



## 5<sup>th</sup> Year Career Development Report Class of 2015 May 2021

Each spring the Career Development Office collects information about our graduates five years after their law school graduation through our 5<sup>th</sup> Year Career Development Report. The purpose of this report is to provide a snapshot of the career experiences of the members of the Class of 2015 (“the Class”) in their first five years since graduating from YLS.

### *Compilation of Data*<sup>1</sup>

The information in this report has been compiled from multiple sources. First employment information was provided by members of the Class to CDO nine months after their graduation.<sup>2</sup> Information about first non-clerkship jobs incorporates independent research and the results of CDO’s Post-Clerkship Employment Survey sent to all graduates who clerked immediately after graduation.<sup>3</sup> Information regarding employment type and geographic location five years after graduation is based on survey responses to CDO’s 5<sup>th</sup> Year Career Development Survey (“5<sup>th</sup> Year Survey”), sent to all members of the Class in May 2020,<sup>4</sup> as well as independent research by CDO.<sup>5</sup> Information regarding debt burden at graduation was provided by the YLS Financial Aid Office. The remainder of the information provided in this report is based solely on the 5<sup>th</sup> Year Survey results.

### **First Employment: Employer Type**

Judicial clerkships and law firms were the most popular first job choices of the Class, and together comprised just over 80% of the total first employers for members of the Class. Smaller percentages of the Class commenced their careers in public interest, government, academia, or business. As so many of our graduates clerk, the chart below also includes information about the first non-clerkship job choices of those Class members who clerked immediately upon graduation. As shown below, law firms constituted the first non-clerkship job choice for approximately two-thirds of the Class.

<b>Class of 2015</b>	<b>First Job Immediately After Graduation</b>	<b>First Non-Clerkship Job of Clerks</b>	<b>First Non-Clerkship Job Choice of Class</b>
<b>Law Firms</b>	41.9%	66.2%	64.9%
<b>Judicial Clerkship</b>	39.0%	--	--
<b>Public Interest</b>	8.6%	19.7%	18.8%
<b>Government</b>	5.7%	12.7%	7.4%
<b>Academia<sup>6</sup></b>	1%	7%	3.5%

<sup>1</sup> Due to rounding, totals within the tables contained within this report may not equal 100%.

<sup>2</sup> 99% of the Class responded.

<sup>3</sup> 84% of the Class is represented.

<sup>4</sup> 39% of the Class responded, although not every respondent answered every question.

<sup>5</sup> Through independent research, CDO obtained employment information from an additional 54% of the Class beyond the 39% who responded to the 5<sup>th</sup> Year Survey.

<sup>6</sup> Academia as used throughout this report includes teaching, research, academic fellowships, and academic administration.

<b>Business<sup>7</sup></b>	3.8%	2.9%	5.4%
<b>Other</b>	--	--	--

### *Gender Differences in Employer Type<sup>8</sup>*

When looking at gender and first employment choices, a higher percentage of men than women commenced their careers in law firms; five years later, among survey respondents a higher percentage of men than women also reported continuing to work at law firms. A higher percentage of women than men worked in public interest organizations immediately after graduation, five years later that remained the same among survey respondents. The percentage of men working in business was slightly higher than that of women upon graduation, although it was nearly equivalent among survey respondents five years out.

### **Gender Differences in Employer Type at Graduation**

<b>Class of 2015</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>
<b>Law Firms</b>	39.8%	43.3%
<b>Judicial Clerkship</b>	39.8%	38.5%
<b>Public Interest</b>	14.8%	3.8%
<b>Government</b>	2.3%	7.7%
<b>Academia</b>	--	1.9%
<b>Business</b>	3.4%	4.8%

### **Gender Differences in Employer Type - Five Years after Graduation**

<b>Class of 2015</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>
<b>Law Firms</b>	46.2%	62%
<b>Judicial Clerkship</b>	--	8.1%
<b>Public Interest</b>	20.5%	5.4%
<b>Government</b>	15.4%	10.8%
<b>Academia</b>	12.8%	8.1%
<b>Business</b>	5.1%	5.4%

### *Debt*

<sup>7</sup> Business as used throughout this report includes private-sector non-legal employers, for which Class members may be working in legal and/or non-legal capacities.

<sup>8</sup> As per office policy, when the number of members of the Class who have reported that they do not identify as male or female is quite small, responses from these Class members are not included within gender-based discussions within this report, so as not to reveal personal or identifiable information about any particular individuals.

Based on information reported to the Financial Aid office at graduation, of the 76% of Class members who borrowed money for their law school educations, 52.8% reported a total debt burden that fell between \$100,000 and \$174,999, and 75% reported a total debt burden of \$100,000 or more. Just under 40% of survey respondents reported that their debt burden focused their employment options on higher-paying fields.

Total Debt Burden at Graduation	Class of 2015
less than \$5,000	--
\$5,000 - 24,999	3.7%
\$25,000 - 74,999	13.6%
\$75,000 - 99,999	7.5%
\$100,000 - 124,999	12.4%
\$125,000 - 149,999	29.2%
\$150,000 - 174,999	11.2%
\$175,000 - 199,999	8.7%
\$200,000 and over	13.7%
<b>Respondents who said, five years out, that their debt burden focused their employment options on higher-paying fields.</b>	<b>39.8%</b>

### Employment Five Years after YLS Graduation: Employer Type

When comparing first non-clerkship job choices with where members of the Class are working five years after graduation: Based upon survey responses as combined with the office's independent research, fewer Class graduates are now working for law firms and public interest organizations, and more Class graduates are in government, business, and academia. Nonetheless, almost half of the Class continues to work at law firms half a decade after graduating from law school.

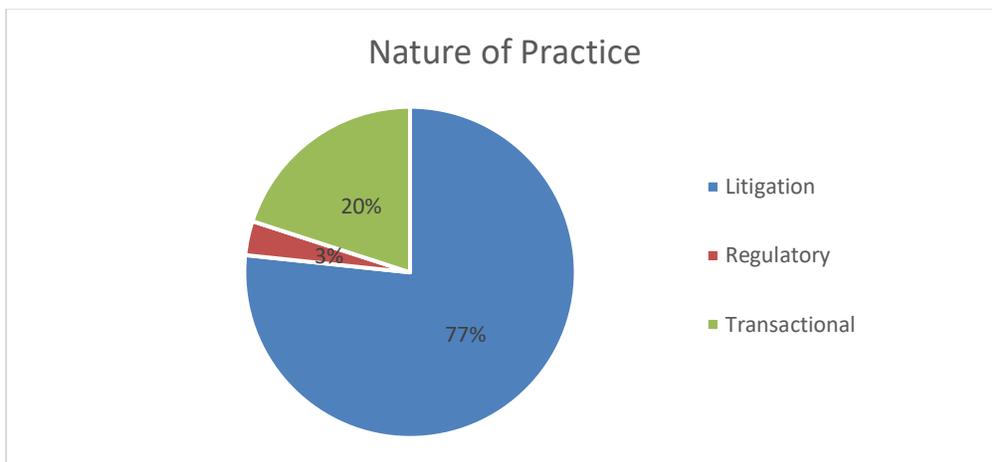
Class of 2015	First Non-Clerkship Job Choice of Class	5 Years After Graduation
Law Firms	64.9%	48.1%
Public Interest	18.8%	10%
Judicial Clerkship	--	4.2%
Government	7.4%	13.7%
Academia	3.5%	10.6%

<b>Business</b>	5.4%	10.6%
<b>Other</b>	--	2.6%

Not factoring judicial clerkships, 31.4% of the Class has worked for a public service employer (not-for-profit organization or government) at some point in the five years since graduation. With respect to judicial clerkships, CDO’s clerkship tracking informs us that about 51% of the Class has clerked for one or more judges at some point in the five years since graduation.

***Nature of Practice***

Of those survey respondents currently practicing law who indicated a practice area specialty, roughly 77% characterized their primary focus as litigation. Twenty percent characterized their primary practice focus as being transactional in nature, and about 3% characterized their primary practice focus as being primarily regulatory.



***Employment Locations***

Upon graduation, the employment locations of over three-fifths of the Class fell in three locations: New York, Washington, DC, and California (including all cities), with New York being the most popular location. Five years after graduation, data collected from survey responses as combined with the office’s independent research indicate that nearly a full two-thirds of the Class continue to work in New York, Washington, DC, or California, with New York continuing to be the most popular location.

<b>Top Three Employment Locations for Class of 2015</b>	<b>At Graduation</b>	<b>5 Years After Graduation</b>
<b>New York</b>	34.2%	29.9%
<b>Washington, D.C.</b>	15.6%	18.5%
<b>California (including all cities)</b>	12.6%	17.4%

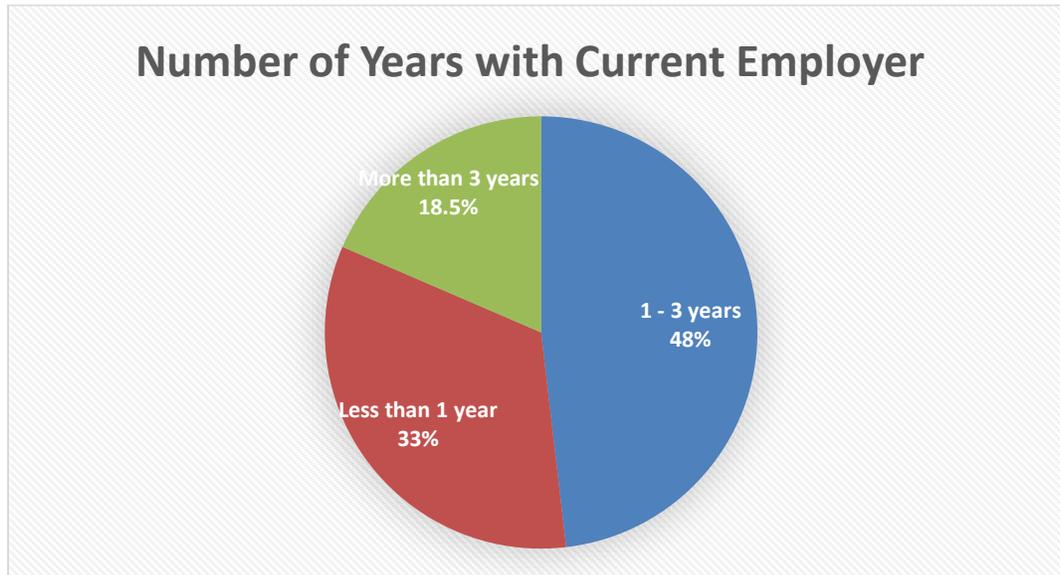
***Number of Employers Since Graduation***

Twelve and a half percent of survey respondents reported that they were still in their first non-clerkship

jobs, 7.5% reported that they were in their second non-clerkship jobs, and 15% reported that they were in their third, fourth, or fifth non-clerkship jobs.

**Number of Years with Current Employer**

Among survey respondents, about two-thirds have been with their current employers for one or more years, and 18.5% have been with their current employers for more than three years.



**Work Schedules**

Based on survey results, roughly 75% of survey respondents reported working 2,000 hours a year or more. The most commonly reported range of work hours was 2,000-2,500 hours per year, with about 51% of respondents reporting working hours in that range. An additional 24% of respondents reported working more than 2,500 hours.

**Salary**

Not surprisingly, law firm and business respondents to the survey reported the highest incomes, with nearly 83% of those in law firms and 100% of those in business reporting salaries of \$150,000 or above. Slightly over 92% of respondents in government reported earning between \$75,000 and \$149,999. Among academics, 37.5% earn over \$74,999.

Class of 2015	< \$30,000	\$30,000 – \$74,999	\$75,000 – \$149,999	\$150,000 – \$300,000	\$300,001 – 499,999	\$500,000 – 999,999
Overall Salary	--	15.6%	34.5%	39%	13%	--
Law Firms	--	--	17%	63.4%	19.5%	--
Public Interest	--	60%	40%	--	--	--

<b>Government</b>	--	7.7%	84.6%	7.7%	--	--
<b>Academia</b>	--	62.5%	12.5%	25%	--	--
<b>Business</b>	--	--	--	33.3%	66.6%	--

**Pro Bono**

Survey respondents were asked to report their average pro bono hours per year in their current employment. Among those in the private sector, over 57% reported devoting over 50 hours to pro bono per year. This is higher than Class of 2014 survey respondents working in the private sector, of whom 51.5% reported devoting over 50 hours of pro bono hours, and more similar to Class of 2013 survey respondents working in the private section, of whom 60.5% reported devoting over 50 hours of pro bono hours.

