

## Survey Results (Included Responses)

[REPORT OVERVIEW](#)

### J.D. Specialization: Faculty/Admin

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.

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

#	Response
1	I think that joint degrees should also be considered as specialized. Students are often able to complete a master's degree in the same time that they can complete a certificate within a JD.
2	Specialization is for the unique student. Most students need a generalist education and should not specialize too early.
3	Our JD graduates are doing well in the job market without specializations; though we offer them, few students partake of them.
4	16 is very hard to answer because certificate programs much like joint programs are not widely participated in by students. They all talk about them and don't do a joint program
5	with law enrollments expected to fall specialized programs are a way to attract more students and maybe stretch the program another year
6	I believe UVA once offered a specialization in taxation and no longer does so.
7	Schools should give students information about recommended courses for certain fields of practice. A list of a student's courses probably gives employers enough info about that student's knowledge level.
8	Almost all lawyers, regardless of their area of specialty, benefit from having a solid foundation of legal knowledge in areas outside that specialty. For that reason, I think a general, broad-based legal education should be required of every law student. Offering specializations incorrectly implies to students that broad-based education is unnecessary past the first year.
9	Although my present law school does not offer a specialization program, the JD program I attended did. I earned a "certificate" in international law, which was earned by taking a certain number of credit hours in international law. I liked the ability to put the certificate on my resume as it demonstrated my interest in and commitment to the subject area.
10	I'm somewhat confounded (sorry) by this good survey. We have multiple joint degrees (planning, business, social work, public administration, public health), certificate programs in international studies and nonprofit work (many times with a strong university that's a real plus for students to integrate law and "non-law" concentrations). I'm not sure that your survey captures that.? I've not included these in the responses above (did on the first cut then thought I might be confounding your data)... but these are really a better (in my opinion) educational option. --Judith Wegner, UNC (judith_wegner@unc.edu) (I'm a former dean and have been conducting national research on legal education so might have insights to share with you if you want to contact me at 919-962-4113)
11	Our Advocacy concentration is not limited to litigation.
12	I haven't given a lot of thought to the subject. While I am generally not favorably disposed, I could be persuaded that some specialization (perhaps in the 3rd year) is a feasible and potentially beneficial option. As it stands, I don't see the need--nor do I believe that a lot could be done without neglecting basics.
13	The problem with specialization is that it takes away from general legal education and preparation for the bar exam.
14	We do not have any certificate programs, although I would like to see them. We have joint programs with the undergrad, which I would like to see more of. I think certificate programs really solidify "specializations" and make them more legit.
15	Since the ABA must "acquiesce" to schools' summer programs abroad, it would seem logical that they be asked to do so for "certificates," "concentrations," and "tracks."
16	Specialization prior to practice is a mistake for the vast majority of lawyers.
17	I think specialization can be helpful but is not always, nor is it right at all schools. Smaller schools in particular need to offer a full range of courses, and that is more important than any one specialization.
18	Specialization should not be required.
19	Specialized programs should require higher number of hours for graduation.  Concern as to how much of all this is mere glitz!!!
20	With regard to question #15 my honest answer is maybe, but I probably lean more toward yes as opposed to no.
21	Several questions are difficult to answer y/n. Q15 is impossible.

