



SUMMER ASSOCIATES SURVEY: PART 2

Fun Mounts a Comeback



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BACKGROUND

Law360 Pulse surveyed law students earlier this year about their preferences for summer associateship programs. Now we're checking back in to see how those programs went. Last year in this survey, we found that summer associates largely gave firms high marks on virtual programs. This year firms were outfitted to welcome back students en masse, and we'll look at how reporting structures have evolved now that more programs are taking place in person. We'll also hear from students about whether they were able to hone their legal skills at the summer associate programs they attended, getting real world assignments and shadowing firm lawyers. In addition, we'll examine just how creative law firms got with their social events, now that many of the pandemic-related constraints have been lifted.

METHODOLOGY

Law360 Pulse conducted the second part of the Summer Associates Survey from June 15 to Aug. 8, 2022. We received 670 responses from 1Ls, 2Ls and 3Ls, as well as part-time and evening students. Participants were required to identify the organizations where they were completing their summer associate programs. The survey was anonymous and will not connect any individual response with any person. Respondents were given the option to volunteer their information for interviews.

INTRODUCTION

By **CRAIG SAVITZKY**

Law360 Pulse

The second installment of our annual Summer Associates survey checked back in with the same student base that only months prior had undertaken the highly competitive process of procuring a summer associateship at a law firm. Questions this time around were focused on whether law schools adequately prepared them for the tasks expected, how firm expectations were evolving, if pandemic-related cultural shifts have now become entrenched, and how those might be affecting students' ability to socialize as well as their outlook on hiring.

When we last touched base with the 2021 summer class, they were just starting to see the light at the end of the COVID-induced tunnel that had hampered mentorship and robbed them of key in-person exposure to courtrooms and other relevant settings. For this year's crop of would-be bar takers, the landscape appears just as fraught, with a looming recession and conflict in Eastern Europe, and with crippling inflationary pressures casting gloom over jobs and housing, and at the pump. Still, some optimism prevailed in firms' efforts to court the young and forward-thinking talent they will need to bring law firm structures in line with contemporary business wisdom. This year's survey debuted two new areas of concentration where firms are allocating training capital. Firms are now integrating technology and innovation into their summer programs. Staid thinking about what constitutes a holistic law practice is no longer sufficient. What areas are firms focused on with tech for their summers? What do

they see as the most important skills for newly minted lawyers to have? Practice management, case management and legal analytics may represent a part of that window into the future, as they are now taught to more than 40% of participants. That said, even as innovation seems to be gaining ground, 84% of participants said there was no skill requirement that included giving them the opportunity to create tools to automate workflow, and a scant 20% received software training in contract life cycle management.

We saw a huge increase in people doing their internships entirely in person, more than double the percentage of last year — though this was still only about two-thirds of all survey takers. However, the fact that 46% categorized their program as “super fun” — almost 19 percentage points more than last year — indicates there is value in sharing an office and that camaraderie can be hindered by being limited to congregating virtually.

Ropes & Gray LLP emerged as this year's winner among associates rating their summer programs, boasting a perfect score out of 7 participants and dethroning the incumbent No. 1, Morrison Foerster LLP. Dechert LLP, Alston & Bird LLP and Skadden Arps Meagher Slate & Flom LLP rounded out the top five. And Latham & Watkins LLP saw the biggest leap among qualifying firms, up 13 spots from last year.

After three years of tailoring summer programs to meet the challenges of the COVID-19, firms seem to be back to a dual track of contending with the aftermath of the public health crisis and grappling with future planning. Students are adjusting admirably, while staring down genuine concerns about their hiring prospects.

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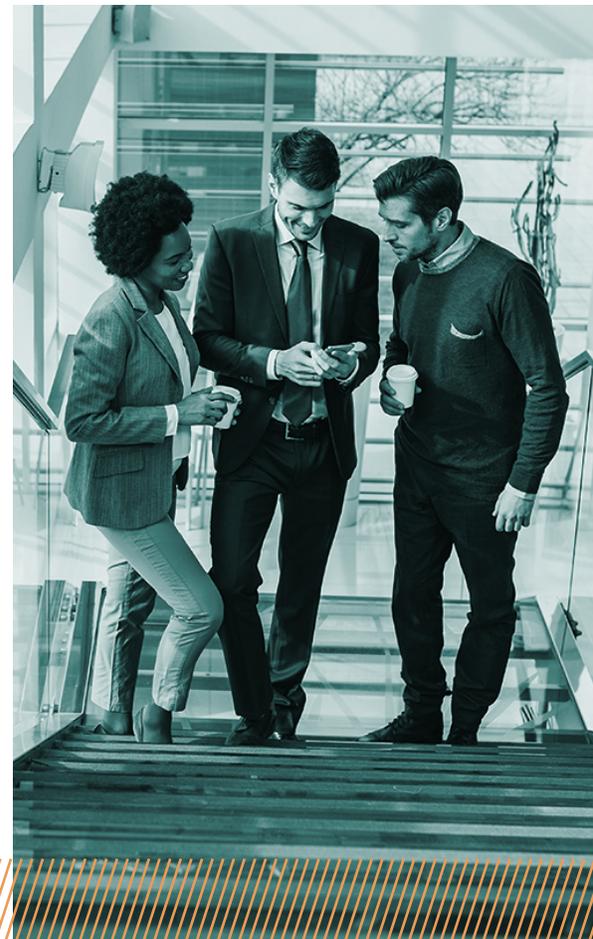
THE TOP FIRMS FOR SUMMER ASSOCIATES

The vast majority of summers felt firms had performed well, with more than 85% responding affirmatively to four key questions about their associateship experience. The 20 firms on our list were at the vanguard in the critical areas the

questions sought to cover: confidence-building, networking and mentorship, compensation and fun programming.

To make the list, firms had to meet a minimum threshold of five participants. Firm scores were derived from four satisfaction questions with a 1–5 rating scale, with five representing the most satisfied and one the least. The scores were averaged, with a higher numerical score representing better satisfaction in each instance.

RANK	FIRM NAME	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	SCORE
1	Ropes & Gray	7	5
2	Morrison Foerster	9	4.97
3	Dechert	5	4.96
4	Alston & Bird	5	4.9
4	Skadden	5	4.9
6	Winston & Strawn	6	4.88
7	Kirkland	13	4.85
8	Cooley	6	4.83
9	Husch Blackwell	7	4.82
10	Paul Weiss	5	4.8
10	Pillsbury	5	4.8
12	Akin Gump	7	4.75
12	Sidley	5	4.75
14	Sullivan & Cromwell	7	4.68
15	Latham	11	4.64
16	Morgan Lewis	9	4.53
17	Wilson Sonsini	7	4.5
18	Troutman Pepper	5	4.45
19	Gibson Dunn	8	4.44
20	Hogan Lovells	5	4.35



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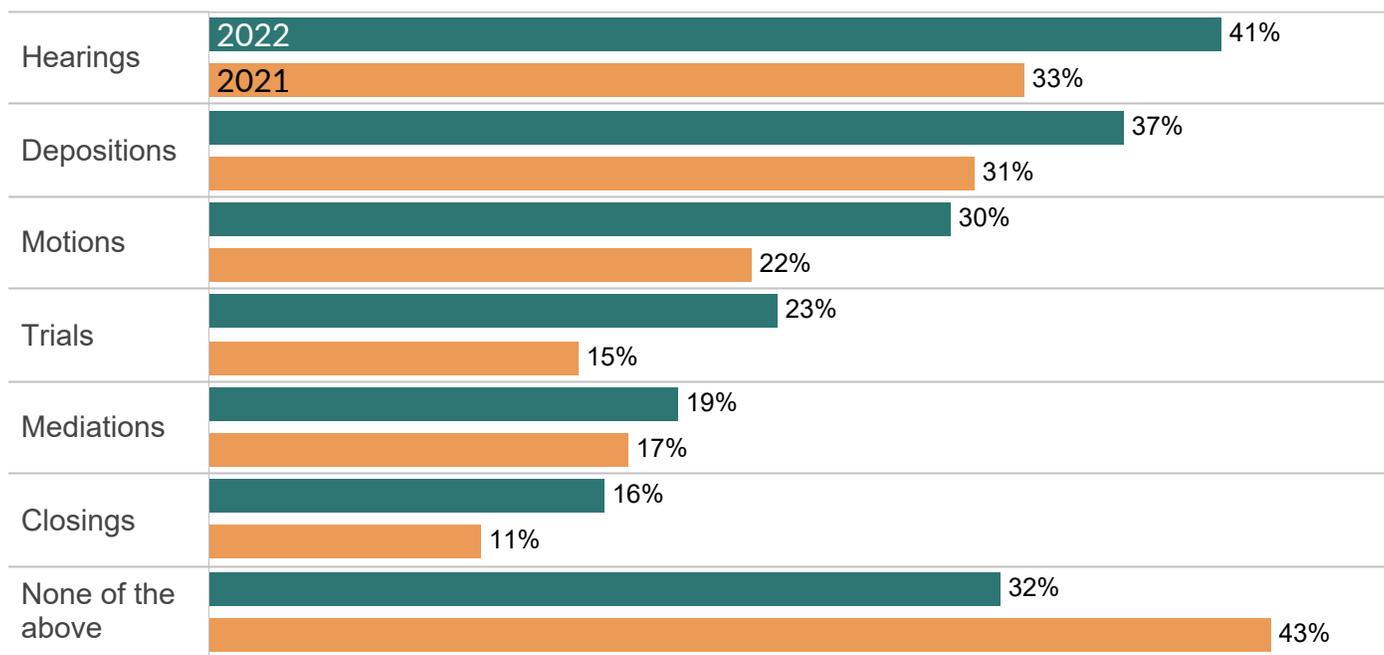
WORK ASSIGNMENTS AND PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

