



Survey Results (Included Responses)



J.D. Specialization: Current Students

Questions that required written responses are displayed by individual query. The "Report Overview" button or "Back" button will return you to your survey results.

Each individual respondent is referenced under the # column.

25

Please provide any additional input relative to the issue of specialization within the J.D. curriculum.

#	Response
1	What do the employers think? This is doomed if it's only a ploy to get more tuition money without employer support or interest in the programs.
2	If schools are to have specialized programs, rankings in those areas would be enough to influence me.
3	This country values specialization. I don't. The motivation behind specialization is money..not equal representation for all.
4	I believe that special consideration (such as accreditation) should be given to specialization programs when a student follows a certain track.
5	Does it really matter? Law school is not the real world. You should be focusing on making the law school experience relate practically to the practicing world of law.
6	none
7	Specific accreditation and a consistent use of specialization descriptors from school to school would increase the value of such specialized programs to employers and students. Employers would know more about what a specialized program listed on an applicant's resume actually represented, and a student would be better able to use such a specialization to demonstrate to employers a higher level of training in that area of law. I do think that specialized programs would be more valuable if they were standardized. Conversely, until such standardization occurs, I don't think many students will attribute much weight to specialized programs when deciding among law schools. At least, that was my reasoning for not doing so -- a schools overall reputation seemed much more important than what specializations it offered.
8	If you're trying to market a specialized program to attract students. You should consider showing how many students who chose a specialized program were able to find a job in their field of specialization. If you're specializing and you can't find employment in that field; what would be the point of either specializing in the hypothetically offered program; or going to the school that offers the hypo. specialized program?
9	Concentration sounds much better than track (which sounds like a jail sentence)
10	I knew what it was going to be like when I got here, but the whole idea of everything relying on grades, and grades being more important relatively than absolutely stinks.
11	ALTHOUGH SPECIALIZATION SHOULD BE AVAILABLE TO PERSONS WHO JUST WANT IT, THE OVERALL GOAL OF A LEGAL EDUCATION SHOULD REMAIN GENERAL ENOUGH TO EXPOSE STUDENTS TO AS MANY AREAS OF LAW AS POSSIBLE. SPECIALIZATION, AS AN IDEA, SHOULD NOT BE USED TO PREVENT THOSE WHO WOULD LIKE TO ACQUIRE SKILL IN VARIOUS AREAS OF THE LAW WHILE IN LAW SCHOOL.
12	I feel that I can get the specialization I need through elective coursework and internships/ summer employment
13	Your thoughts are very good. But, if label of specialized program is 'certificate', who apply for that program?
14	Ranking of law schools should be abolished!
15	I can take classes that relate to my specialized interest so I'm not sure of the necessity of a "certification" or whatever. I'm assuming I can just tell employers that I've taken x classes that relate to the job I want to do and they will consider that as much of an advantage as getting a certificate.
16	UConn rocks. Go Huskies!
17	MBA/ JD program
18	?
19	There should be a standard set with minimum hours. More credit for more specialization and that should be reflected in the US News rankings as such.
20	I think it is more important to be well rounded in all types of law than it is to be specialized in a limited field of law.
21	The school I selected having the specialty area I was interested in reassured me that I would be given plenty of opportunity to study my area(s) of interest as well as have something to show for it when I am done.
22	I am the batman.

