

ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN LAW SCHOOLS (AALS) 2020 ANNUAL MEETING
Theme: Pillars of Democracy: Law, Representation, and Knowledge
January 2020

AALS Section on Post-Graduate Legal Education Program
Is it Time to Self-Regulate? Devising More Formal Standards and Guidelines
in Post-Graduate Legal Education

POST-GRADUATE LEGAL EDUCATION SURVEY RESULTS

OVERVIEW

The program, *Is it Time to Self-Regulate? Devising More Formal Standards and Guidelines in Post-Graduate Legal Education*, is hosted by the AALS Section on Post-Graduate Legal Education to provide overall insights and remarks on the program topic along with a discussion on the sufficiency of standards and guidelines for creating admission policies, setting academic and curriculum requirements, and gathering employment statistics and professional data. The overall goal of the program is to: 1) allow for an insightful and critical discussion and reflection upon areas of the field that can benefit from more formal standards and guidelines and 2) to form a working group for developing and devising a post-graduate law best practices booklet or template that would be a resource for administrators and professors working within the field.

Incorporated as part of the program, Section members completed a brief survey regarding the program topic. The survey was divided into three main parts: Admission Policies, Academic and Curriculum Requirements, and Employment Statistics and Professional Data. For each part, participants ranked core areas on whether there are sufficient standards and guidelines within graduate legal education.

SURVEY SCOPE

- Degree Groups: As defined by the ABA listing for Post-JD and Non-JD degrees at this link: https://www.americanbar.org/groups/legal_education/resources/llm-degrees_post_j_d_non_j_d/.
- Student Populations: U.S., international, campus-based, and online students.

SURVEY DEFINITIONS (from www.merriam-webster.com)

- Sufficient: "enough to meet the needs of a situation or a proposed end".
- Standards: "something set up and established by authority as a rule for the measure of quantity, weight, extent, value, or quality".
- Guidelines: "a line by which one is guided: such as . . . an indication or outline of policy or conduct".

SURVEY DATES

November 25, 2019 through December 17, 2019

SURVEY RESPONSES

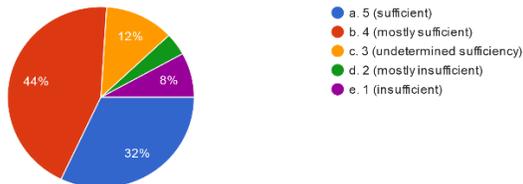
The survey was sent to all AALS listed members of the Section on Post-Graduate Legal Education as of November 25, 2019 – a total of 160 members. Twenty-five members participated, which is about a 16% response rate. Detailed within the following pages are graph illustrations and accompanying optional comment/question responses for each main part of the survey.

SURVEY RESULTS

I. **ADMISSION POLICIES:** Regarding Admission Policies within graduate legal education, rank each one of the following areas with respect to whether you believe there are sufficient standards and guidelines. Your perspective can collectively be based on your own law school, law schools in general, and/or the ABA and other bodies governing education. The rank categories are as follows: 5 (sufficient), 4 (mostly sufficient), 3 (undetermined sufficiency), 2 (mostly insufficient), 1 (insufficient).

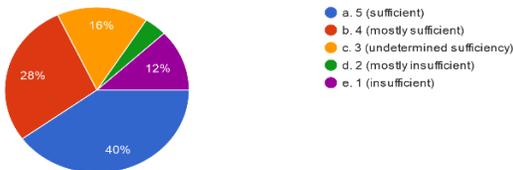
1) Admission requirements overall for academic credentials.

25 responses



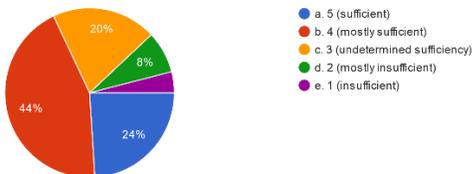
2) Admission requirements for language proficiency of international applicants.

25 responses



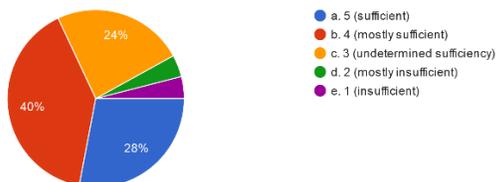
3) Admission requirements for degree equivalency to a U.S. JD (e.g., for admission to an LLM program) and for U.S. baccalaureate degrees (e.g., for admission to an MJ/JM program).

25 responses



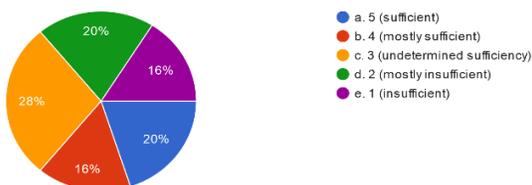
4) Admission requirements for years of legal practice and/or other professional work experience.

