

# **USNWR Law Methodology**

Posted March 26, 2008

The rankings of 184 law schools fully accredited by the American Bar Association are based on a weighted average of the 12 measures of quality described here. Data was collected in the fall 2007 and early 2008. Specialty rankings are based on nomination by legal educators at peer institutions.

## **Quality Assessment (weighted by .40)**

### **Peer Assessment Score (.25)**

In the fall of 2007, law school deans, deans of academic affairs, the chair of faculty appointments, and the most recently tenured faculty members were asked to rate programs on a scale from "marginal" (1) to "outstanding" (5). Those individuals who did not know enough about a school to evaluate it fairly were asked to mark "don't know." A school's score is the average of all the respondents who rated it. Responses of "don't know" counted neither for nor against a school. About 70 percent of those surveyed responded.

### **Assessment Score by Lawyers/Judges (.15)**

In the fall of 2007, legal professionals, including the hiring partners of law firms, state attorneys general, and selected federal and state judges, were asked to rate programs on a scale from "marginal" (1) to "outstanding" (5). Those individuals who did not know enough about a school to evaluate it fairly were asked to mark "don't know." A school's score is the average of all the respondents who rated it. Responses of "don't know" counted neither for nor against a school. About 26 percent of those surveyed responded.

## **Selectivity (weighted by .25)**

### **Median LSAT Scores (.125)**

The median of the scores on the Law School Admission Test of the 2007 entering class of the full-time J.D. program.

### **Median Undergrad GPA (.10)**

The median of the undergraduate grade point average of the 2007 entering class of the full-time J.D. program.

### **Acceptance Rate (.025)**

The proportion of applicants to the full-time program who were accepted for entry into the 2007 entering class.

## **Placement Success (weighted by .20)**

### **Employment Rates for Graduates**

The employment rates for 2006 graduating class. Graduates who are working or pursuing graduate degrees are considered employed. Employment rates are measure at graduation (.04) and nine months after graduation (.14). For the nine-month employment rate, 25 percent of those whose status is unknown are counted as employed. For the 2006 graduating class, those graduates who are unemployed and seeking employment, unemployed and not seeking employment, and unemployed and studying for the bar are all counted as being unemployed for the purposes of the *U.S. News* employment rate calculations. Previously, those graduates who were unemployed and not seeking employment were not counted as being unemployed. However, changes in how law schools report their 2006 graduating class employment data to the American Bar Association meant that all three groups of unemployed were reported together and none of them could be counted separately.

### **Bar Passage Rate (.02)**

The ratio of the school's bar passage rate of the 2006 graduating class to that jurisdiction's overall state bar passage rate for first-time test takers in summer 2006 and winter 2007. The jurisdiction listed is the state where the largest number of 2006 graduates took the state bar exam. The state's bar passage rates were supplied by the National Conference of Bar Examiners.

## **Faculty Resources (weighted by .15)**

### **Expenditures Per Student**

The average expenditures per student for the 2006 and 2007 fiscal years. The average instruction, library, and supporting services (.0975) are measured, as are all other items, including financial aid (.015).

### **Student/Faculty Ratio (.03)**

The ratio of students to faculty members for the 2007 class, using the American Bar Association definition.

### **Library Resources (.0075)**

The total number of volumes and titles in the school's law library at the end of the 2007 fiscal year.

## **Overall Rank**

Data were standardized about their means, and standardized scores were weighted, totaled, and rescaled so that the top school received 100; others received their percentage of the top score. Western State University and University of La Verne in California, Florida A&M University, John Marshall Law School-Atlanta, Charleston School of Law in South Carolina, Faulkner University in Alabama, Liberty University in Virginia, and Phoenix School of Law in Arizona are not ranked because as of December 2007 they were only provisionally approved by the American Bar Association. Three law schools in Puerto Rico—Catholic University, Inter-America University, and the University of Puerto Rico—are not ranked.

To be listed, a law school must be accredited and fully approved by the American Bar Association and must draw most of its students from the United States.

## **The Tiers**

The law schools not ranked in the Top 100 are listed alphabetically in two groups, the Third Tier and Fourth Tier. Law schools within each of these tiers should be considered broadly similar in quality. The Third Tier ranking begins at 105 and the Fourth Tier ranking begins at 142.