- 23 Until specialization options become more uniform and prevalent, greater weight will continue to be given to "rankings" over "specialization"
- 24 i think specialization would be especially helpful in the fields of law that require more scientific background.
- 25 If the ABA can standardize the basic J.D. program for ABA accredited schools, it can do the same for specialized fields.
- 26 Specialization is ok, but I think it is important that a student get a broad exposure during school to make sure of where they fit.
- 27 Not a bad idea, except for the fact that most lawyers don't end up practicing in the area they though they were going to practice.
- 28 I chose to receive a more general legal education as to a specialized one. I felt that I would be more attractive to employers if I did so and I may change my mind in the next three years as to the areas in which I want to practice.
- 29 If I chose a specialty program, I would want the prestige of a respected, rigorous program in the concentration area. If it seemed to me the school had created a specialty program meretly to respond to a current "fad" in law, it would not interest me.
- 30 Specialization is ok, but the law is not specialized. Some many issues overlay so many areas of law that specializtion without a very solid base hurts a lawyer's ability be effective.
- 31 There are many other factors that go into a decision to attend a particular law school besides level of specialization offered or even if the school has specialization. Reputation, while important, is also not the only consideration. Quality of education, location, and the quality of life at the school are also important.
- 32 The idea of a specialized program is appealing in that it implies some level of expertise in one area - something that is appealing given the perceived necessity of specialization once in practice (unless doing general practice upon graduation). It suggests a sort of perfected understanding and presents itself as helping a student hone in on an area of particular interest as well as offering employers a desirable quality in prospective associates. The concerns I have about it, however, lie in whether it would limit learning and prevent a general, overall understanding of the law and risk focusing learning too soon...such that opportunities to discover other, varied interests might be foreclosed.
- 33 I feel most of my fellow students (an me too) don't really know what kind of law they want to practice when they enter law school. Specialization programs wouldn't cut it for most entering students, at least until the second or third years.
- 34 I don't think we have any particular specializations. In fact I have been disappointed by the lack of civil/human rights courses offered. The school seems to cator to corporate law even though it holds itself out to be a general program. I think lawyers need to know a lot about a lot of things and specializing is good if that is where your interest is, but a lawyer should still have to know the basics about other areas of law which will eventually, most likely, overlap. AS long as you have decent courses with decent professors you can learn from that is the important factor. If you really want to specialize, after graduation, you can do that on your own.
- 35 I would assume in a state like Nebraska specialty areas would not be a plus.
- 36 n/a
- 37 The issue of whether or not a school offers a track/certificate/concentration in one field or another played absolutely no role in my decision of where to apply/attend.
- 38 Maine Law does offer a concentrated track in environmental law with an associated Ocean and Coastal Law Journal. This concentration is quite respected nationally for its quality. I do not consider this concentration a "specialized program" for purposes of this survey.
- 39 I chose a school based on money and lifestyle. I could not have afforded tuition or to live in the places where the programs I wanted to attend were based, so many I ruled out prior to application deadlines. Additionally, the schools were specifically too costly considering I am interested in things like child advocacy and that I will never be able to pay off the student loans!! It is a true disservice to those of us that want to do public interest work that only high status schools appear to have many of these "specialized" programs. There don't seem to be any loan forgiveness programs attached to lower ranked or cheaper schools....I will still struggle to do public interest work from the debt I will have after school. I am lucky that the school I attend is focused in general on community service and public interest and that there are several professors that are very involved in these areas of law. That helps me on my path. Thanks!
- 40 Specialization only pigeonholes prospective applications
- 41 specialization should never come at the expense of a solid classical grounding.
- 42 J.D. programs shouldn't try to get too cuddly and helpful like this survey seems to imply they are thinking of doing. There are enough law schools, law students, and lawyers out there already. I do not see a need to make the degree more appealing, accessible, or useful; it will only weaken the perceived rigor of any school doing it and make it seem more like a liberal arts degree, which while intellectually valuable, is neither as useful or as rigorous as a law degree.
- 43 I dont know
- 44 The issue seems to be reaching grave importance. There is a consensus that lawyers must specialize now because of the liabilities in advertising to clients that you may adequately represent their interests through a general practice. Law schools and bar exams continue to cater to the premise that we will all be general practitioners - although it strongly discouraged. Specialization within the JD curriculum without more, i.e., specialized licenses, bar exams, etc., while attractive in theory, does not seem to be conducive to passing that final hurdle - the Bar Exam.
- 45 I don't think specialization is that important.
- 46 It is important to be known for something, whether it is a specialty in one area or a specialty in for example, a more general program. While a specialty lured me to my school of choice, it was extremely important that the school also offer quality instruction in other areas, because they are generally the areas a student with a specialty knows little about. Good instruction in these other "non-specialty" areas are important for the well-rounded lawyer. In addition, while a specialty can be very useful, the skills learned in law school can be applied to any field of law.

- 47 a school should not allow one specialization to consume the entire program, just because a school is known for a particular specialization it seems to much of an advocacy for that position when the subject matter is weaved into every required core class
- 48 i think specialization is dangerous in some respects. i know some people are hesitant to take classes they think are "bar classes" (eg evidence) just because it won't help them with their specialization. it seems silly to close oneself off from learning other subject matter or becoming a better-rounded lawyer. specialization is fine. i, for example, am earning a certificate in general practice. it's only one class a semester for 4 semesters. it gives me plenty of time to take other courses.
- 49 Everything in our country seems to be heading to more and more specialization. Why not legal studies then. This is also harmonious with the rampant explosion of litigation which makes it nearly impossible to not specialize in any one area when you actually practice.
- 50 Law schools should not be allowed to list elective courses that are not regularly offered with classes offered each year. It is disappointing to learn, only after you enroll in a particular law school, that those courses are unavailable. I decided to attend a law school w/o a specialized program only because of the amount of environmental courses listed within their catalog. I have been enrolled since January 2001 and have yet been given any opportunity to take such "advertised" elective classes. I am not the only student with this opinion, 75% of my entering class agrees!!
- Many students are indifferent as to whether a "certificate" or a "specialization" is offered, so long as the curriculum is diversified. I attend a law school w/ two (almost three) concentration programs. If I am not interested in any of the courses offered within those programs it will be very difficult to graduate, as the electives offered are mostly within such concentration fields
- 51 typo question 17.
- 52 More intensive 'lawyering skills' training, but not at the expense of more traditional substantive, classroom instruction
- 53 personally, the most important criteria in determining a law school is its ranking which generally correlates to its reputation. Beyond that, your success depends on GPA and law review/journal experience.
- 54 Any school that wishes to specialize in a n area must also serve the opposite crowd as well. You can not learn a specialty with out knowing what your opposition is going to do as well.
- 55 extremely useful training prior to employment
- 56 Specialization can also be visible through clinical and experiential programs.
- 57 Corporate, IP, Criminal, International, ADR, should all be available concentrations
- 58 I have at least two job offers at large firms and had nine flyback offers to firms that had at least 150 attorneys, and I am not sure what type of law I will practice. From my perspective, one should go to the highest ranked school they can get into, be ranked in the top 15% of their class, and expect the firms to line up to recruit them. I am not sure what specializing helps to accomplish. Firms want the best talent; they will teach you what you need to know. However, my experience is limited.
- 59 In my experience, specialization programs made a law school look much more attractive to a prospective student. Courses were often highlighted, giving the appearance that they had many more courses to offer than a school that did not have specialization options, and professors were also highlighted who have accolades in that field. When I was a prospective student I had the suspicion that there wasn't much difference to schools that clumped similar classes together and called them some sort of 'certificate program' or some other name they came up with and the schools that just offered a range of classes in no particular grouping.
- Specialization programs seemed to be strong selling points, making the school look more up to date on the interests of current students.
- 60 Generally, a bad idea. Law schools should remain geared towards graduating lawyers with exposure to many areas of the law.
- 61 I have actually recently applied to a law college lower ranked than my current law college and am considering transferring with one of the major considerations being they are known for turning out trial lawyers and have a specialization in criminal law. The tuition and class size is about the same. The teaching quality is about the same, according to U.S. News.
- 62 There should be more opportunities to explore specialization opportunities in the first year. In other words, first year students should be given more career counseling, more opportunity, to discover what specialty might suit them.
- 63 I choose only to apply to schools which had a strong specialty program in the area I thought I wanted to practice. After 2 1/2 years of concentrating my legal education in this area, I realize I have no desire to practice in this field and because my school is so specialized, there are few courses offered in the area I do find exciting. I wish I had taken the general overview of course offerings when deciding where to apply.
- 64 What about joint Masters programs? I think these, if designed properly, yield the greatest benefits of any specialized curriculum.
- 65 I think the legal profession is traditionally bent and inherently suspicious of the less traditional, less traditional somehow often less rigorous
- 66 Make it affordable. Make it easily applicable to 'real-world' legal work. Ensure the professors are not only skilled, but approachable and personable to students.
- 67 Before I started law school, I had no idea what area I wanted to practice in. I therefore was looking for a highly ranked school with a good general education and was not concerned with specialization programs.
- 68 Isn't specialization what an LLM is for?
- 69 Good lawyers know as much law as they can fit in their heads without myopically focusing on stupid shit.

- 70 Since my school didn't offer specialization I chose to pursue a joint degree to show my level of commitment. JD/MBA = unofficial concentration in business
- 71 None
- 72 I would have preferred to specialize, but because so many classes are needed just to pass the state of VA bar, specialization really doesn't matter.
- 73 Possible that with specialization programs, certain employers would not hire without that concentration and thus leave less options for those not sure what they want to do.
- 74 I tend to favor a much more well-rounded approach to legal studies. Lawyers should specialize when they go out and practice after sampling several different practice areas.
- 75 I believe it would be a plus to an employer. I am particularly interested in Antitrust. I am taking all the courses my law school offers in the subject: at present, 3. I believe an employer looking at 2 identical candidates with identical courses and grades, but one of whom has officially "earned" a "concentration" or "minor" in Antitrust would be chosen over the comparable candidate with the same courses/performance, but without the official designation. I believe strength of school outweighs the presence or absence of a designation; however, all else being equal, it might have made a difference to me as a law school applicant, and I think it looks good to firms.
- 76 I've been told over and over again that law school doesn't teach you anything you need to know about being a lawyer, except how to think like a lawyer. This leads me to believe that that most areas of specialization are superfluous because you'll learn most of what you need to know in practice. I mean if you want to be a tax lawyer than you'll probably already be a CPA or get an MBA, so you probably don't need more specialization in law school. Although, intellectual property does seem like an important area for specialization.
- 77 I am in a JD/MBA program and the MBA program offers several areas of specialization. MBA employers expect to see specialization and it helps in the job search process because they set requirements according to specialization.
- 78 It may be good to offer a concentration, but you can get that by just choosing what classes you take. It seems better to offer a solid legal education that would properly prepare you for specialization in any area. The idea of further specialization seems unnecessary and limiting (in that you may change your mind later or need knowledge of areas you didn't study to be effective in obtaining and succeeding at a job).
- 79 I think a generalized philosophically-based (i.e. not specialized and not predominantly hands-on skills) education, combined with what will certainly be on-the-job exposure to specialties, offers the most to the average law student. Further, the way every area of law constantly changes and the way all areas of law inevitably work together are further reasons that a philosophical background in generalized principles are essential to an education that can at all times be adapted to changing reality.
- 80 N/A
- 81 I'm actually not sure if any of the schools I applied to had or had specialized programs. I also think it is unnecessary because law school should be more of a liberal arts education, most students don't know what area they want to specialize in anyway (with the exception of older, non-traditional students or students with advanced degrees in certain areas) and people have the freedom to take the classes they want to specialize in anyway.
- 82 I am currently pursuing a joint degree in environmental planning to give me a stronger background in environmental regulation because the school I attend does not offer many environmental law classes.
- 83 I want a good general legal education, the concentration should be supplement, not replacement for that. A fourth year LL.M with a specialization could be a better overall approach.
- 84 I am pursuing a certificate in Public Interest Law. My law school has newly developed a more comprehensive foundational curriculum than was available when I entered and a greater commitment to making sure core courses are offered regularly. All a very good thing, I think.
- 85 Not everyone has an area of specialization in the beginning of law school, but may develop one in their 2nd or 3rd year. It would be hard to switch schools to accommodate this interest. This could be avoided if all schools offered areas of specialization like other programs, (i.e. medicine, education, etc)
- 86 I knew what kind of law I wanted to practice before entering law school and I knew that it was important to learn as much as I can about that body of law before graduation to make myself more marketable in a competitive field, international law. I am in my last year of law school.
- 87 These questions are a waste of time for busy law students.
- 88 The fact that a school offers a specialization within the field of law I am interested indicates to me that there will be a number of classes (maybe more than at a school without the specialization) from which to choose and in which I will be interested.
- 89 I don't think it is very important to employers.
- 90 My interest is in family/juvenile dependency & domestic violence. If a school offered a strong concentration or specialized program in that area, I might have considered it but there are other extremely important factors, such as the clinical component, the perspective of the program -- traditional law or progressive views. I am holistically trained and am bringing that to my law education and practice. I would not choose a school with a specialized program that merely had traditional classes and experience as its focus. I have gotten a very rich experience on my own. I chose the school I attend based on a number of factors the most important of which was the faculty focus on students. The second most important factor for me was practical -- the school is located within 50 miles, is considered a very good school and I could take the train so I didn't have to commute in traffic. I hope this helps you in your research. Good Luck!
- 91 I think certificate programs can be effectively used to demonstrate a moderate to superior level of breadth and proficiency in a particular area. Consistent criteria for such programs would be useful for such a demonstration.
- 92 none
- 93 earning a masters in my area of specialization, along with my JD, is attractive