Just under a quarter of participants – 24% – felt the criteria on which their performance would be judged were not made clear from

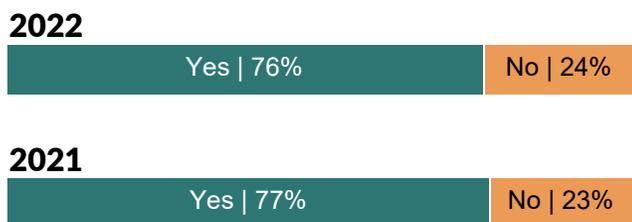
the start. In-person experiences outside of the office were up across the board from 2021 percentages.

Students expressed a lot of excitement about getting to do on-the-job training in actual litigation or deal-making scenarios, in court, boardroom and other settings. The percentage of summer associates allowed to get involved in pro bono work declined by seven points, to 68% this year from 75% last year.

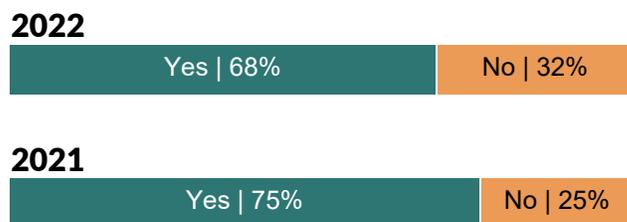
I was able to gain **courtroom experience** by accompanying firm attorneys to the following:



The criteria on which **my performance** would be judged were made clear from the start.



The firm allowed me to get involved in **pro bono work**.