- 22 I think there is so much basic law to learn that it makes little sense for people to try to specialize at the JD level. I'm not opposed to that in an LLM program, but I think specialization is often more of a marketing scheme than something that actually benefits students.
- 23 The Infusion curriculum is designed to provide exposure to skills training and ethics instruction in every course throughout the curriculum.
- 24 For more information on our environmental and land use law certificate, visit our website at <http://www.law.ufl.edu/elulp>
- 25 questions 14-16 above should have had a don't care/won't make a difference answer.
- I see the greatest benefit in concentrations coming in allow students to make sense of curriculum (whether or not they chose to concentrate) and to keep pressure on administration as it decides how often and by whom to staff courses.
- To the extent that these concentrations may be precursors to real "department" in law schools, I think law schools would be the worse off for it.
- 26 Regarding whether I personally think law schools should offer opportunities to earn a specialized designation, I think they are beneficial in some schools from some students. It is also perfectly appropriate for a law school to decide that a certificate program is contrary to the academic goals of the institution.
- 27 I'm not sure I fully understand questions 12-15.
- 28 It would be helpful in completing the survey if you explained what you mean by specialization more thoroughly at the beginning. Thanks.
- 29 We have a large number of joint degree programs which function something like the specialization programs you are asking about. We have no specialization programs per se (as defined in this survey). But a joint degree (which we do market) covers much the same ground.
- 30 We do offer several family law related courses and have a legal aid clinic where family law is practiced. We also teach many classes in litigation.
- 31 I support certificate. I don't know if Connecticut's state bar permits them yet. State bar requirements could be a substitute for accreditation.
- 32 send me a copy of your results
- 33 Our specialization does not consist of a concentration or certificate. Rather students apply to be part of a program that offers courses and extracurricular activities in a particular area. On their resume they can put that they participated in the program, but there is nothing that goes on the diploma for example.
- In general, I would be concerned that standardization across schools would limit the ability of schools to shape programs as they wish. There are a wide variety of ways that schools can provide opportunities for specialized study and recognize that specialization. Standardization would cabin innovation in this area.
- 34 I am much in favor of track-type systems, and hope we will start moving in that direction. Great idea to do this project, and I hope you will keep the rest of us informed on your progress.
- 35 I don't like the specializations at the JD level because students must choose at the beginning of second year, before they have received exposure to areas of law that might be more attractive to them. I think the LLM is a better route if we're talking about what's best for the students, but that is seen as paternalistic by many of my colleagues.
- 36 These are necessary to give students greater depth of knowledge and greater enjoyment. They may be valuable in differentiated students in the job market. They certainly help schools to market their products.
- 37 As a former big-firm hiring partner and current tenured professor, I don't think formal designations of specialization are of much use. Students may specialize by taking courses in a particular area. There is no obvious benefit to anyone of giving them "concentration" credit.
- 38 You may consider my answers contradictory. Let me explain why not so.  
At the University of Oklahoma College of Law, the school has no specialization or certificate programs. Faculty have voted against this idea at least twice. OU has no LL.M. programs either. However, for at least fifteen years, OU has a formalized "emphasis areas" in the College of Law bulletin and students are counseled about "emphasis areas." In question 7, I checked and listed the emphasis areas (which are voluntary curricular guidance) even though not formally a specialization or certification program. OU's emphasis areas are curricular tracks for the guidance and information of students as the students make choices among the courses offered.
- 39 I think that it is fine to offer certificate programs at the J.D. level as we do, but you have to be careful because if every area has their own pet program then the certificates become less valuable or significant.
- 40 Many foreign law schools offer at least one option to gain a specialization and US students should be able to compete in the global market with such specialized competitors.
- 41 JD candidates should be able to certify an area of concentration, provided the curriculum at the law school they attend adequately supports (number of electives; range of electives; when are courses given; are they reasonably available to the entire student population; who teaches the elective program: Full-time faculty or adjuncts). This is key. Specialization might be extremely useful to a young lawyer who intends to practice in a state which has a specialized Bar that also certifies practitioners who meet similar criteria for certification as a specialist in, for example, Tax or Estate Planning.
- 42 Our programs have proved highly successful as measured by student employment opportunities, faculty recruitment and retention and alumni satisfaction.
- 43 while it is an interesting marketing device students may be misled about their actual preparation level to actually "practice" in a specialized field.
- 44 I am somewhat skeptical of the value of concentrations (which is what we call them here). Clearly, they have been

useful for purposes of marketing, and for that reason, I suppose I cannot say no to question 16. I have my doubt that they have any value beyond marketing.

