

SUMMER ASSOCIATES SURVEY

The Annual Rite of Passage Evolves to Address Shifting Times



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BACKGROUND

Law360 Pulse's second annual Summer Associates Survey homes in on the process law students undergo when looking to pair with a firm for a summer associateship, examining their criteria for selecting firms, looking at which firms were the most popular and investigating the on-campus interview experience. We will be revisiting the students to assess their associateship experience in Part II of the survey later this year. The Summer Associates Survey is part of a series of surveys that radically expand the data-driven insights available as part of Law360 Pulse, a news service focused on the business of law.

METHODOLOGY

Law360 Pulse conducted the first part of the Summer Associates Survey from March 7 to April 4, 2022. We received 1,117 responses from law students, of whom 501 were in their 1L year, 375 in their 2L year, 199 in their 3L year, and 42 attending either part-time or only evening classes. Among the participants, 56% were women and 41% were men. Two percent said they preferred not to disclose their gender and 1% identified as nonbinary. The survey was anonymous and will not connect any individual response with any person.

INTRODUCTION

By CRAIG SAVITZKY

Law360 Pulse

fter nearly three years of disruptions, are law firm summer programs finally ebbing closer to the way things were before COVID-19? Will the Zoom happy hours finally be swapped out for actual bar stools? The data collected from our second foray into the world of would-be associates facing the arduous process of applying for a prized summer associateship seems to indicate so, to an extent.

Proportionately fewer respondents reported that all their interviews were taking place remotely this year – 69%, compared with 82% last year. Only 13% said the pandemic was a big hindrance to their ability to network, compared with 30% in 2021. And a slightly higher share of the participants – 16% – said COVID-19 was no hindrance, compared with 9% last year.

A deeper dive suggests that firms are reading the tea leaves of the zeitgeist and shedding their time-tested ways of doing business in favor of a more flexible model. This effort seems to be driven by the desire to accommodate a generation eager to be "virtualized," and to combat the lingering fluidity of COVID-era policies, by the business benefits of a workforce not bound by geography and by the fiscal nimbleness that comes about as a result of decentralizing a physical footprint. Nearly two-fifths – 37% – of respondents encountered firms that would allow them to report from

a different city than where the associateship was based.

Responses to questions about start dates and how firms treated their attorneys show students were paying attention to how firms reacted on the fly, with one participant listing pandemic-induced lower pay rates and start-date delays as features that would distinguish a firm. In 2021, 24% of students said associateships were shortened and 13% said pay was decreased, whereas only 5% reported shortened associateships and 3% noted a decrease in pay in 2022.

This year's survey also contains stipend data for the first time. Some students openly griped about the compensation they were offered when it was juxtaposed against law school debt. "I am paying a hefty sum for this education, but some firms only offer \$15/hr. I could get that at Target. My first choice was the firm/company that was going to pay \$33/hr. Consider requiring at least \$20/hr for the law field," one respondent said. In the competitive landscape of BigLaw one-upmanship, it will be interesting to observe whether prospective associates seize leverage and the programs become a theater for the next round of pay wars, akin to what has happened in the midlevel associate market.

We will continue to follow these trends and, we hope, unearth new ones, in the second installment of the survey, which is set to go out in late summer and will explore students' social and work experiences at firms.

AT THE VANGUARD

Kirkland & Ellis LLP leapfrogged last year's winner, Latham & Watkins LLP, to become law students' choice for the most desirable firm of 2022, completing a clean sweep of all three of this year's rankings, which also included firms' ability to market themselves and the most mentions for on-campus interviews. Among those who mentioned the firm by name, one student noted Kirkland "provided extra opportunities for students to get to know the lawyers and all of the areas in which they work," and that the firm "seemed more transparent about their company than other major law firms." Another praised Kirkland's open assignment system and "continued growth over the past several years."

Vinson & Elkins LLP saw the biggest rise from last year's list of students' top-choice firms, rising 19 positions to reach the top 20. O'Melveny & Myers LLP, one of the top 10 firms last year, slid 19 spots to 26th.