3

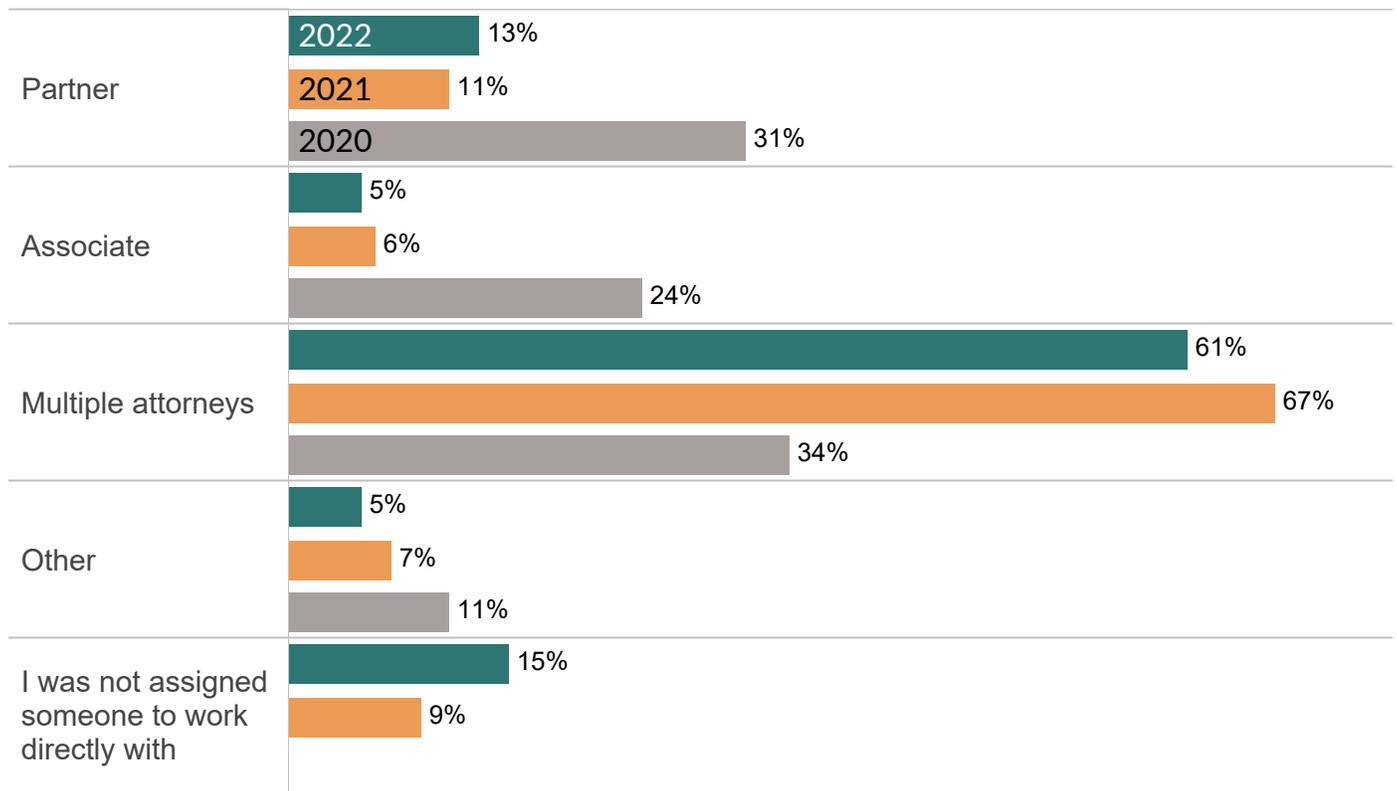
MENTORSHIP AND TRAINING

Responses showed students again being assigned to shadow multiple attorneys rather than being paired with a single partner or midlevel associate – unlike in 2020, when more than half were paired with a single attorney. We also saw

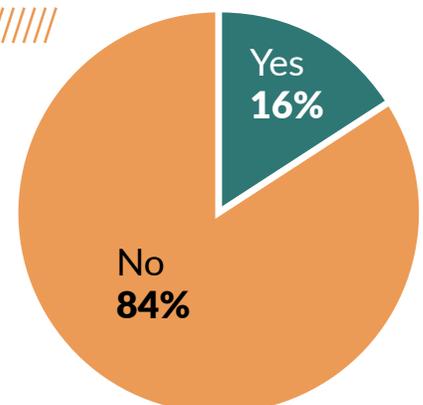
a slight rise from last year in the portion of summers who had no direct pairing with attorneys, possibly as a result of the department-to-department mobility that being in the office affords.

Over half of participants – 53% – attested to being given the opportunity to work on innovation projects. Among that subset, the average time they were allotted per week was 34.46 hours.

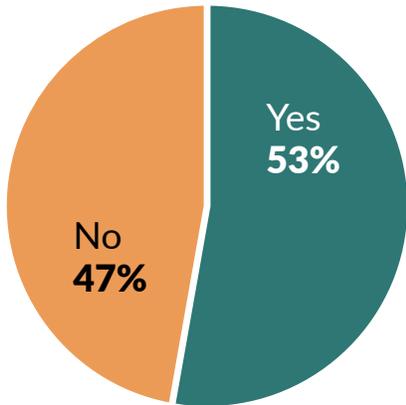
I was assigned to **directly work with**:



Does the firm have a skills requirement which includes giving summer associates the **opportunity to create tools** to automate workflow, e.g. no-code document automation?



Did your firm give you the opportunity to work on **innovation projects**?



How many **hours** per week?

