

Student Membership & School Alliances

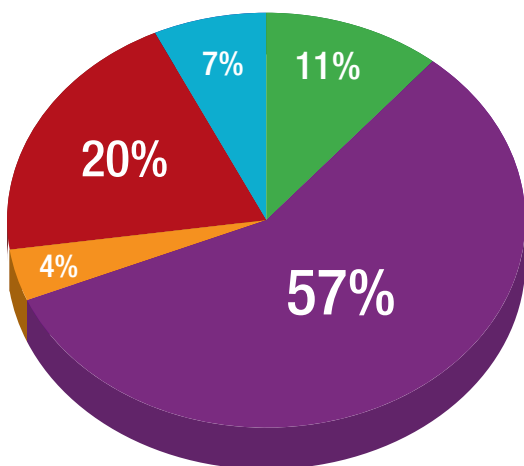
This is the third year that AHLA is including a special supplement for our student members and Student Alliance Programs. The academic health law community plays a vital role in the training of future health lawyers, compliance and privacy officers, and other healthcare executives. AHLA also plays an important role in informing and educating the health lawyers and professionals of tomorrow by providing accurate and up-to-date information that is vital to the success of our members, both in law school and in the legal profession.

What are Law Firms Looking For?

Whether you have just started on your law career path, or are closing in on graduation, this question is likely at the top of your list of things to consider. AHLA leaders and Boston University Law School Alumni took part in a survey, that Boston University professor and AHLA member Kevin Outterson allowed us to share with you. As Professor Outterson notes “The results reinforce what we’ve been hearing from alumni: health law students need to master certain core subjects (fraud & abuse, reimbursement, tax, administrative law) but they also need to understand the larger context of healthcare, to be able to speak the clients’ language. We are excited to partner with AHLA to help guide law students so they graduate better prepared to practice healthcare law.”

The complete survey is included in the electronic version of this yearly law school student member and school alliance installment (www.healthlawyers.org/connections), and we offer this brief synopsis of some of the findings.

There were a total of 94 survey respondents, including attorneys from:



- Private Law Firm, 1 Office
- In-House Corp. Legal Dept.
- Private Law Firm, >1 Office
- Other
- Government

The survey delved into what law firms were looking for in a number of ways, including use of a hypothetical review of attributes they would look for when deciding between 3 types of law school applicant:

- » Candidate 1-has taken health law courses
- » Candidate 2-has completed a health law concentration
- » Candidate 3-has a LL.M. in health law

Other than these attributes, each of the candidate’s background and qualifications was identical. The respondents ranked the applicants likelihood of receiving an offer of employment:

- » Candidate 1: 19%
- » Candidate 2: 42%
- » Candidate 3: 39%

The survey followed up and asked why the respondent favored each type candidate, and a few of their answers were as follows: Candidate 1-Course work less important than practical experience in healthcare industry; Most practical training will be on the job; Candidate 2-Demonstrated interest in the area; Student with most practical background could hit the ground running; Concentrated focus indicates commitment to the field; Candidate 3-Greater the health law training the better; LLM indicates strong interest in health law; Greater exposure to the statutory and regulatory requirements.

The survey then asked each respondent to take into consideration a number of personal attributes, and then compare how important these would be in relation to the academic attributes already discussed as determinants of a lawyer’s success in their career. The attributes were:

- » Initiative
- » Sound judgment
- » Creativity/innovation
- » Interpersonal skills & relationship building
- » Openness/responsiveness to feedback

The majority of respondents viewed the attributes as more important than the academic qualifications. While approximately 42% saw them as having the same importance, 56% saw them as far more important than the academic qualifications.

The survey then asked the respondents how well law schools **do** to prepare future lawyers in relation to certain skills, as well as how well they **should prepare** graduates and delineated the gap between the 2. On a scale of 1-5, they answered the “do” focus with the following rankings: