAGE BE TAUGHT as part of legal education?



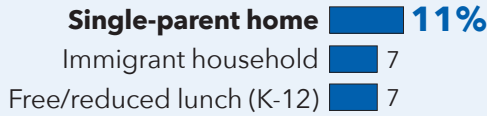
Which of the following applied to **YOUR HOUSEHOLD** growing up?

Were you the first in your family to **ATTEND OR COMPLETE...**

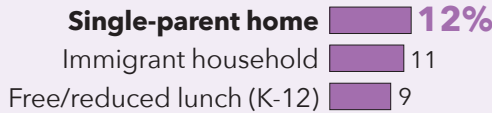
**STUDENTS**



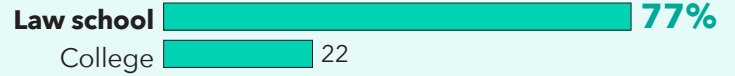
**ATTORNEYS**



**TEACHERS**



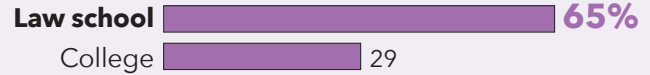
**STUDENTS**



**ATTORNEYS**



**TEACHERS**



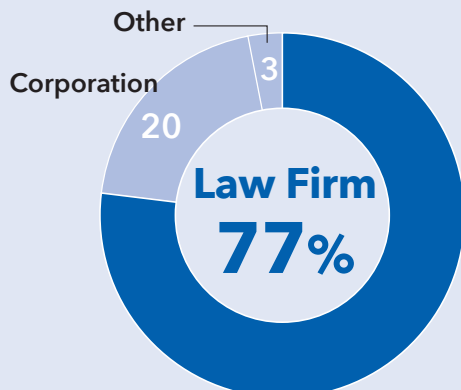
**STUDENTS:** What is your year of **LAW SCHOOL**?



**ATTORNEYS**

The average attorney respondent has been in practice **26 YEARS**.

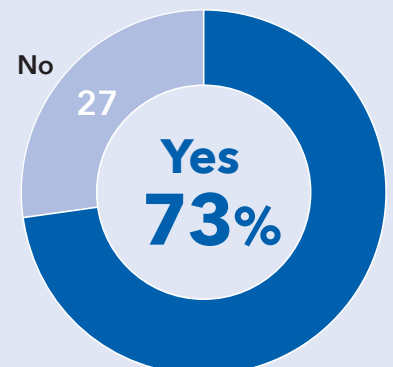
Which best describes your **workplace**?



Which best describes your **professional title**?

<b>Partner</b>	<b>50%</b>
Counsel	9
In-house counsel	8
Associate/Asst. gen. counsel	6
Senior associate	6
General counsel	6
Mid-level associate	5
Attorney	3
Other	3

Do you **manage** junior associates?



## STUDENTS: 31%

## ATTORNEYS: 57%

## TEACHERS: 12%

## Gender

<b>Female</b>	<b>56.9</b>
Male	37.6
Rather not say	3.0
Non-binary	2.5

<b>Male</b>	<b>64.3</b>
Female	32.8
Rather not say	2.5
Non-binary	0.3

<b>Male</b>	<b>52.8</b>
Female	41.0
Rather not say	5.1
Non-binary	1.0

## Race / Ethnicity

<b>White or Caucasian</b>	<b>61.6</b>
Multiracial	13.5
Hispanic, Latino/a/x, or Spanish	7.1
Asian	6.7
Other/Rather not say	5.1
Black or African American	4.5
Middle Eastern or North African	1.1
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0.2
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.2

<b>White or Caucasian</b>	<b>78.4</b>
Other/Rather not say	8.2
Multiracial	4.5
Asian	3.3
Hispanic, Latino/a/x, or Spanish	2.7
Black or African American	1.9
Middle Eastern or North African	0.6
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0.2
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.1

<b>White or Caucasian</b>	<b>71.1</b>
Other/Rather not say	10.3
Multiracial	5.2
Black or African American	5.2
Hispanic, Latino/a/x, or Spanish	3.6
Asian	3.1
American Indian or Alaskan Native	1.0
Middle Eastern or North African	0.5
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0

## Neurodivergence

Are you **neurodivergent**?

<b>No</b>	<b>67.7</b>
Yes	24.7
Rather not say	7.6

Are you **neurodivergent**?

<b>No</b>	<b>88.4</b>
Yes	6.6
Rather not say	5.0

Are you **neurodivergent**?

<b>No</b>	<b>82.6</b>
Yes	9.7
Rather not say	7.7