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## November 4, 2025 Program: Q&A Responses

### **How many applications should we submit for 2L summer?**

There's never been a magic number; it totally depends on a student's goals and priorities -- for instance, there are more law firms in NY than in Portland, OR. So, more than 1, but fewer than 100. Most students likely apply to 40-60 between 1L and 2L summer jobs.

More does not mean better.

Quality over quantity. We recommend only applying to 3-5 positions on any one day. More than that, it's WAY too easy to make mistakes and typos. For many lawyers, it's very easy to eliminate an applicant because of a typo in their application materials -- attention to detail is a highly valued skill among young attorneys, particularly in BigLaw. At least through fall exams, think of submitting applications as study breaks (outline for an hour, send in one app, read for an hour, send in one app, etc.).

### **Any info on visa sponsorship?**

Not any more than you're reading in the news and on social media. When employers tell us if they are or are not open to hiring international students, that information is posted in 12twenty and in the Class of 2028 AirTable. If that field is blank, it means the employer hasn't provided any information. If it says "it depends," that means the firm is open to sponsoring international applicants (but it's a business decision, so associates that are making the firm money are more likely to be sponsored). With all the changes to immigration policy, and employers making hiring decisions 2+ years before a planned full-time employment start date, it is hard to have a concrete answer.

### **So if we don't work in Big Law during law school summers, we cannot enter the industry after graduation?**

Most entry-level hiring at BigLaw firms is made from their 2L summer class. Some firms will hire graduates coming off of judicial clerkships who did not summer at the firm, and there are always opportunities to move from one law firm to another once you are working -- this is called the "lateral" market. There are also a very small number of law firms that will recruit rising 3Ls for post-graduate positions, but this is based on the business needs of the firm and these postings are for specific office locations in specific practice groups.

There is NO EXPECTATION that students work at a law firm their 1L summer. There is very limited hiring done for the 1L summer. Typically, over 90% of summer associates at a firm are joining the firm after their 2L summer.

### **When is it best to apply for 2L positions that opened this week?**

Here's a very lawyerly answer -- apply when you have your best application materials ready. Many firms have told us that they would rather see well-edited and written resumes and cover letters than something thrown together to get materials in early.

You can supplement your applications later with your grades (available mid-January 2026).

If an employer asks for a legal writing sample, refer to the handout from your LRW professor (on BCourses) and integrate the feedback from your LRW professor before sending it to a firm. There's also a sample "blank page" to upload for a writing sample accessible to you in 12twenty in the Resource Library that explains to the employer that you plan to supplement your application with a writing sample later in the calendar year.

### **What is a good way to give a firm a good impression of you instead of a coffee chat?**

Lawyers respect research -- if you can show that you've done research (in-person and/or online) and why it's important to you, that's illustrating your legal skills and it's impressive. Law firms tell us they are looking for the "right fit" but they can't usually define that (well, they do with a response like "we know it when we see it," which is not helpful to you one bit!).

Think of using your LRW skills -- a citation -- "I learned X from this person (and this can be a 2L/3L you found via the Who Worked Where list) and this is why it's important to me" in your cover letters/interviews.

At a recent panel on campus, recruiters admitted that firms want to "feel special" -- you can do that through showing your research and synthesizing it to your own priorities and goals.

### **If the unthinkable happens and we make a mistake in our application (typos, wrong position, name, etc.) is it worth it to email and correct it?**

It happens! The CDO recommends sending in an "updated" resume -- maybe it notes a new description of your SLP or a new leadership position. Don't point out your error, instead focus on what's new when you send in the updated document.

### **When I was applying to law school, my school bursar would send the LSAC the transcript directly. How does sending the official transcript work with firms?**

You'll have to follow the instructions for the employer's website, but most likely it will be uploading a file -- a PDF of your official electronic transcript or screen shot should be fine. You will not be asking your undergrad institution or UC Berkeley Law to submit an official transcript to each employer.

**Is there any risk to applying for 1L summer in order to enter the "pipeline," knowing that you would turn down a 1L summer offer for, e.g., an externship?**

NOPE! \*\*No downside at all.\*\* If you accept a non-law firm job for the 1L summer, and then are offered a 1L summer firm interview/offer, it's a GREAT legal negotiation strategy to reply "Thank you for this opportunity, I have already accepted a position with Judge \_\_\_\_\_ for the 1L summer, however, I'd love to talk to you about a 2L opportunity." Firms typically have less than 1 1L for every 9 2Ls they hire, they hire WAY more 2Ls than 1Ls.