Vinson & Elkins also featured the most impressive rank change in the "best at marketing" category, ascending 28 spots from 2021. Among the firms participants singled out, but which do not appear on the 30 most mentioned, Knobbe Martens was cited by one student as "the only firm that interested me (prestigious; does patent prosecution/litigation). It just didn't need to distinguish itself." And Millbank LLP garnered praise for collegiality; its atmosphere, one student said, "set it apart from the others."

Kirkland's dominance extended to on-campus interview bids – the firm received 30 more mentions than Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP, which jumped five spots this year to overtake Latham for No. 2. Akin Gump received high marks from one participant as a firm that is "incredibly accomplished, yet down to earth. I loved speaking with their panelists and truly enjoyed my interview." In the category of most OCI bids, Baker Botts got the biggest year-over-year bump, climbing 24 spots to crack the top 10. Hogan Lovells experienced the longest free fall, plunging 27 slots to finish in a tie for 46th.



If you could choose to do your summer associateship program at any law firm, which would be your top three firms?

RANK	FIRM	MENTIONS	2021 RANK	RANK CHANGE
1	Kirkland	92	2	+1
2	Latham	85	1	-1
3	Cooley	58	5	+2
4	Skadden	55	3	-1
5	Sidley	46	10	+5
6	Cravath	36	8	+2
7	White & Case	33	15	+8
7	WilmerHale	33	23	+16
9	Gibson Dunn	32	4	-5
10	Covington	30	6	-4
10	Wachtell	30	19	+9
12	Morgan Lewis	28	28	+16
12	Ropes & Gray	28	18	+6
14	Morrison Foerster	27	20	+6
15	Wilson Sonsini	26	26	+11
16	Davis Polk	25	12	-4
16	Vinson & Elkins	25	35	+19
18	Hogan Lovells	24	28	+10
18	Perkins Coie	24	13	-5
20	Goodwin	23	23	+3
20	Greenberg Traurig	23	35	+15
22	Sullivan & Cromwell	22	16	-6
23	Akin Gump	21	8	-15
23	Holland & Knight	21	38	+15
23	McDermott	21	51	+28
26	Cleary	20	13	-13
26	Jones Day	20	11	-15
26	O'Melveny	20	7	-19
29	Husch Blackwell	18	70	+41
29	Paul Weiss	18	25	-4
31	King & Spalding	16	44	+13
31	Mayer Brown	16	47	+16
31	Simpson Thacher	16	48	+17



Which firms really stood out to you in terms of marketing their summer programs?

RANK	FIRM	MENTIONS	2021 RANK	RANK CHANGE
1	Kirkland	65	2	+1
2	Latham	54	1	-1
3	Skadden	38	10	+7
4	Cooley	24	5	+1
4	Sidley	24	8	+4
6	Goodwin	23	25	+19
7	Morrison Foerster	22	11	+4
7	White & Case	22	11	+4
9	Akin Gump	21	3	-6
9	Perkins Coie	21	22	+14
9	Ropes & Gray	21	6	-2
9	Vinson & Elkins	21	37	+29
13	Jones Day	20	7	-5
14	Gibson Dunn	18	15	+1
14	Reed Smith	18	32	+18
14	Wilson Sonsini	18	22	+8
17	Haynes and Boone	15	26	+9
17	Morgan Lewis	15	8	-9
19	McDermott	13	*	-
19	Simpson Thacher	13	26 +7	
21	Baker Botts	12	20 -1	
21	Davis Polk	12	17	-4
23	Holland & Knight	11	49	+26
23	O'Melveny	11	4	-19
23	Orrick	11	*	-
23	Winston & Strawn	11	37	+14
27	Covington	10	19	-8
27	Jackson Walker	10	*	-
27	Norton Rose Fulbright	10	*	-
27	Proskauer	10	*	-
27	Troutman Pepper	10	*	-
27	Weil	10	14	-13

^{*} Firm did not rank in the top 50 in 2021



Which firms did you list in your on-campus interviewing bidding (OCI)? (Firms with 100 or more mentions)

RANK	FIRM	MENTIONS	2021 RANK	RANK CHANGE
1	Kirkland	188	1	0
2	Akin Gump	158	7	+5
3	Latham	155	2	-1
4	Jones Day	154	9	+5
5	Sidley	134	3	-2
6	Cooley	133	4	-2
6	Ropes & Gray	133	5	-1
8	Baker McKenzie	128	26	+18
9	Skadden	126	6	-3
10	Baker Botts	124	34	+24
11	DLA Piper	120	11	0
12	Holland & Knight	116	25	+13
13	Goodwin	113	16	+3
13	Morgan Lewis	113	8	-5
15	Morrison Foerster	112	18	+3
15	White & Case	112	12	-3
17	Arnold & Porter	108	15	-2
18	K&L Gates	107	29	+11
19	Davis Polk	105	17	-2
20	Paul Hastings	101	12	-8
21	Gibson Dunn	100	10	-11

ANATOMY OF A DECISION

Students report applying to an average of 17 firms in the quest to nab an associateship. Of the firms they bid on in OCI, students were granted an average of 4.7 interviews during early interview week. The average overall success rate for students seeking on-campus interviews during early

interview week was 34%. Close to a third – 30% – of all participating students reported being granted zero interviews. At 83%, "practice areas available" had the highest percentage of "important" selections among criteria that affect the choice of a law firm for a summer associateship.

"Alternative career track" was selected as the least important with 52%. Just over two thirds of participants – 68% – said they had little to no reliance on professors to guide them through the selection process.

How many firms did you apply to?

16.6

10 MEDIAN

How many of those firms granted you an interview during early interview week?

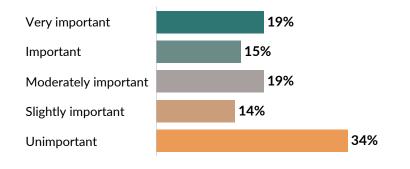
4.7

MEDIAN

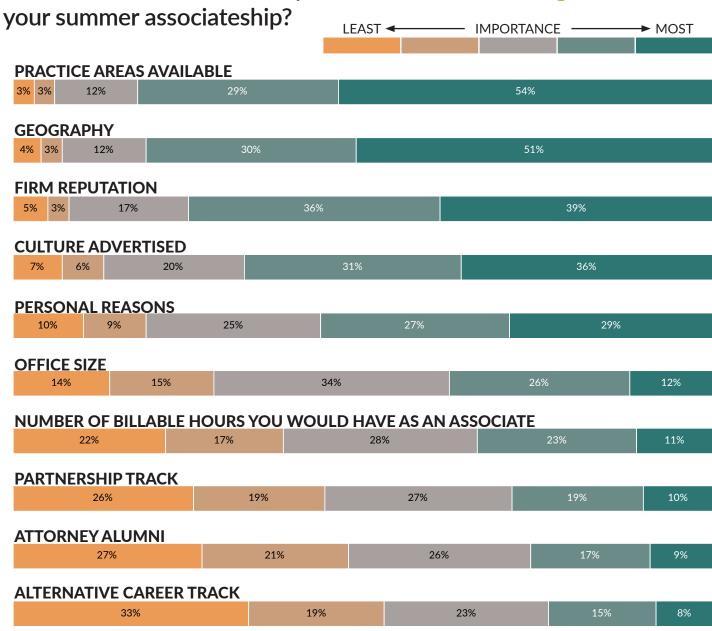




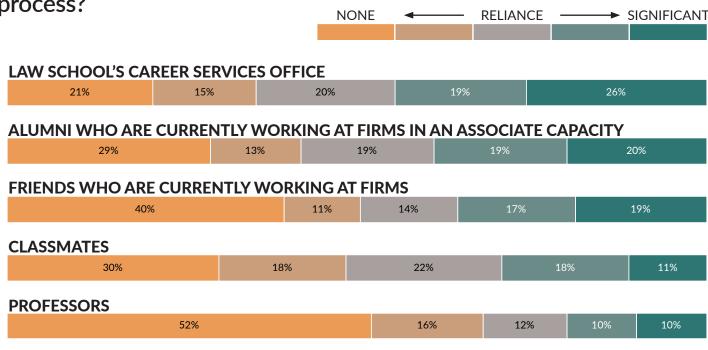
How important is it for you to have the **option to report virtually** to your associateship and not have to relocate to a different city?



