

What Yale Law School Graduates Do: A Summary of CDO's 5th Year Career Development Survey Classes 2006 - 2010

Starting with the Class of 1996, the Career Development Office (“CDO”) has solicited information from each class five years after law school graduation. In addition, CDO has compiled aggregate reports to show trends over five years. The first aggregate survey created in 2005 reported on the Classes of 1996 - 2000 (“Cohort 1”). The second aggregate survey created in 2011 reported on the Classes of 2001 - 2005 (“Cohort 2”). This report provides a summary of the data collected from the Classes of 2006 - 2010 (“Cohort 3”).

*Compilation of Cohort 3 Data*¹

The data in this report has been compiled from multiple sources. First employment information was provided from members of each Class to CDO nine months after their graduation. Information about first post-clerkship job choices incorporates the results of a Post-Clerkship Employment Survey sent annually by CDO to all students who clerked immediately after graduation. Information regarding employment type and geographic location five years after graduation is based on responses to the 5th Year Career Development Survey, as well as independent research by CDO. 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 5th Year Survey responses. Combining the survey responses from the Classes surveyed in Cohort 3, we received an overall response rate of 62%.²

The data about Cohorts 1 and 2 in this report was compiled from *What Yale Law School Graduates Do: A Summary of CDO's 5th Year Career Development Survey (Classes of 1996-2000)* and *(Classes of 2001-2005)*, available on the CDO website located at www.law.yale.edu/student-life/career-development/employment-data/5th-year-career-development-survey.

I. First Employment

First Employer Type

Law firms and judicial clerkships are the most popular destinations of our graduates in Cohort 3 immediately after law school. Smaller percentages commenced their careers in public interest, government, academia, or business.³ Because so many of our graduates clerk, the chart below also includes information about the first non-clerkship job choices of Cohort 3.

Cohort 3 (2006- 2010)	First Job After Graduation	First Non- Clerkship Job Choice
Law Firms	39%	61%
Judicial Clerkship	37%	N/A
Public Interest	10%	16%

¹ Due to rounding, totals may not equal 100%.

² We received a 68% response rate from the Class of 2006, a 64% response rate from the Class of 2007, a 65% response rate from the Class of 2008, a 60% response rate from the Class of 2009 and a 54% response rate from the Class of 2010. Because some respondents did not answer every question, some statistics reflect response rates less than the overall response rate.

³ An additional 3% of Cohort 3 pursued an advanced degree upon graduation or completion of a clerkship. Those graduates are not included in this chart.

Government	7%	12%
Academia⁴	2.5%	5%
Business	4.5%	6%
Other	N/A	Less than 0.1%

Compared to graduates in Cohort 2, fewer graduates in Cohort 3 went to law firms as their first non-clerkship job choice, while more went into public service (including public interest and government, listed separately above) and business. In Cohort 2, 72% of graduates went to law firms, while 19% went to public service and 4% went into business as their first-non clerkship job choice. The percentage of graduates going into academia as their first-non clerkship job choice was the same for both Cohort 3 and Cohort 2.

Compared to graduates in Cohort 1, fewer graduates in Cohort 3 went to law firms and academia as their first non-clerkship job choice, while more went into public service. In Cohort 1, 63% of graduates went to law firms, 9% went to academia, and 21% went to public service as their first non-clerkship job choice. The percentage of graduates going into business as their first non-clerkship job choice was the same for both Cohort 3 and Cohort 1.

Gender Differences in First Employer Type

More men started their careers with judicial clerkships from Cohort 3, while more women went straight to law firms and public service (including public interest and government). This was similar to graduates in Cohort 2 and Cohort 1, with more women initially choosing law firms and public service, and more men starting their careers with a judicial clerkship.