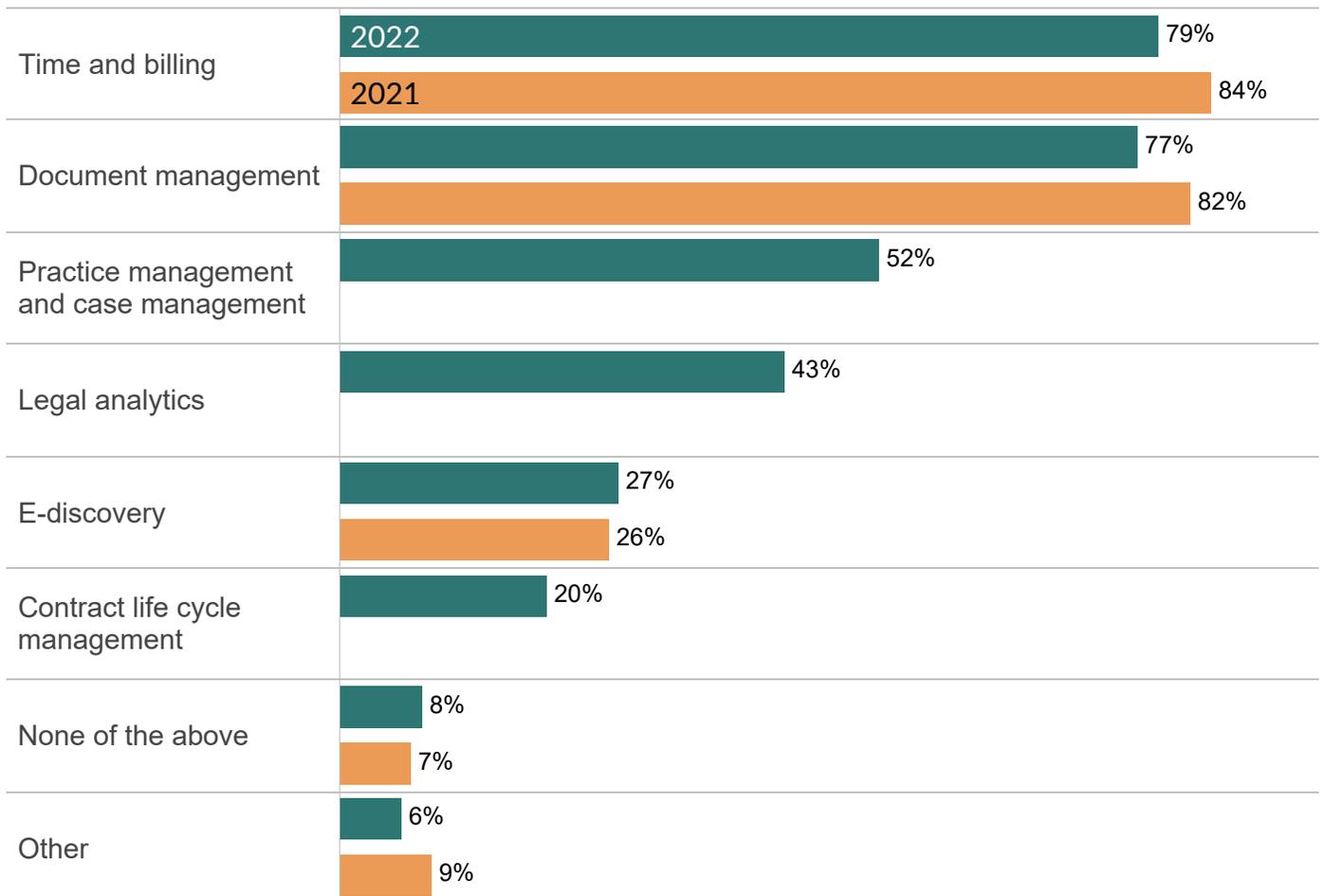
34.46

MEAN

40

MEDIAN

The firm offered me **training in software** in the following areas:



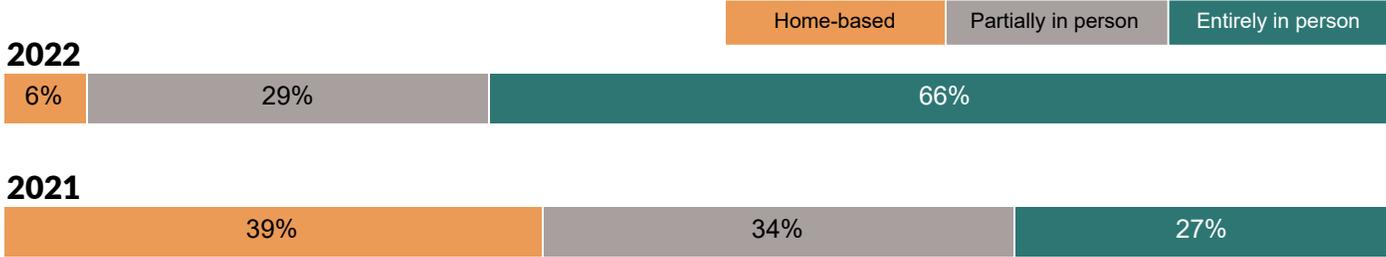
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LAW LIFE AFTER THE PANDEMIC, BUT NOT COVID

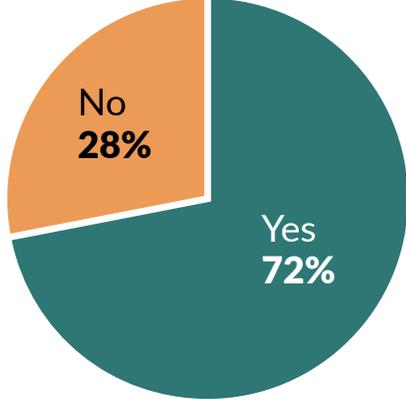
Nearly three-quarters of respondents – 72% – said their firms took measures to encourage participation from attorneys, such as requiring in-office attendance or clustering mandatory report dates to overlap with the summer class, in an effort to foster mentorship and networking.

The percentage of students who reported to their summer programs in person increased by a whopping 39 percentage points, up to 66% from only 27% last year. According to participants, 58% of summer recruiters were using “job flexibility” as a recruiting tool. More than half – 54% – of survey takers observed firms implementing lectures or training on subjects such as financial well-being, nutrition and stress management in the aftermath of the pandemic. The portion of students participating in summer programs lasting 11 weeks or longer rose from 17% last year to 21% this year.

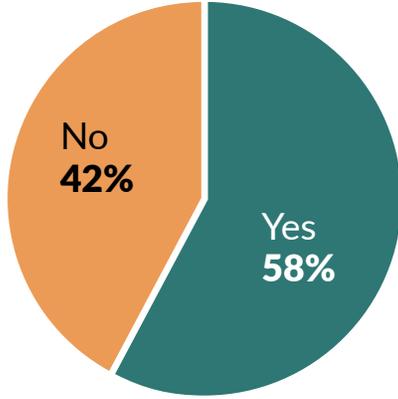
My summer associateship was **conducted**:



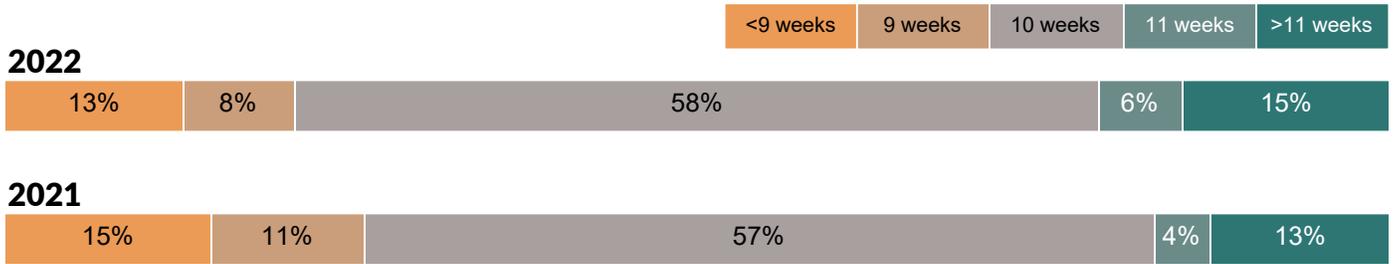
Is the firm taking any **actions to encourage participation** from attorneys, such as requiring in-office attendance or clustering mandatory report dates to overlap with the summer class, in an effort to foster mentorship and networking?



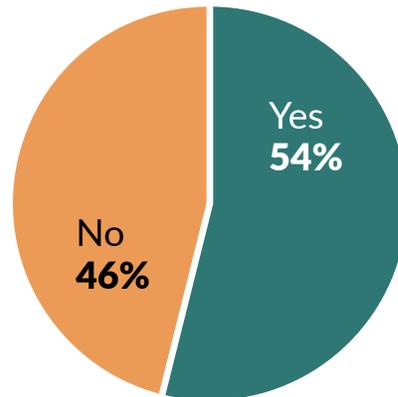
Did your firm offer **“job flexibility”** as a recruiting tool?



My summer program is:



Has the firm implemented **lectures or training** on subjects such as financial well-being, nutrition and stress management in the aftermath of the pandemic?



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PERKS AND HAZARDS

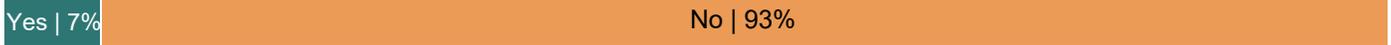
Signing bonuses are still not the norm. Only 7% of participants reported receiving them, and those who did received a median amount of \$9,500. Forty-three percent said their firms of-

ferred a bonus to cover living expenses incurred while studying for the bar.

Pressure to socialize with colleagues after hours was still relatively low at 23%, but did increase by six percentage points from last year. Less than half – 49% – received hiring assurances, down by six percentage points from 2021 and by a lofty 25 percentage points from 2020.

My firm offered me a **signing bonus**:

2022



2021

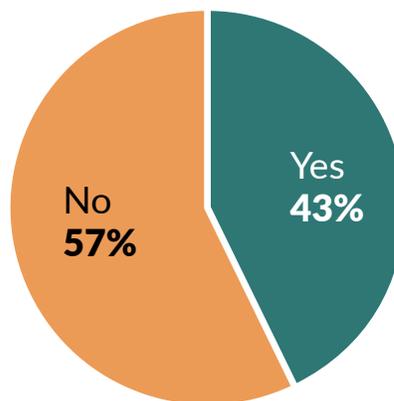


If yes, **how much** was it?

\$18,294
MEAN

\$9,500
MEDIAN

Does your firm offer a **bonus to cover living expenses** incurred while studying for the bar?



I felt **pressure to socialize** with colleagues after hours.

2022



2021



My firm assured me it would **hire** me.

2022



2021



2020



6

THE MOST FUN EXPERIENCE

“ A sunset yacht river cruise with an open bar along the Potomac River.

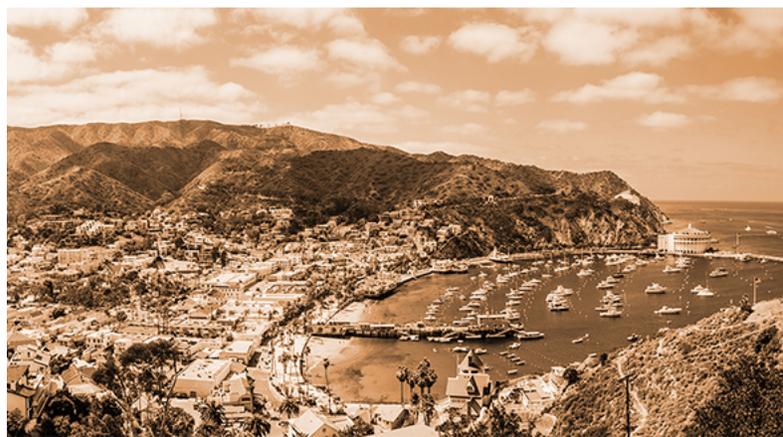


“ An event where they took us to Sonoma Wine Country.

“ A Paul McCartney concert.



“ Going to Nike House of Innovation— we had a floor to ourselves and then had the entire store rented out later in the evening for shopping.



“ A day trip to the beach at Catalina island.



“ Playing volleyball with an Olympic gold medalist at the court in our office.



“ Attending a hearing where I got to see opposing counsel get yelled at by a judge for being a moron.

“ A half-day whitewater rafting trip with various partner- and associate-level attorneys.