<b>Class of 2015</b>	<b>Private Sector Respondents</b>
<b>over 100 hours</b>	38.8%
<b>51 - 100 hours</b>	18.4%
<b>26 - 50 hours</b>	10%
<b>1 - 25 hours</b>	10%
<b>0 hours</b>	22%

Respondents were also asked what factors contributed most to their pro bono hours. Just over 63% of respondents indicated that “Personal Satisfaction” was a factor.

**Job Satisfaction**

Survey respondents were asked to indicate their overall satisfaction with their current employment. Nearly 85% of respondents reported being either “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with their current positions, of whom the majority reported being “very satisfied.”

While survey respondents across employment sectors expressed a high degree of satisfaction, law firm respondents reported being slightly less satisfied than their counterparts in public interest and government, academia, and business (almost 77% of those respondents in law firms are “very satisfied” or “satisfied,” compared with 100% in public interest, 84.5% in government, 100% in academia, and 100% in business).

Law firm respondents from the Class of 2015 also expressed slightly lower percentage levels of job satisfaction than their counterparts in the Class of 2014. While nearly 77% of respondents working for law firms from the Class of 2015 reported that they were “very satisfied” or “satisfied,” 80.5% of respondents working for law firms from the Class of 2014 reported being “very satisfied” or “satisfied.”

<b>Class of 2015</b>	<b>Very Satisfied</b>	<b>Satisfied</b>	<b>Somewhat Satisfied</b>	<b>Not Satisfied</b>
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<b>Overall Satisfaction</b>	48.7%	35.9%	11.5%	3.8%
<b>Law Firms</b>	44.2%	32.6%	16.3%	7%
<b>Public Interest</b>	70%	30%	-	--
<b>Government</b>	61.5%	23%	15.4	--
<b>Academia</b>	37.5%	62.5%	--	--
<b>Business</b>	25%	75%	--	--

Both men and women who responded to the survey expressed high rates of job satisfaction – nearly 90% of women reported being either satisfied or very satisfied with their current positions, as did just almost 85% of men.

*Plans to Stay with Current Employer*

With regard to how long survey respondents reported planning to stay with their current employers, the most common response was that they planned to stay for 1-3 more years, with nearly 42% of respondents selecting that option. Almost 18% of respondents reported planning to leave their current employers within the next year and almost 23% reported planning to stay with their current employers for more than 5 additional years.

**Retrospective**

Survey respondents were asked to indicate why they had initially decided to attend law school. Respondents could select one or more choices. 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.

<b>Why did you attend law school? (Select as many as apply)</b>	<b>Class of 2015</b>
<b>To create career options</b>	33.8%
<b>To engage in the intellectual challenges of law</b>	27.4%
<b>To enter a career in public service</b>	24.2%
<b>To establish a lucrative career</b>	6.4%
<b>To defer making a choice about my career</b>	3.8%
<b>Other</b>	4.5%

The 5<sup>th</sup> Year Survey asked respondents, “When you began law school, in what area(s) did you envision working when you graduated?” Respondents were able to select one or more choices. Approximately 49% of respondents selected government, just over 42% selected public interest, about 37% selected law firm practice, a bit under 29% selected academia, and nearly 16% selected business.

According to data collected through both survey responses and independent CDO research, five years post-graduation: About 18% of the Class is working in government; 10% in public interest; 48% at law firms; and 10.6% in academia and business, apiece.

	<b>Where did you envision working 5 years after graduation?</b> <i>(Select as many as apply)</i>	<b>Actual employment 5 years after graduation</b>
<b>Law Firm</b>	37.3%	48.1%
<b>Public Interest</b>	42.2%	10%
<b>Academia</b>	28.9%	10.6%
<b>Government</b>	49.4%	18%
<b>Business</b>	15.7%	10.6%
<b>Other</b>	--	2.6%
<b>No Idea</b>	6%	N/A

### **Use of CDO Alumni Resources**

Twenty-seven percent of survey respondents reported using the CDO website to assist with their post-graduation career searches, and about 23% reported having sought advice from CDO regarding career issues since graduation.