25 responses



5) Admission policies regarding conditional admission (i.e., students with low GPAs or low TOEFL scores).

25 responses



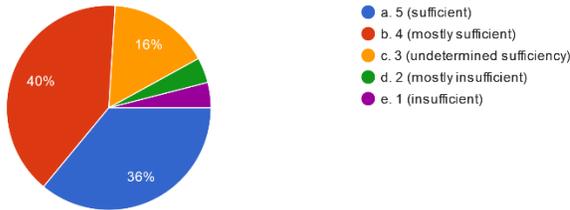
(Optional) You may add **comments or questions** here regarding **ADMISSION POLICIES: 5 responses**

- No conditional admissions
- Some law schools are waiving the IELTS or TOEFL for LLM admissions, opting for oral interviews instead. This has a negative effect on our recruiting, as prospective students are now demanding English assessment exam waivers. We are uncomfortable doing this, as an oral interview is not an adequate assessment for most applicants. Some students are very fluent in their speaking, but not able to perform sufficiently at law school. Also, it would be helpful to know what best practices for scholarships are. Many admitted LLM students say they received x% scholarships from other schools, but it is hard to verify those claims.
- English proficiency standards should be up to each institution, as the necessary proficiency varies according to the nature of the program. However, minimum standards could level the playing field among LLM programs, preventing schools from competing on the basis of lower admissions standards.
- This should be left up to the schools.
- There are no policies or guidelines regarding non-JD admissions.

II. ACADEMIC AND CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS: Regarding Academic and Curriculum Requirements within a graduate law program, rank each one of the following areas with respect to whether you believe there are sufficient standards and guidelines. Your perspective can collectively be based on your own law school, law schools in general, and/or the ABA and other bodies governing education. The rank categories are as follows: 5 (sufficient), 4 (mostly sufficient), 3 (undetermined sufficiency), 2 (mostly insufficient), 1 (insufficient).

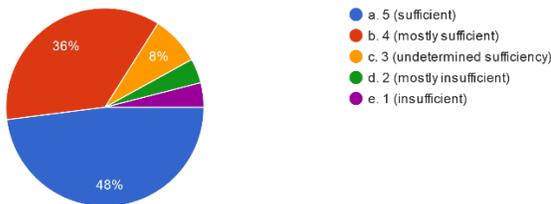
1) The types of required courses within an academic program.

25 responses



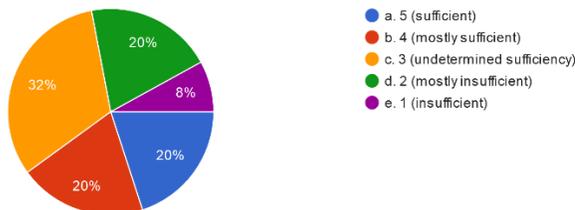
2) The offering of elective courses.

25 responses



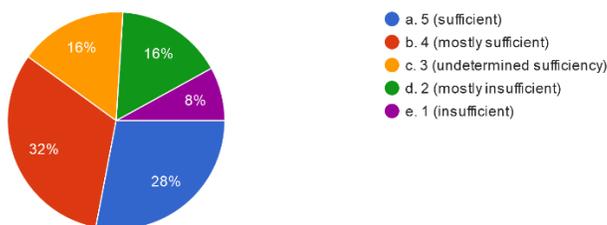
3) Determining options and criteria for offering experiential learning type courses such as externships, internships, clinics, and practicums.

25 responses



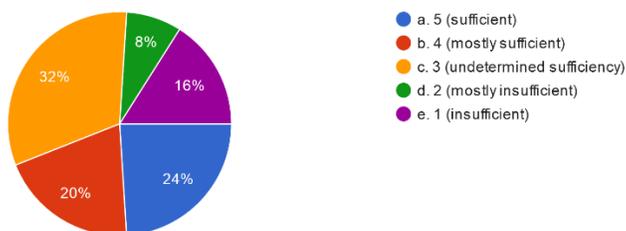
4) Determining options and criteria for incorporating writing requirements such as through thesis papers and/or capstone projects.

25 responses



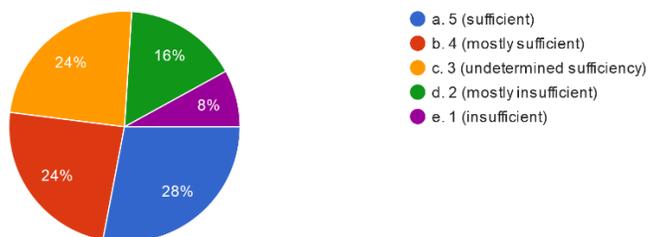
5) Using grading curves within graduate law non JD courses.