Which criteria factored into your decision for choosing a law firm for your summer associateshin?



Whom did you rely on to guide you through the law firm selection process?

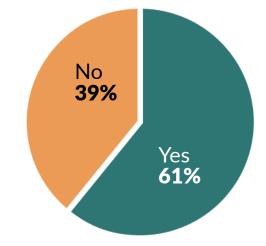


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EQUIPPED WITH THE RIGHT TOOLS

Sixty-one percent said their schools helped them prepare by staging mock interviews. The vast majority of students are relying on firm websites to research different programs. In addition, established resources like Vault, the National Association Law Placement and Chambers bested several prominent legal media outlets in popularity for their searches, perhaps in some part due to cost-prohibitive subscription rates.

Did your law school prepare you with any mock summer interviews?



Which of the following resources did you use to help inform your decision?

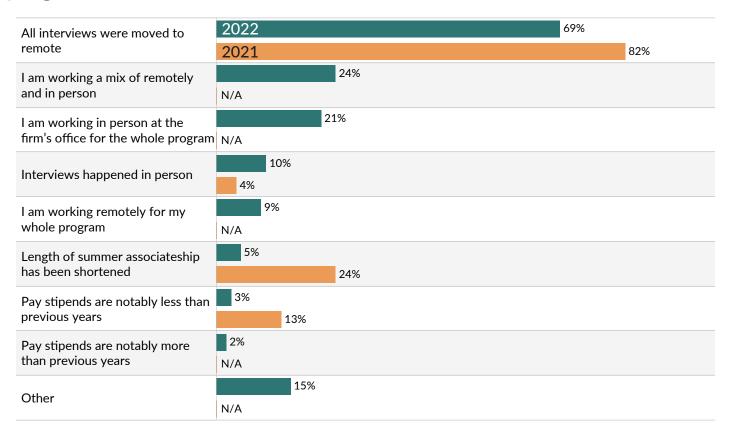


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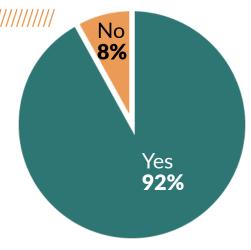
COVID RECEDES INTO THE BACKGROUND

Proportionately fewer respondents reported that all their interviews were taking place remotely this year – 69%, compared with 82% last year. Only 13% said the pandemic was a big hindrance to their ability to network, compared with 30% in 2021. A slightly higher share of the participants – 16% – said COVID-19 was no hindrance, compared with 9% last year. And a whopping 92% are willing to report to their associateship in person if asked.

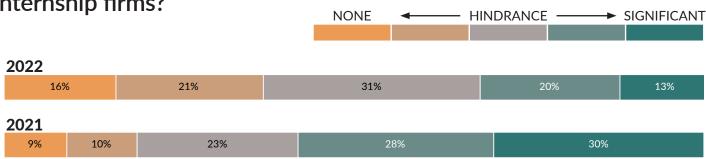
Has the **COVID-19 pandemic affected** your summer associateship programs, and how?



If given the option to report to an office for your 2022 summer internship, will you do so?



On a scale of 1 to 5, how much would you say COVID-19 has hindered your ability to network with attorneys at potential internship firms?