## **Specialty Rankings**

These specialty rankings are based solely on votes by legal educators who nominated up to 15 schools in each field. Legal educators chosen were a selection of those listed in the Association of American Law Schools Directory of Law Teachers 2005-2006 as currently teaching. In the case of clinical and legal writing, the nominations were made by directors or members of the clinical and legal writing programs. Those programs that received the most nominations appear.

**Reminder:** Using **black** ink, please rate each school with which you are familiar on a scale from marginal (1) to outstanding (5) by placing an "X" in the right box. Mark "don't know" if you are unfamiliar with a particular school.

**V13-1**

Job No. 2L96

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## **America's Best Graduate Schools Annual Assessment of Law Schools**

As part of its spring 2008 report on graduate and professional schools, *U.S. News & World Report* is collecting data to

assess the quality of law schools. As a legal professional, your opinion on the quality of the J.D. preparation at various law schools is important to applicants to these programs. On the following pages, you will find a list, by state, of all law schools accredited by the American Bar Association. We ask that you rate the ones you know.

**Your participation in this survey is greatly appreciated.**

**Survey Directions:**

1. Review the entire list of law schools **before** rating individual programs.
2. Identify the law schools you are familiar with, and then rate the academic quality of their J.D. program at each of these schools. Consider **all** factors that contribute to or give evidence of the excellence of the school's J.D. program, for example, curriculum, record of scholarship, quality of faculty and especially the level of professional preparedness shown by graduates.
3. Rate schools on a scale of outstanding (5) to marginal (1) by marking the corresponding box. If you are not familiar with a school's program, mark the box labeled "Don't Know."
4. Return the completed survey in the postage-paid return envelope provided by **December 7, 2007**. If you have misplaced the envelope, please return the survey to: Angela Foster-Woods, Synovate, 222 South Riverside Plaza Chicago, IL 60606-5809.
5. Keep a copy of your completed survey for your own records.

Any questions? Contact the *America's Best Graduate Schools*, help desk at (800) 408-5365 or [usnews@synovate.net](mailto:usnews@synovate.net).

Thank you!

**RATINGS**

**Outstanding**

**Strong**

**Good**

**Adequate**

**Marginal**

Don't  
Know

5 4 3 2 1 DK

**ALABAMA**

03195 Faulkner University (Jones)       (21)

03002 Samford University (Cumberland)

03001 University of Alabama

**ARIZONA**

03003 Arizona State University (O'Connor)

03197 Phoenix School of Law

03004 University of Arizona (Rogers)

**ARKANSAS**

03005 University of Arkansas – Fayetteville

03006 University of Arkansas – Little Rock (Bowen)

**CALIFORNIA**

03007 California Western School of Law

03182 Chapman University

03008 Golden Gate University

03009 Loyola Law School

03011 Pepperdine University       (33)

Job No. 2L96

Group No. 13

**Reminder:** Using **black** ink, please rate each school with which you are familiar on a scale from marginal (1) to outstanding (5) by placing an "X" in the right box. Mark "don't know" if you are unfamiliar with a particular school.

