

Friday, May 12, 2017

Comparing Class Of 2016 Employment Outcomes With Class Of 2015 And Class of 2014

By [Jerry Organ](#)

Following up on yesterday's post, [ABA Releases Class of 2016 Employment Data: 7% Drop In Law Grads Lead To Placement Rate Increase, Numerical Decrease In Long-Term J.D.-Required/Advantage Jobs](#):

The ABA Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar posted the [Class of 2016 Employment Summary spreadsheet](#) yesterday.

In this initial post, I provide a brief summary of the Class of 2016's employment outcomes compared with the Class of 2015 and the Class of 2014.

Changes in the Percentage of Graduates and Number of Graduates in Full-Time, Long-Term Bar-Passage-Required and JD Advantage Jobs

Across all law schools for which the ABA has released employment summary data for the Class of 2016, the percentage of graduates in full-time, long-term bar-passage-required positions and full-time, long-term JD advantage positions was 72.5% (excluding those in law school funded positions). This represents an increase from 69% for the Class of 2014 and 70.1% for the Class of 2015. This would appear to be modestly good news. When you disaggregate the two categories, the full-time, long-term bar-passage required positions went from 58% for the Class of 2014 to 59.2% for the Class of 2015, to 61.8% for the Class of 2016, while the full-time, long-term JD advantage positions went from 11% to 10.9% to 10.8%.

Because there was a significant decline in the number of graduates across these law schools between 2014 and 2015, and again between 2015 and 2016, however, this modest increase in the percentage of graduates in these positions masks an actual decline in the number of graduates in such positions. There were 37,160 graduates in the Class of 2016, compared with 39,984 graduates in the Class of 2015 and 43,832 graduates in the Class of 2014, a total decline of 6,672 graduates over two years, or 15.2%. There were 26,945 graduates in the Class of 2016 with full-time, long-term bar-passage required or JD advantage positions, compared with 28,029 in the Class of 2015 and 30,234 graduates in the Class of 2014, a decline of 3,289, or 10.8% over two years..

When these totals are disaggregated, full-time, long-term bar-passage-required positions declined from 25,417 for the Class of 2014 to 23,687 for the Class of 2015, to 22,948 for the Class of 2016, a decline of 2,489 over two years, or 9.8%. For full-time, long term JD advantage positions, the total went from 4,817 to 4,342, to 3,997 a decline of 820, or 17%.

Comparison of Full-Time, Long-Term Bar-Passage-Required Positions and JD Advantage Positions for the Class of 2014, the Class of 2015, and the Class of 2016

	Graduates	# FTLT BPRJDA	% FTLT BPRJDA	# FTLT BPR	% FTLT BPR	# FTLT JDA	% FTLT JDA
Class of 2014	43,832	30,234	69%	25,417	58%	4,817	11%
Class of 2015	39,984	28,029	70.1%	23,687	59.2%	4,342	10.9%
Class of 2016	37,160	26,945	72.5%	22,948	61.8%	3,997	10.8%
Change (2014-2016)	(6,672)	(3,289)	3.5%	(2,489)	3.8%	(820)	(0.2%)

Relationship of Employment Outcomes to Bar Passage

Part of the continuing decline in the number of graduates in full-time, long-term bar passage required positions is attributable to the decline in the number and percentage of graduates passing the July bar exam, as reported by the NCBE in its annual statistics publications for each of the last four years.

Year	First-Time Bar Takers in July from ABA-Accredited Law Schools*	First-Time Bar Passers in July from ABA-Accredited Law Schools	July Pass Rate Among First-Time Takers from ABA-Accredited Law Schools	Number in FTLT Bar Passage Required Jobs	% of First-Time Passers in July from ABA-Accredited Law Schools in FTLT Bar Passage Required Jobs
2013	47,465	38,909	82%	25,902	66.6%
2014	44,282	34,333	78%	25,417	74%
2015	39,955	29,772	75%	23,687	79.6%
2016	35,623	26,443	74%	22,948	86.8%

**Note that the NCBE's classification of first-time takers is over-inclusive in that it reflects not just graduates from May who are taking the bar exam for the first time in July, but also graduates from a prior year who might be taking the bar exam for the first-time in a given jurisdiction even if they have previously taken the bar exam in another jurisdiction. Thus first-time bar passers includes some people who are not part of the graduating cohort in a given year.*

In the three-year period, then, between 2013 and 2016, the number of first-time takers from ABA-accredited law schools taking the July bar exam who passed the exam and became eligible for jobs requiring bar passage declined by roughly 12,466, or by 32%. In that time period, however, the percentage of those eligible for full-time, long-term bar passage required positions who landed such positions has increased from 66.6% to 86.8% between 2013 and 2016.

Geographic Differences Worth Noting

Some geographic differences also are noteworthy. The percentage of graduates of all law schools in states with more than one law school who were in full-time, long-term, bar-passage-required or JD advantage jobs was over 80% in five states (Missouri (82.4%), New York (82.1%), Pennsylvania (81.9%), Tennessee (81.7%), Virginia (81%)). In nine states, however, it was less than 70% (Arizona (69.7%), Ohio (69.4%), Washington (67.8%), Michigan (66.3%), Louisiana (66.2%), Florida (65.5%), California (64.3%), Oregon (63.1%), North Carolina (59.6%)).