25 responses



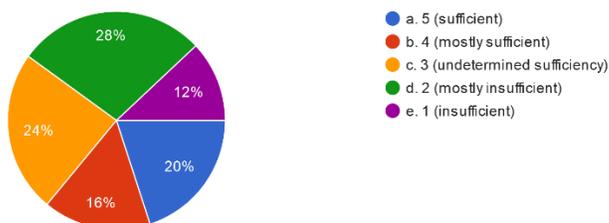
6) Separate classes or combined classes with JD students.

25 responses



7) Designing and implementing delivery models within graduate legal education (e.g., online courses, blended campus and online courses).

25 responses



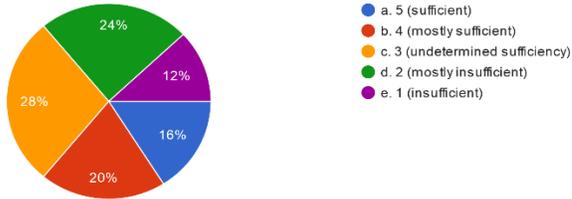
(Optional) You may add comments or questions here regarding ACADEMIC AND CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS: 2 responses

- NY bar admission eligibility is driving any current bounds on required courses for non-JD students (Q1 and Q2). Experiential/practical courses are already hard for LLM students to participate in given prerequisites and visa requirements; and changes to ABA standards should not impose any further constraints. Similarly, for writing requirements etc. Q4 (writing) through Q6 (separate classes) should be up to each institution. Online and blended courses are simply money-making ventures for schools and do not serve international students well as part of a U.S. degree program/alternative. However, online and blended options are an excellent way to allow U.S. and foreign students from non-ABA institutions to engage in real time. The ABA should encourage all institutions to promote the internationalization of the law school curriculum, including the use of blending learning options through international partnerships.
- There are no guidelines or regulations.

III. EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS & PROFESSIONAL DATA: Regarding Employment Statistics & Professional Data among students in graduate legal education programs, rank each one of the following areas with respect to whether you believe there are sufficient standards and guidelines. Your perspective can collectively be based on your own law school, law schools in general, and/or the ABA and other bodies governing education. The rank categories are as follows: 5 (sufficient), 4 (mostly sufficient), 3 (undetermined sufficiency), 2 (mostly insufficient), 1 (insufficient).

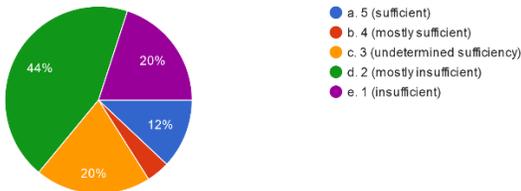
1) Aligning curriculum and educational objectives with career paths.

25 responses



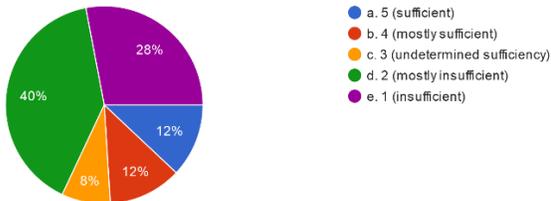
2) Career counseling and employment placement assistance.

25 responses



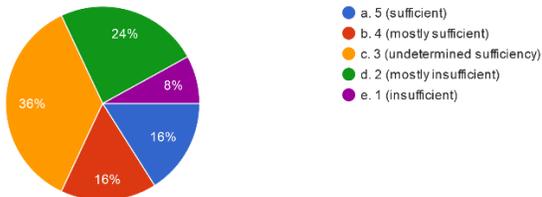
3) Collecting and measuring career data from alumni of graduate law programs.

25 responses



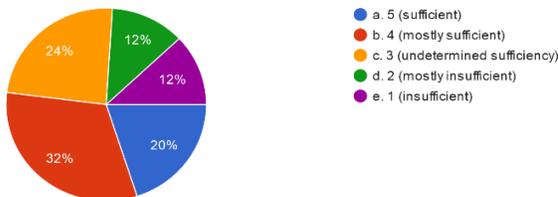
4) Assisting with job search, resume writing, and interview practice.

25 responses



5) Assistance with bar exam application procedures and for other professional licensing and certification opportunities.

25 responses



(Optional) You may add **comments or questions** here regarding **EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS & PROFESSIONAL DATA: 3 responses**

- Should be at least recommended best practices to subscribe if not standards to meet
- International student needs are diverse and career services offices lack the capacity to fully assist this cohort, esp. students who hope to obtain U.S. employment. We provide the same resources as we do to JD students, but these students are largely on their own for the "extra" that we cannot provide. We advise students accordingly so they are on notice, but we hope the ABA can encourage all institutions to be equally forthright when the institution cannot or does not offer employment assistance regarding opportunities outside the U.S. or opportunities for students without work authorization in the U.S. While we do provide extra assistance with resumes and interviews on a case by case basis to foreign graduate students, it is our impression that other institutions do not uniformly do so.
- There are no guidelines or regulations.