WHAT FIRMS ARE OFFERING

On the plus side, nearly two-fifths of participants - 37% - encountered firms that would allow them to report virtually from a different city than where the associateship was based. However, of the 49% who identified as a minority, 43% believed they

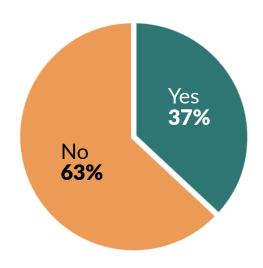
had been the recipient of an interview intended to satisfy a quota, when the firm had little or no intention of bringing them on board. Comments revealed the importance students placed on diversity. Sidley Austin LLP "actually asked me about my diversity statement," one student reported. Another said of Perkins Coie LLP, the firm "talked a lot about diversity and the programs, instead of just asking me a lot of behavioral questions."

How much are you being paid for your summer associateship?

\$35,232 \$32,850



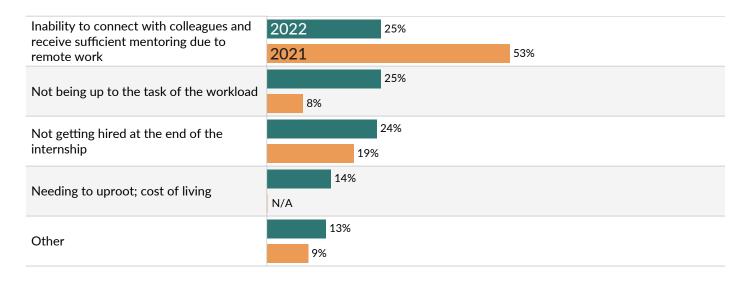
While interviewing, did you encounter any firms that would allow you to report virtually from a different city than where the associateship is based?



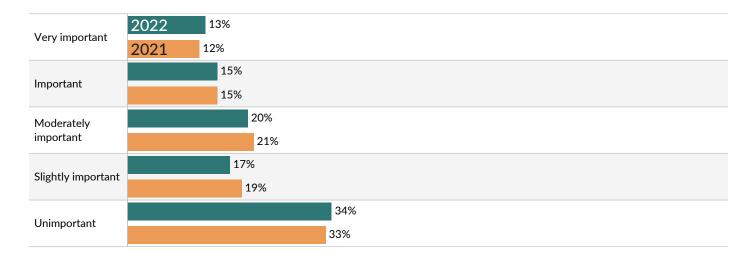
If you identify as a minority, do you believe that you have ever been the recipient of an **interview intended to satisfy a quota**, when the firm had little or no intention of bringing you on board?



What is your biggest concern going into your summer internship?



How important is a firm's **track record on climate change** — either climate advocacy or defending entities considered climate bad actors — in your decision?



LAW SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

Six law schools had a 50% or better success rate at students landing interviews, led by Harvard with a stellar 66%. New York University had the highest average number of interviews per student landed by participating members of its student body.

RANK	LAW SCHOOL	SURVEY PARTICIPANTS FROM SCHOOL	AVERAGE INTERVIEWS LANDED	OCI/EIW SUCCESS RATE
1	Harvard University	19	12.41	66
2	Columbia University	10	14.00	61
3	New York University	22	15.65	58
4	University of California – Los Angeles	14	12.64	54
5	University of California - Berkeley	20	8.00	53
6	University of Michigan – Ann Arbor	10	10.00	48
6	University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill	13	5.23	48
8	Boston College	12	7.73	45
8	University of Buffalo (SUNY)	13	3.60	45
10	University of Pennsylvania (Carey)	21	9.72	41
11	Georgetown University	25	5.92	40
12	Wake Forest University	10	3.90	39
13	University of Connecticut	10	4.90	38
14	Southern University Law Center	11	0.55	37
15	Fordham University	18	10.75	36
16	American University (Washington)	11	6.90	35
17	University of Washington	10	6.44	31
18	University of Virginia	26	12.58	30
18	Washington University in St. Louis	19	2.56	30
20	Emory University	10	7.20	29
20	Loyola University Chicago	15	2.69	29
20	University of Houston	10	6.20	29
23	Brooklyn Law School	13	5.27	28
23	University of Florida (Levin)	11	3.10	28
23	University of Miami	13	3.69	28
26	Arizona State University (O'Connor)	15	4.64	26
26	University of Texas - Austin	20	7.18	26
28	George Washington University	23	7.71	25
29	South Texas College of Law	10	1.11	23
29	University of New Hampshire (Pierce)	11	4.44	23