Cohort 3 (2006- 2010)	Women	Men
<i>Total Respondents</i>	47%	53%
Law Firms	41.5%	37%
Judicial Clerkship	35%	39%
Public Interest	12%	8%
Government	7%	7%
Academia	2.5%	2%
Business	2%	7%

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

Debt

It is difficult to do a direct comparison of the reported debt burden on Cohort 3 as compared with those of Cohorts 1 and 2. This is because Cohort 3 was presented with different debt burden options in its Survey than the two prior Cohorts. It is also because different debt burden options were presented to different Class year respondents over the course of Cohort 3. What we can report is that:

- Approximately 40% of respondents in the Classes of 2006 and 2007 said that their need to pay off debt affected their legal career choices. Among Class of 2008, 2009, and 2010 survey respondents, 39% said that their debt burden focused their employment options on higher paying fields. This is similar to the responses of Cohort 1 and Cohort 2, where 39% and 47% of respondents said the need to pay off debt affected their legal career choices, respectively.
- Among the Classes of 2007, 2008, 2009, and 2010, 49% of survey respondents had a total debt burden at graduation of \$100,000 or more. Sixty-six percent of Class of 2006 respondents had a total debt burden at graduation of over \$75,000.

II. Employment Five Years After YLS Graduation

Employer Type

Five years after graduation, the percentage of graduates from Cohort 3 in government, academia, and business increases and the percentage of graduates in law firms decreases when compared to first non-clerkship employment. There were similar trends among graduates from Cohorts 2 and 1.

Cohort 3 (2006- 2010)	First Non- Clerkship Job Choice	5 Years After Graduation
Law Firms	61%	44.5%
Public Interest	16%	11.5%
Government	12%	20%
Academia	5%	11%
Business	6%	12.5%
Other	Less than 0.1%	0.5%

Employment Locations

Five years after law school, approximately 64% of our graduates from Cohort 3 work in NYC, DC or California. Compared to the graduates from Cohort 1, more graduates in Cohort 3 are employed in DC and California, while the percentage of graduates employed in NYC has decreased. In comparison to the graduates from Cohort 2, slightly more graduates in Cohort 3 are employed in DC, while fewer are employed in California. The percentage of graduates employed in NYC is the same between Cohort 2 and Cohort 3.

Top Three Employment Locations	Cohort 1 (1996 - 2000)	Cohort 2 (2001 - 2005)	Cohort 3 (2006 - 2010)
New York City	28%	25%	25%

Washington, D.C.	20%	23%	25%
California (all cities)	12%	17%	14%

Plan to Stay with Current Employer

More than one-third (36%) of respondents in Cohort 3 are still in their first non-clerkship job. Forty-percent are in their second job and 24% are in their third, fourth, or fifth job. These results were similar to those among Cohort 2, where 37% of respondents were still in their first non-clerkship job, and 47% were in their second job. Likewise, among Cohort 1, 40% of respondents were still in their first non-clerkship job, and 43% were in their second job.

The most common response from graduates in Cohort 3 was that they plan to stay with their current employer for 1-3 more years, with 44% of respondents selecting that option. These results were similar among graduates in Cohort 1 and 2, with 41% and 40% of respondents planning to stay with their current employer for 1-3 more years, respectively.

Work Schedules

The most commonly reported range of work hours among Cohort 3 was 2,000 - 2,500 hours per year, with 52% of respondents working hours in that range. This is slightly lower than Cohort 2, where 53% reported working 2,000 - 2,500 hours, but it is higher than Cohort 1, where 48% reported working this number of hours. Only a small percentage of graduates in each Cohort reported working part-time or flex-time in their current positions (Cohort 1: 6%; Cohort 2: 5%; Cohort 3: 4%).

Annual Salaries

Not surprisingly, law firm respondents reported the highest incomes, with 80% of law firm respondents in Cohort 3 reporting salaries of \$150,000 - \$300,000. This is slightly higher than law firm respondents from Cohort 1 and Cohort 2, where 65% and 72% of law firm respondents reported earning \$150,000 - \$300,000, respectively.⁵ Cohort 3 respondents in business also reported high incomes, with 56% reporting salaries of \$150,000 - \$300,000 and 24% earning more than \$300,000. Eighty-seven percent of Cohort 3 respondents in government reported salaries of \$75,000 - \$149,999. Among Cohort 3 respondents in public interest, 48% reported salaries of \$30,000 - \$74,999 and 45% reported salaries of \$75,000 - \$149,999.