- 45 There should be a discussion of whether, without specialization, law school should just be two years. Specialization in, e.g., tax, can take you into a third year. But it seems a lot of what lawyers learn, they learn on the job. But these are controversial claims, and should be the subject of serious discussion in the profession.
- 46 Re 16-I don't feel strongly either way. I recognize specialization helps in tight job markets or specialized areas, but am concerned that emphasis on specialization will result in students not taking advantage of full range of courses, while potentially tying them to specialization they may not ultimately practice in.
- 47 I think law practice evolves too much for such programs to add much value; students benefit more from intellectually demanding emphasis on foundational subjects.
- 48 Many of these ideas are quite tentative.
- 49 I think that is wise for students to get a general education in the law, to view the JD program as an opportunity to explore and to learn basic concepts in many fields, as well as the skills to learn other substantive areas. I am against specialization in the JD curriculum.
- 50 For the best students, over specialization should be avoided. There is more benefit for those who are less obviously employable.
- 51 While I support some kind of consistency in labels, I think a better way to promote that would be some ABA rules about what is needed for a "certificate" program for example, rather than making it a matter of accreditation per se, although I suppose such rules would allow the general accreditation process to examine such certificate programs to ensure they are following the rules. Although I support specialization because it benefits students in a difficult job market, I am concerned that specialization leads students to take a narrower range of courses. This both has an impact on the education of students getting such certificates, and on other students because the lower demand for non-certificate courses can lead to some of them being dropped. It would seem important to assess how valuable such certificates really are, both for getting jobs and being well-prepared for specific jobs. If neither of these goals is actually met by such programs, then I would withdraw my support for them. Presumably, potential employers will be the best judge of the value of these programs over some time and will vote with their job offers.
- 52 Specialization should never be required, but allowing it and grouping courses to aid students who wish to specialize is a service.
- 53 This may be a duplicate of an incomplete form that I was filling out.
- 54 A firm that cares (and most don't) can look at what courses a student has taken w/o formal specialization programs.
- 55 We are developing our International & Immigration Institute, which will offer the certification program.
- 56 Many, many lawyers end up practicing in an area which they never anticipated while they were in law school. In any discipline there is a tension between broad mastery and depth of knowledge. Specialization in law school becomes problematic when pursuing the certificate forecloses opportunities to take at least a few classes during law school that will expose the student to concepts and structures that go beyond the bounds of the certificate program.
- 57 didn't answer 16 because I'm torn. My mediation class students receive a certificate granted by state ADR Commission for 40 hr basic that they believe is a plus with employers.
- 58 Q. 13-15 are difficult to answer without determining what standards would be used.
- 59 I think the label should be up to the school and shouldn't carry any special significance. We started with "specialization" but switched to "concentration" because some faculty resisted the training of "specialists."
- 60 A general comment: Some of your questions are unclear. For example, in moving from Q6 to Q7, I was uncertain whether I should include (in Q7) areas in which we advertise our strengths but where we do not offer certificated specializations. As a result of my confusion, some of my answers might not be consistent with each other.
- 61 Loyola New Orleans is a bit different in that we have two separate curriculums: civil law and common law. We allow students to obtain a certificate in the other program.
- 62 We have joint JD/\*\* programs with other schools at our university, and I've deemed those, for purposes of this survey, to be "specialized." This is largely because the students in such programs get law school curricular credit for courses taken in the other schools. We have no "track" programs other than, arguably, one in environmental law, for which we conduct joint courses with another law school, with specific curricular requirements. My own view is that law students should take a general course of study and use their electives to feed their interests. We offer a pretty good summer program, during which core subjects are offered, giving scope for electives during the fall and spring terms. To put this in context I've taught law school for 20 years and clerked and practiced for 8 years before that -- I may be a mastedon. Frozen in time. All the best with your very worthwhile project.
- 63 I think it's just about the worst marketing gimmick law school have come up with (right after the US News rankings and just before the glossy brochure). After more than a decade of practice and almost two decades of teaching, I'd say that most students at most law schools don't even get to master the fundamentals of lawyering (blame the faculties and the predominant doctrinal focus of most curricula). How is specialization -- which usually only means 3-5 doctrinal courses in the area of concentration -- going to make them better lawyers? It's a hoax.
- 64 There needs to be more of a focus on courses and practical training for students who want to practice law
- 65 Specializations are bad news. Students think they actually make one a specialist which is totally wrong. Students CHOOSE schools based on a specialization which is wholly ludicrous. Students need an intensive, required broad-based liberal arts education in the law and NOT a concentration in one area of the law. They can do that when they get out. Most of these "specialization" programs are a joke. They are just a bunch of courses put together to mislead students into thinking they have some special expertise. Law students need to hit the basics on a broad level and hit them hard. We require 2/3s of their ENTIRE three year curriculum. We work them very hard. That is what makes an excellent lawyer and then they can truly specialize when they get out. I truly believe this entire specialization "program" is a silly, misleading and functionally worthless and is simply a way for law schools to attempt to market themselves to