PRACTICE AREA TRENDS

Corporate law was the most coveted practice area for students in 2022. Intellectual property

law jumped ahead of general litigation for the second spot. Trial law rose 2 percentage points from last year. Some students said they based their OCI selections on which practice areas firms had available. For one respondent, IP boutique Merchant & Gould PC was "my top choice because of their status in the intellectual property field."

At this point in your law school career, what practice area do you see yourself going into?

PRACTICE AREA	2022	2021	Change
Corporate	14%	16%	-2
Intellectual Property	12%	10%	+2
General Litigation	9%	13%	-4
Trials	6%	4%	+2
Employment	5%	4%	+1
Mergers & Acquisitions	5%	5%	0
Real Estate	5%	4%	+1
Appellate	4%	4%	0
White Collar	4%	4%	0
Health Care	3%	4%	-1
Tax	3%	3%	0
Capital Markets	2%	2%	0
Cybersecurity & Privacy	2%	2%	0
Energy	2%	1%	+1
Environmental	2%	2%	0
Immigration	2%	2%	0
Media & Entertainment	2%	2%	0
Sports & Betting	2%	1%	+1
Technology	2%	2%	0
Banking	1%	1%	0
Bankruptcy	1%	2%	-1
Class Action	1%	1%	0
Commercial Contracts	1%	1%	0
Government Contracts	1%	2%	-1
Insurance	1%	-	-
International Arbitration	1%	2%	-1
International Trade	1%	1%	0
Personal Injury and Medical Malpractice	1%	-	-
Private Equity	1%	2%	-1
Securities	1%	1%	0

MEET THE TEAM



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QUESTIONNAIRE

- Q1: What year of law school are you in?
 - » 1L
 - » 2L
 - » 3L
 - » 4L (part-time)
 - » Evening student
- **Q2:** What law school are you attending?
 - » Students were presented with a drop-down menu of the top 200 law schools in the 2022 U.S. News & World Report and an option for "other" to fill in.
- Q3: How many firms did you apply to?
 - » Enter a number
- **Q4:** Which firms did you list in your on campus interviewing bidding?
 - » Students filled in the names of firms.
- **Q5:** How many of those firms granted you an interview during early interview week?
 - » Enter a number
- **Q6:** How did the firm you listed as the top choice in your bidding distinguish itself from the others you interviewed with?
- **Q7:** Which criteria factored into your decision for choosing a law firm for your summer associateship?
 - » Select one for each option
- 1 (least important) » 2
- » 3
- » 4
- » 5 (most important)

- » Geography
- » Practice areas available
- » Firm reputation
- » Culture advertised
- » Partnership track
- » Alternative career track
- » Attorney alumni
- » Office size
- » Number of billable hours you would have as an associate
- » Personal reasons

Q8: If you could choose to do your summer associateship program at any law firm, which would be your top three firms?

- » Select up to three
- » Students filled in the names of firms.

Q9: Whom did you rely on to guide you through the law firm selection process?

- » Select one for each option
- 1 (least reliant)
- » 2 » 3
- 1 »5 (most reliant)

- » Professors
- » Classmates
- » Alumni who are currently working at firms
- » Friends who are currently working at firms
- » Law school's career services office

Q10: Did your law school prepare you with any mock summer interviews?

- » Select one
- » Yes
- » No

Q11: Which of the following resources did you use to help inform your decision?