Job Satisfaction

Respondents were asked to indicate their overall satisfaction with their current employment. Approximately 85% of respondents in Cohort 3 are either “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with their current positions. This is slightly higher than the responses from Cohort 1 and Cohort 2, where close to 80% of respondents in each Cohort were either “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with their current positions. Among Cohort 3 respondents, law firm respondents are the least satisfied with their current positions (26% “very satisfied”) and academics are the most satisfied (68% “very satisfied”). Notably, business respondents in the Class of 2006 reported greater job satisfaction than business respondents in other classes in Cohort 3, with 80% reporting that they are very satisfied with their current employment as compared to 50% of those in the Class of 2007, 63% of those in the Class of 2008, 54% of those in the Class of 2009 and only 46% of those in the Class of 2010.

⁵ The higher reported income of law firm respondents from Cohort 3, as compared with that of respondents from Cohorts 1 and 2, may in part reflect the salary increases that took place at many law firms in and around 2007. In many instances, these salary increases raised first-year associate salaries from \$145,000 to \$160,000.

Cohort 3 (2006 - 2010)	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Not Satisfied
Overall Satisfaction	48.5%	37%	11%	4%
Law Firms	26%	49%	20%	4%
Public Interest	63%	30%	6.5%	1%
Government	65%	29%	4%	2%
Academia	68%	29%	2%	1%
Business	59%	34%	6%	2%

III. Public Service

When looking at all the job choices of our Cohort 3 graduates (not including judicial clerkships), it is interesting to note that 40% have worked for a public service employer (public interest organization or government) at some point in the five years since graduation. This is slightly higher than Cohorts 1 and 2, where 35% and 32% of respondents reported working in public service at some point since graduation, respectively.

Pro Bono

Respondents were asked to report their average *pro bono* hours per year in their current position. Graduates in the private sector from Cohort 3 dedicated more time to pro bono than graduates from Cohort 1, but less time than graduates from Cohort 2. Fifty-four percent of respondents from Cohort 2 reported conducting 51 or more hours of pro bono compared to 39% of graduates from Cohort 1 and 44.5% of graduates from Cohort 3.

Pro Bono Hours	Cohort 1 (1996 - 2000)	Cohort 2 (2001 - 2005)	Cohort 3 (2006 - 2010)
Over 100 hours	23%	34%	25.5%
51 - 100 hours	16%	20%	19%
26 - 50 hours	14%	15%	18%
1 - 25 hours	23%	15%	18%
0 hours	24%	16%	19.5%

IV. 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. These are the same 3 most popular choices among Cohorts 1 and 2.

Why did you attend law school? <i>(Select as many as apply)</i>	Cohort 3 (2006 - 2010)
To create career options	70%
To engage in the intellectual challenges of law	58%
To enter a career in public service	52%
To defer making a choice about my career	14%
To establish a lucrative career	14%
Other	9%

Respondents were also asked, “When you began law school, in what area(s) did you envision working five years after graduating?” Comparing this question to where graduates actually work five years after graduation demonstrates that more graduates in Cohort 3 are in law firms and fewer graduates are in public service (including public interest and government) and academia than what they planned. These results are similar to the graduates in both Cohort 1 and Cohort 2.

Cohort 3 (2006 - 2010)	Where did you envision working 5 years after graduation? <i>(Select as many as apply)</i>	Actual employment 5 years after graduation
Law Firm	29%	44.5%
Public Interest	43%	11.5%
Government	50%	20%
Academia	35%	11%
Business	13%	12.5%
Other	N/A	0.5%
No Idea	10%	N/A