MEET THE TEAM



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QUESTIONNAIRE

Q1: Which firm is hosting your summer associateship?

» *Students filled in the names of firms.*

Q2: What year of law school are you in?

- » 1L
- » 2L
- » 3L
- » 4L (part-time)
- » Evening student

Q3: My assigned work during my summer associateship made good use of the skills I learned in school.

- » Yes
- » No

Q4: I received clear instructions on my assignments.

- » Yes
- » No

Q5: The criteria on which my performance would be judged were made clear from the start.

- » Yes
- » No

Q6: The most valuable lesson I learned during my summer associateship was:

» *Be specific.*

Q7: The firm allowed me to get involved in pro bono work.

- » Yes
- » No

Q8: Did your firm give you the opportunity to work on innovation projects?

- » Yes
- » No

Q9: How many hours per week?

» *Enter a number*

Q10: My summer associate experience has left me confident I am fully prepared to embark on my career at a law firm:

- » Strongly agree
- » Agree
- » Neither agree nor disagree
- » Disagree
- » Strongly disagree

Q11: I was assigned to directly work with

- » A partner
- » An associate
- » Multiple attorneys
- » I was not assigned someone to work directly with
- » Other (please specify)

Q12: I felt I was able to make connections with senior attorneys at the firm.

- » Yes
- » No

Q13: Here's what I would have liked my firm to do differently during my summer program.

- » *Be specific.*

Q14: The firm offered me training in software in the following areas:

- » *Select all that apply.*
- » Document management
- » Time and billing
- » E-discovery
- » Contract lifecycle management
- » Legal analytics
- » Practice management and case management
- » Other (please specify)
- » None of the above

Q15: Does the firm have a skills requirement which includes giving summer associates the opportunity to create tools to automate workflow, e.g. no-code document automation?

- » Yes
- » No

Q16: The firm provided ample opportunities for networking and mentorship:

- » Strongly agree
- » Agree
- » Neither agree nor disagree
- » Disagree
- » Strongly disagree

Q17: Is the firm taking any actions to encourage participation from attorneys, such as requiring in-office attendance or clustering mandatory report dates to overlap with the summer class, in an effort to foster mentorship and networking?

- » Yes
- » No

Q18: My summer associateship was conducted:

- » Entirely in person
- » Partially in person
- » Home-based

Q19: Did your firm offer “job flexibility” as a recruiting tool?

- » Yes
- » No

Q20: Did you feel like you actually had job flexibility or good work-life balance during your summer associateship?

- » Yes
- » No

Q21: Has the firm implemented lectures or training on subjects such as financial well-being, nutrition and stress management in the aftermath of the pandemic?

- » Yes
- » No

Q22: My summer program is:

- » Less than 9 weeks
- » 9 weeks
- » 10 weeks
- » 11 weeks
- » More than 11 weeks

Q23: My firm offered me a signing bonus:

- » Yes
- » No

Q24: If yes, how much was it?

- » *Enter a number*

Q25: Does your firm offer a bonus to cover living expenses incurred while studying for the bar?

- » Yes
- » No

Q26: I was able to gain courtroom experience by accompanying firm attorneys to the following:

- » Depositions
- » Hearings
- » Motions
- » Trials
- » Mediations
- » Closings
- » None of the above
- » Other (please specify)

Q27: I was given the opportunity to network with others outside my supervisors and summer associate cohort.

- » Yes
- » No

Q28: The most fun experience of my summer associate program was:

- » *Be specific.*

Q29: I felt pressure to socialize with colleagues after hours.

- » Yes
- » No

Q30: Please give the firm a rating in terms of fun programming (5 = Super fun, 1 = Not fun at all)

Q31: My experience gave me better insight into the kind of law I want to practice.

- » Yes
- » No

Q32: My firm assured me it would hire me.

- » Yes
- » No

Q33: My summer experience:

- » Affirmed my belief that this is the right career choice for me
- » Made me want to rethink my career path
- » Made me consider pivoting to a government position, in-house counsel, solo practitioner or other

Q34: My summer compensation is:

- » Very fair
- » Fair
- » Neither fair nor unfair
- » Unfair
- » Very unfair

Q35: Please enter your name and email address if you would be willing to speak to a reporter about your summer associate experience.

- » *Be specific.*

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