**What happens if I receive an offer for 1L and 2L summer, I work for them my 1L summer and I decide I do not want to continue?**

Yeah, that's a new thing this year - good issue spotting. Honestly, we don't know because firms are telling us they intend to complete 2L hiring by June (before you've started your 1L summer). However, over the past two years as the 2L BigLaw timeline has moved earlier and been compressed, firms are still hiring in the summer -- we just received a job post for a BigLaw firm for 2Ls this week in the CDO, so it happens.

The other good news is that most students DO like their firm and are happy to return for a second summer and post-grad. Through the interview process, you will meet 4-8 attorneys or more that you'd be working with and you will want to talk to 2Ls/3Ls that worked there to confirm your decision before you accept an offer.

**How can we create a contingency plan for if our 2L position gets eliminated or if we are the 2% who doesn't get invited back post-grad?**

1. We haven't seen a situation for 2L positions getting eliminated (this is based on Leslie's 25 years of legal experience). Law firms don't like that kind of bad PR. They read Reddit too.
2. We'll have programming later in the spring on how to have a successful summer associate experience.

There's no way around it, not getting an offer sucks. CDO counselors work very closely with those few students to help them reapply to other jobs as 3Ls. The most common reason that students that don't receive offers have (a) missed deadlines repeatedly without telling attorneys in advance or (b) misbehaved socially in the office or at events (often because of alcohol), or (c) the student clearly didn't like working there and didn't participate in projects/social events/trainings.

Firms hire 2Ls with the intent of giving 100% offers to students -- this is not a "Hunger Games" situation.

**Can we apply to multiple offices for each firm? Is that usually through one application or multiple?**

Totally depends on the firm -- their applications will note if you can only apply to one office, or if you apply to one office and say in your cover letter why you'd be interested in multiple offices, or if you apply separately to each office. We have seen all of these options this year. The CDO recommends not applying to more than 2 locations (with flexibility if the firm has both a San Fran/Silicon Valley office or a Downtown LA/Century City office).

**Are there any downsides to applying to multiple offices for the same firm (if allowed)? Would you suggest prioritizing only one office?**

The CDO recommends focusing one or two offices at most. Firms are looking for applicants who can show a personal + professional connection to an office. They use that as a proxy for how likely you are to stay at their firm (and they are hoping to hire summer associates who plan to stay with the firm for at least 3-4 years after graduation).

**What is the best way to determine what practice groups specific offices have? I've looked at the attorneys practice areas on firm websites, is that optimal?**

You can look on their website and filter location + practice area. Some firms have entries in [NALPDirectory.com](http://NALPDirectory.com) that show a breakdown by practice areas. You can also use [Firm Prospects](#) (PW: cdoaccess) to do a filtered search by firm/location/practice area.

**If 1L is opening at the same time as 2L for a firm, is it okay to apply with the same materials for both positions?**

Yes. Some firms are getting around this by having a 2L application where you can "opt in" by clicking a box to be considered for a 1L position.

**Can you retake the assessments, like suited, if you're unhappy with your results?**

No. The results stick with you. Most of the assessment is about how you react to different situations -- answer honestly. There's also a section that asks you to look for typos and patterns. Make sure you're in the right mind space to focus on the assessment the first time you take it.

**Is there a concern that, given how early 2L hiring is happening, it will be more common for firms to not extend post grad offers to their 2L summer associates?**

No, firms HATE getting bad press for not giving out offers to 2Ls. See Reddit and Above the Law. They don't want to be on the BigLaw Recruiting sub. Ever.

**Does CDO record which firms hire into practice groups vs into a rotation/ "unassigned"? This changes if I'm interested but is hard to learn for all firms.**

It changes at the firms too, so no. Firms that have submitted surveys to FloForward note if they have assigned groups or rotational programs, so that's the best source of data online, or ask 2Ls/3Ls for more info. If a firm asks in your application which practice area you are interested in, it's a sign that they hire into practice groups.

**Any advice for students with a primarily public interest background? How do we create a profile that's appealing to these firms?**

Firms are looking for students that understand what the employer does, and we want you to highlight in your cover letter and interviews the transferable skills that are most relevant to the type of employer you are applying to. So, for PIPS employers, students may want to highlight commitment to the mission and empathy for clients. For BigLaw, client service and problem solving. There can also be lots of overlap because lawyers do a lot of the same things regardless of sector.

**It was mentioned that you stop interviewing once you accept an offer. Out of curiosity, why should we stop if we have other firms we might be interested in?**

Give careful consideration before accepting a job offer; renegeing on an offer is not acceptable. Once you have accepted an offer, you have committed to that job. It demonstrates a lack of integrity to continue interviewing to see if something "better" comes along and even more so if you accept a later offer from another employer.

You expect the employer to honor their commitment; it is equally important that you honor yours.

Remember that the legal community is small, your reputation is very important, and your actions impact your classmates' and the law school's reputation as well. If you have questions about how to request an extension before accepting an offer, please contact a counselor.