unknowing and unsophisticated students. The ABA should forbid such advertising, only allow concentrations and severely restrict the number of credit hours that can be designated to them. We need to spend all of our time making these students lawyers and not having them use their "play time" in the last two years wandering around trying to believe they are becoming specialist. It is just so absolutely silly and counterproductive to effective teaching of professionals.

- 66 specialization is a marketing gimmick
- 67 No opinion on questions unanswered. You should provide that option on this questionnaire.
- 68 Our curriculum offers ample opportunity for specialization. We also give students guidance on developing their own programs. But labelling "specialized" programs and then giving them special recognition, creates the danger of a very unwanted rigidity that we have successfully avoided.
- 69 Question 6 confuses me on the defn used for subsequent questions.
- 70 A necessary evil
- 71 I'm not the right person at our institution to respond to this type of survey--try Alta Charo, our new associate dean
- 72 It is form over substance, catering to prospective law students' unformed ideas about legal education. 'Tis pity.
- 73 Your questions really don't address the interplay between the JD degree and the rising enrolments in specialized LLMS eg in the field of IP. We also offer a range of concurrent LLM/JD combinations, which are also increasingly popular.
- 74 To me specialization cannot be made uniform across teaching institutions because the content of courses is so varied. I think the accrediting process is sufficient regulation of the content of the law school education. The school's own integrity and student needs should allow the school to shape appropriate certificates, concentrations, etc. I would have a concern if a graduate tried to claim he or she was a specialist without special state bar recognition of same...that would be unethical and misleading to the public.
- 75 My negotiaotion/mediation class gives students the basic mediation training to be qualified or certified in the surrounding states.
- 76 It is a marketing gimmick. I don't think it means much to most employers, and students are better off getting a general grounding that will prepare them for a range of types of practice.
- 77 Specialization within the J.D. curriculum is a good idea ONLY if the certificate or other designation requires ADDITIONAL CREDIT HOURS beyond the number of credit hours required for the J.D. degree. All of our programs require eight additional hours. Otherwise, it is just a "major" and often at the expense of the general education required to be an effective lawyer.
- 78 Every law school has its own niche. That being the case, I don't see why the specialization can't be highlighted. On the other hand, if a law school is merely lising specialization that really don't exist, there should be some way to monitor this through the ABA. Perhaps this objective could be achieved through the site visits that occur.
- 79 i think that law school curriculum should be revised and expanded. current methods of teaching are very hidebound and old fashioned and fortunately not followed by many professors.
- 80 We suggest trascks. Is that specialization? We recommend tracks.Beyond that we do not go and at the JD level, I deem it inappropriate to add a specialty to a degree designation.
- 81 Specialized designations at the J.D. level are mere marketing gimmicks at best. It would be better if the ABA or AALS simply banned them.

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