V13-2

**RATINGS**

Outstanding

Strong

Good

Adequate

Marginal

Don't

Know

5 4 3 2 1 DK

*California, continued*

03012 Santa Clara University       (34)

03013 Southwestern Law School

03014 Stanford University

03181 Thomas Jefferson School of Law

03016 University of California – Berkeley

03017 University of California – Davis

03015 University of California (Hastings)

03018 University of California – Los Angeles

03193 University of La Verne

03010 University of the Pacific (McGeorge)

03019 University of San Diego

03020 University of San Francisco

03021 University of Southern California (Gould)

03183 Western State University

03022 Whittier Law School

**COLORADO**

03023 University of Colorado – Boulder       (49)

03024 University of Denver (Sturm)

**CONNECTICUT**

03025 Quinnipiac University

03026 University of Connecticut

03027 Yale University

**DELAWARE**

03028 Widener University

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

03029 American University (Washington)

03030 Catholic University of America (Columbus)

03031 George Washington University

03032 Georgetown University

03033 Howard University

03178 University of the District of Columbia (Clarke)

**FLORIDA**

03186 Barry University       (61)

03189 Florida A&M University

03184 Florida Coastal School of Law

03190 Florida International University

03034 Florida State University

03035 Nova Southeastern University (Broad)

03173 St. Thomas University

03036 Stetson University

03037 University of Florida (Levin)

03038 University of Miami

**GEORGIA**

03039 Emory University

03040 Georgia State University

03192 John Marshall Law School – Atlanta       (73)

Job No. 2L96

Group No. 13

**Reminder:** Using **black** ink, please rate each school with which you are familiar on a scale from marginal (1) to outstanding (5) by placing an “X” in the right box. Mark “don’t know” if you are unfamiliar with a particular school.

**V13-3**

**RATINGS**

**Outstanding**

**Strong**

**Good**

**Adequate**

**Marginal**

**Don’t**

**Know**

**5 4 3 2 1 DK**

*Georgia, continued*

03041 Mercer University       (74)

03042 University of Georgia

**HAWAII**

03043 University of Hawaii (Richardson)       (76)01/79-80

**IDAHO**

03044 University of Idaho

**ILLINOIS**

03045 DePaul University

03046 Illinois Institute of Technology (Chicago-Kent)

03047 John Marshall Law School

03048 Loyola University Chicago

03049 Northern Illinois University

03050 Northwestern University

03051 Southern Illinois University – Carbondale

03052 University of Chicago

03053 University of Illinois – Urbana-Champaign

**INDIANA**

- 03054 Indiana University – Bloomington
- 03055 Indiana University – Indianapolis
- 03056 University of Notre Dame
- 03057 Valparaiso University

**IOWA**

- 03058 Drake University       (35)
- 03059 University of Iowa

**KANSAS**

- 03060 University of Kansas
- 03061 Washburn University

**KENTUCKY**

- 03062 Northern Kentucky University (Chase)
- 03063 University of Kentucky
- 03064 University of Louisville (Brandeis)

**LOUISIANA**

- 03065 Louisiana State University – Baton Rouge
- 03066 Loyola University – New Orleans
- 03067 Southern University
- 03068 Tulane University       (45)

**MAINE**

- 03069 University of Maine

**MARYLAND**

- 03070 University of Baltimore
- 03071 University of Maryland

**MASSACHUSETTS**

- 03072 Boston College
- 03073 Boston University
- 03074 Harvard University
- 03075 New England School of Law
- 03076 Northeastern University       (53)

Job No. 2L96

Group No. 13

**Reminder:** Using **black** ink, please rate each school with which you are familiar on a scale from marginal (1) to outstanding (5) by placing an “X” in the right box. Mark “don’t know” if you are unfamiliar with a particular school.

**V13-4**

**RATINGS**

**Outstanding**

**Strong**

**Good**

**Adequate**

**Marginal**

**Don't**

**Know**

**5 4 3 2 1 DK**

*Massachusetts, continued*

- 03077 Suffolk University       (54)
- 03078 Western New England College

**MICHIGAN**

- 03188 Ave Maria School of Law
- 03079 Michigan State University
- 03080 Thomas M. Cooley Law School
- 03081 University of Detroit Mercy
- 03082 University of Michigan – Ann Arbor
- 03083 Wayne State University

**MINNESOTA**

- 03084 Hamline University
- 03085 University of Minnesota – Twin Cities
- 03191 University of St. Thomas
- 03086 William Mitchell College of Law

**MISSISSIPPI**

- 03087 Mississippi College
- 03088 University of Mississippi

**MISSOURI**

- 03089 St. Louis University       (68)
- 03091 University of Missouri – Columbia
- 03090 University of Missouri – Kansas City
- 03092 Washington University in St. Louis

**MONTANA**

- 03093 University of Montana

**NEBRASKA**

- 03094 Creighton University
- 03095 University of Nebraska – Lincoln

**NEVADA**

- 03185 University of Nevada – Las Vegas (Boyd)

**NEW HAMPSHIRE**

- 03096 Franklin Pierce Law Center       (76)02/79-80

**NEW JERSEY**

- 03097 Rutgers State University – Camden
- 03098 Rutgers State University – Newark
- 03099 Seton Hall University

**NEW MEXICO**

- 03100 University of New Mexico

**NEW YORK**

- 03101 Albany Law School - Union University
- 03102 Brooklyn Law School
- 03104 Columbia University
- 03105 Cornell University
- 03106 CUNY – Queens College
- 03107 Fordham University
- 03108 Hofstra University
- 03109 New York Law School
- 03110 New York University       (33)

Job No. 2L96  
Group No. 13

**Reminder:** Using **black** ink, please rate each school with which you are familiar on a scale from marginal (1) to outstanding (5) by placing an “X” in the right box. Mark “don’t know” if you are unfamiliar with a particular school.

**V13-5**

**RATINGS**

- Outstanding
- Strong
- Good
- Adequate
- Marginal
- Don’t
- Know

**5 4 3 2 1 DK**

*New York, continued*

- 03111 Pace University       (34)
- 03112 St. John’s University
- 03114 Syracuse University
- 03115 Touro College (Fuchsberg)

03113 University at Buffalo – SUNY

03103 Yeshiva University (Cardoza)

**NORTH CAROLINA**

03116 Campbell University (Wiggins)

03117 Duke University

03118 North Carolina Central University

03119 University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill

03120 Wake Forest University

**NORTH DAKOTA**

03121 University of North Dakota

**OHIO**

03122 Capital University       (46)

03123 Case Western Reserve University

03124 Cleveland State University (Cleveland-Marshall)

03125 Ohio Northern University (Pettit)

03126 Ohio State University (Moritz)

03127 University of Akron

03128 University of Cincinnati

03129 University of Dayton

03130 University of Toledo

**OKLAHOMA**

03131 Oklahoma City University

03132 University of Oklahoma

03133 University of Tulsa

**OREGON**

03134 Lewis and Clark College (Northwestern)       (58)

03135 University of Oregon

03136 Willamette University (Collins)

**PENNSYLVANIA**

03138 Duquesne University

03137 Pennsylvania State University (Dickinson)

03139 Temple University (Beasley)

03140 University of Pennsylvania

03141 University of Pittsburgh

03142 Villanova University

**PUERTO RICO**

03175 Catholic University

03176 Inter-American University

03177 University of Puerto Rico

**RHODE ISLAND**

03180 Roger Williams University       (70)

Job No. 2L96

Group No. 13

**Reminder:** Using **black** ink, please rate each school with which you are familiar on a scale from marginal (1) to outstanding (5) by placing an “X” in the right box. Mark “don’t know” if you are unfamiliar with a particular school.

**V13-6**

**RATINGS**

Outstanding

Strong

Good

Adequate

Marginal

Don’t

Know

**5 4 3 2 1 DK**

**SOUTH CAROLINA**

03194 Charleston School of Law ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ (71)

03143 University of South Carolina ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

**SOUTH DAKOTA**

03144 University of South Dakota ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

**TENNESSEE**

03145 University of Memphis (Humphreys) ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

03146 University of Tennessee – Knoxville ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

03147 Vanderbilt University ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ (76)03/79-80

**TEXAS**

03148 Baylor University ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

03151 St. Mary's University ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

03149 South Texas College of Law ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

03150 Southern Methodist University ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

03152 Texas Southern University (Marshall) ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

03153 Texas Tech University ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

03179 Texas Wesleyan University ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

03154 University of Houston ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

03155 University of Texas – Austin ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

**UTAH**

03156 Brigham Young University (Clark) ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

03157 University of Utah (Quinney) ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

**VERMONT**

03158 Vermont Law School ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

**VIRGINIA**

03187 Appalachian School of Law ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ (33)

03160 College of William and Mary (Marshall-Wythe) ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

03159 George Mason University ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

03196 Liberty University ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

03172 Regent University ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

03161 University of Richmond ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

03162 University of Virginia ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

03163 Washington and Lee University ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

**WASHINGTON**

03165 Gonzaga University ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

03166 Seattle University ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

03167 University of Washington ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

**WEST VIRGINIA**

03168 West Virginia University ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

**WISCONSIN**

03169 Marquette University ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

03170 University of Wisconsin – Madison ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

**WYOMING**

03171 University of Wyoming ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ (47)04/79-80