- » Select all that apply
- » Firm websites
- » NALP
- » Chambers Associate
- » Vault
- » Law360
- » Law360 Pulse
- » Law360 Tax Authority
- » The Deal Pipeline
- » American Lawyer Law.com
- » Law.com
- » AM Law Litigation Daily
- » Legal Intelligencer
- » Bloomberg Law
- » Bloomberg BNA
- » Above the Law
- » ABA Journal
- » LexBlog
- » National Law Journal Law.com
- » Thomson Reuters

- » JD Supra
- » How Appealing
- » SCOTUSblog
- » Legaltech News
- » New York Law Journal
- » The Recorder
- » Connecticut Law Tribune
- » Daily Business Review
- » Daily Report Online
- » Delaware Business Court Insider
- » Delaware Law Weekly
- » New Jersey Law Journal
- » Texas Lawyer
- » Supreme Court Brief
- » The Litigation Daily
- » JURIST News Legal News & Commentary
- » National Law Journal
- » Other (please specify)

Q12: How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected the summer associateship programs so far?

- » Select all that apply
- » All interviews were moved to remote
- » Interviews happened in person
- » Length of summer associateship has been shortened
- » I am working remotely for my whole program
- » I am working a mix of remotely and in person
- » I am working in person at the firm's office for the whole program
- » Pay stipends are notably less than previous years
- » Pay stipends are notably more than previous years

Q13: On a scale of 1 to 5, how much would you say COVID-19 has hindered your ability to network with attorneys at potential internship firms?

» 1 (no hindrance) » 2 » 3 » 4 »5 (big hindrance)

Q14: What is your biggest concern going into your summer internship?

- » Select one
- » Inability to connect with colleagues and receive sufficient mentoring due to remote work
- » Not being up to the task of the workload
- » Not getting hired at the end of the internship
- » Needing to uproot; cost of living
- » Other (please specify)

Q15: If given the option to report to an office for your 2022 summer internship, will you do so?

- » Select one
- » Yes
- » No, I prefer not to work at an office for my internship, even after the pandemic is effectively over

Q16: While interviewing, did you encounter any firms that would allow you to report virtually from a different city than where the associateship is based?

- » Select one
- » Yes
- » No

Q17: How important is it for you to have the option to report virtually to your associateship and not have to relocate to a different city?

- » Select one
- » Very important
- » Important
- » Moderately important
- » Slightly important
- » Unimportant

Q18: If you identify as a minority, do you believe that you have ever been the recipient of an interview intended to satisfy a quota, when the firm had little or no intention of bringing you on board?

- » Select one
- » Yes
- » No
- » Not applicable

Q19: Which firms really stood out to you in terms of marketing their summer programs?

- » Select up to three
- » Students filled in the names of firms.

Q20: How important is a firm's track record on climate change — either climate advocacy or defending entities considered climate bad actors — in your decision?

- » Select one
- » Very Important
- » Important
- » Moderately Important
- » Slightly Important
- » Unimportant

Q21: If you didn't get a summer associateship this season, what is your backup plan?

» Be specific

Q22: At this point in your law school career, what practice area do you see yourself going into?

- » Select one
- » Other (please specify)
- » Aerospace & Defense
- » Appellate
- » Asset Management
- » Banking
- » Bankruptcy
- » Benefits
- » Capital Markets
- » Class Action
- » Commercial Contracts
- » Corporate
- » Cybersecurity & Privacy
- » Employment
- » Energy
- » Environmental
- » Fintech
- » Food & Beverage
- » General Litigation
- » Government Contracts
- » Health Care
- » Hospitality

- » Immigration
- » Insurance
- » Intellectual Property
- » International Arbitration
- » International Trade
- » Media & Entertainment
- » Mergers & Acquisitions
- » Native American
- » Personal Injury and Medical Malpractice
- » Private Equity
- » Product Liability
- » Project Finance
- » Real Estate
- » Retail & E-Commerce
- » Securities
- » Sports & Betting
- » Tax
- » Technology
- » Telecommunications
- » Transportation
- » Trials
- » White Collar

Q23: What is your gender?

- » Male
- » Female
- » Nonbinary
- » Prefer not to identify

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