- 94 I've never really thought about it before this
- 95 I would like to see more specialization in the entertainment area of law. Only one of the schools to which i applied actually offered ONE course in that area.
- 96 Two issues that made a lot of the difference for me are:
1) that the location of the school was in the same town where my husband and family are and I doubt I would've gone to school far away regardless of the "track" it offered.
2) Further, I was fortunate enough to get a scholarship for all of tuition and a stipend. Considering the debtload, I could not walk away from that regardless of any specialty offered.
- I would have liked it if an LLM program was offered at our school - I think that would make it a more attractive school. Because again, with location being a primary issue, I am unlikely to have that opportunity unless it is offered through my current school.
- Additionally, my school advertises its legal writing certificate program, but then there are roughly only 20-30 slots open each year. Considering there are 150 students, if someone came to our school for that purpose and did not make the "lottery", I would feel defrauded if that was the enticement that made me choose that particular school.
- 97 n/a
- 98 Perhaps law schools should be modeled after med school curriculum specialization. I feel that law schools should not require specializations in the near future, but perhaps offer more certificate programs. Mercer Law School offers a writing certificate program.
- 99 Specializing certificate programs was a consistent concern when I toured the different schools and made my ultimate decision. The decision came down to what program I thought I would benefit more from, in the event I had the opportunity to do so.
- 100 MMost people don't know what kind of law they want to practice while in law school. It's more important at that point to learn the basics of how to practice law. If someone wants to specialize, they can go get at LLM.
- 101 JD specialization should reflect marketable specialties and new paradigms in law and sovereignty.
- 102 I don't tend to think that JD specialization is worthwhile - I think law schools should produce lawyers, not specialists, and that if you then want to add on to that education you should seek an LLM.
- 103 Although I think being specialized is good, it may be difficult for a law student who doesn't know what kind of law he or she would like to practice, to choose a specialization. In addition, many people end up working in an area they didn't expect to after law school. As a result, a specialization may not be of much benefit. Lastly, when a law student who has a specialization first begins looking for a job, he or she may be more limited in prospective employers if he or she wants to find a job within that specialty. This may make it more difficult to find a job.
- 104 The main problem is that there is no consistency and the employers really do not know what any of this means - and that is what is most important!
- 105 The main label that matters would seem to be the J.D.
- 106 a good lawyer can do it all!!
- 107 I have a B.s. in Pol Sci with a minor in Biochemistry, and my Doctorate of Pharmacy.
- 108 Just that there should always be a general category, don't limit all types of law to a specialization
- 109 I would rather have a degree from a higher-ranked school because it, in effect, could open more doors for jobs. I can always specialize once I begin practicing.
- 110 It is generally perceived that school has no true, relevant bearing on the real world of law. What you learn that is significant doesn't happen until after graduation. Claiming a 'specialty' in school seems to be rather ridiculous.
- 111 I think this survey is flawed in many respects. For one it assumes that everyone is specializing and knows what they hell they are doing. As a 1L i have no idea about any of that. Second of all how am i suppose to know what makes me attractive to potential employers (#6). I'm sure it helps to specialize, but not necessarily the end all be all of the interview process. Thirdly, questions 21-25 need ot have the "i don't care" button... I answered yes/no but really i don't care. Question 5...please define "innovative"....the word sounds good but what does it entail?
- 112 I could care less about what a school says it speacializes in. This to me doesn't see to be anything important until your 2 or 3 year of school, when you look to transfer. Even then you are going to look at schools that people in the area you are looking to specialize in reccomend, not schools that "say" they are great at it.
- 113 They should be general enough to apply to all aspects of the specialization. For example, I want to specialize in Agency law, but the only thing really close to what I need is Sports Law. Therefore, I attend a school with this program, but only a limited number ob these classes actually apply to what I want to do.
- 114 correspondance courses
- 115 Dont go to loyola law school.
- 116 none
- 117 If preequisits, such as intensive knowledge in biology or coputers, are considered "important", as with some IP fields, should those not be listed also?
- 118 environmental
- 119 schools in general should clarify the existence of specialized programs, not for marketing purposes, but to further educate the students about their possibile routes though school
- 120 no standard + on the job training.

- 121 The 1st Year Trial Practicum at Drake University is innovative and very educational and should be a model for all schools.
- 122 At this point in my law school career, I don't believe that specialization is that important to me. Perhaps, as we get out of the general courses, that will make a difference.
- 123 I think specialization is good for those very focused on a certain area of the law. However, for those that aren't sure, a specialized program could pigeonhole them into an area they may not even like.

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