



Portfolio Media, Inc. | 230 Park Avenue, 7th Floor | New York, NY 10011 | www.law360.com
Phone: +1 646 783 7100 | Fax: +1 646 783 7161 | customerservice@law360.com

These Firms Were The Top For Their Summer Associates

By **Kevin Penton**

Law360 (September 12, 2023, 2:46 PM EDT) -- Summer associates praised the summer programs operated by many BigLaw firms this year, handing out high marks for mentoring and opportunities to engage in pro bono work.

Yet 36% reported obtaining no courtroom experience, an increase of 4 percentage points compared to 2022, while hiring assurances decreased from 49% in 2022 to 45% this year.

Law360 Pulse surveyed summer associates between June 14 and July 17, receiving 815 responses from 1Ls, 2Ls and 3Ls, as well as part-time and evening students. Participants were required to identify the organizations where they were completing their summer associate programs.

Weil Gotshal & Manges LLP topped this year's list, followed by Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP. Law firms were only included on the list if at least five of their summer associates participated in the survey.

These Firms Are the Summer Winners

These 20 firms earned the highest marks from law students for their summer associate experience.

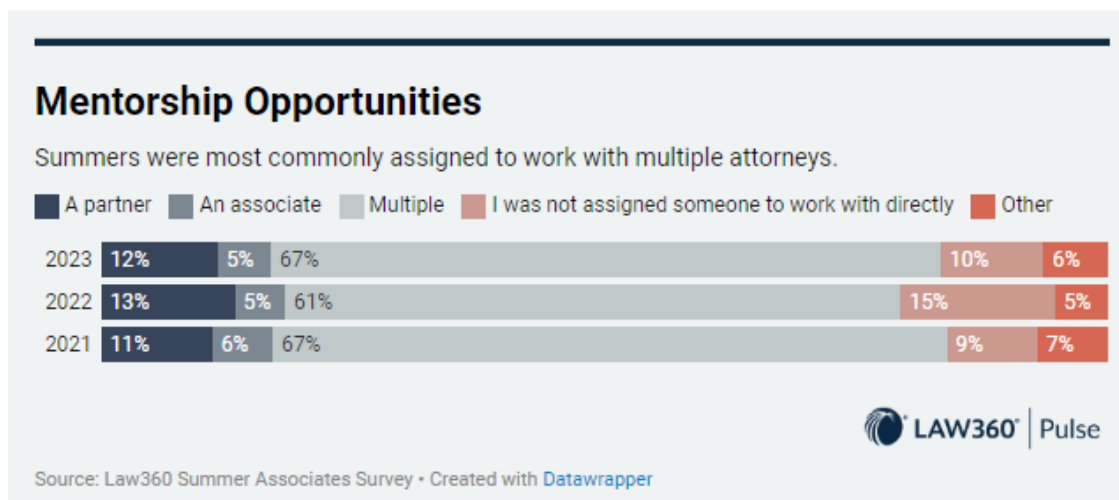
RANK	FIRM	SCORE	RANK	FIRM	SCORE
1	Weil	1.08	11	Clifford Chance	1.3
2	Pillsbury	1.08	12	Kirkland	1.33
3	Morgan Lewis	1.1	13	Morrison Foerster	1.33
4	Fish & Richardson	1.15	14	Baker Botts	1.38
5	WilmerHale	1.25	15	Latham	1.38
5	Norton Rose Fulbright	1.25	16	Akin	1.39
5	Jones Day	1.25	17	Davis Polk	1.4
5	Goodwin	1.25	18	Bryan Cave Leighton Paisner	1.4
5	Dechert	1.25	19	Haynes Boone	1.45
10	Willkie	1.28	20	Arnold & Porter	1.45

Source: Law360 Pulse Summer Associates Survey

Pillsbury's summer associates spoke highly of the program's compensation fairness, mentorship opportunities and how confident the program made them feel towards starting their career.

Morgan Lewis & Bockius LLP and Fish & Richardson PC finished third and fourth, respectively, with five other firms tied for fifth.

Summer associates reported having more opportunities to work with mentors than in years past, with 67% saying they had multiple attorneys providing guidance, a jump of 6 percentage points from 2022.



And the connections were not only with lower-level attorneys at the firms: 92% of summer associates said they connected with senior attorneys at their firms.

Pillsbury had 46 participants in this year's summer program, a size that is tailored each year towards the growth needs that the firm may have, said Mariah Brandt, the chair of Pillsbury's on-campus recruiting team.

The firm ensures that summer associates have at least three formal reviews throughout the course of the program, to allow them to get feedback on what they are doing well and what they may need to improve, she said.

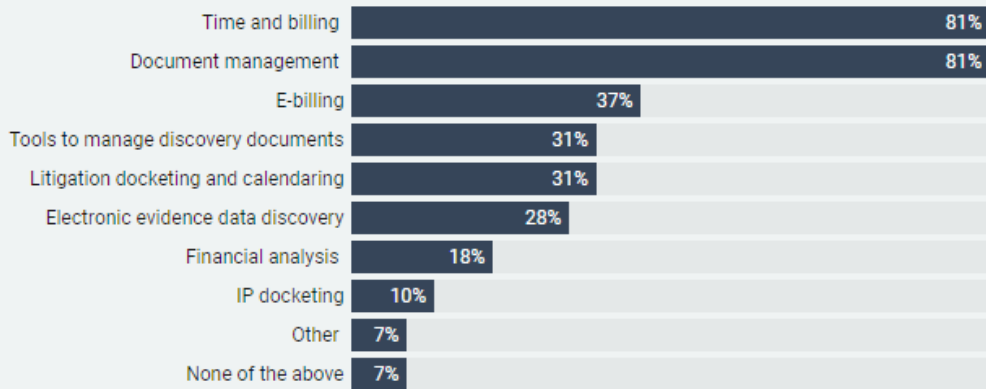
"A hallmark of our program is really trying to set up everyone for success," Brandt said. "Once you get an offer to be a summer associate, the offer is yours to lose. If you're here and you're doing great work, then we want to hire you and have you come back."

Pro bono work was available for 73% of summer associates, an increase of five percentage points from 2022. Tools such as training for managing discovery documents or for managing litigation docketing and calendaring were available for 31% of participants, while 37% had the opportunity to learn electronic billing.

The days of remote associateships were largely left behind this summer, with 76% of survey respondents reporting that their programs occurred entirely in person. That's up 10 percentage points from 2022 and 49 percentage points from 2021, when only 27% of participants said their programs were entirely in person.

Software Training

Most associates were trained in document management and time and billing.

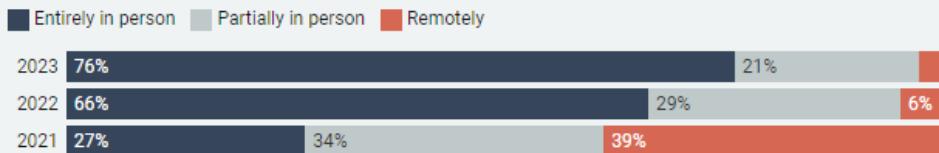


Source: Law360 Pulse Summer Associates Survey • Created with Datawrapper

Most summer associates did not report feeling pressured to essentially move into their cubicles to impress the bosses, with only 16% saying they felt compelled to come early and stay late in order to be competitive with other participants.

In Person

Summer programs have largely returned to being held entirely in person.



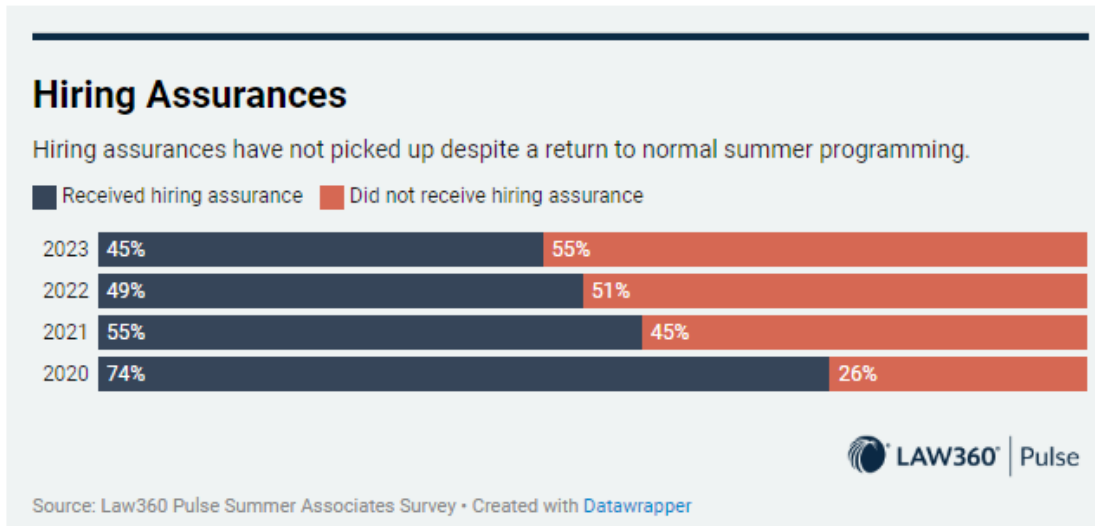
Source: Law360 Pulse Summer Associates Survey • Created with Datawrapper

Yet while the pressure to impress may be down, so is the percentage of summer associates who reported that their law firms assured them that there will be a job waiting for them after law school. Hiring assurances dropped from 49% in 2022 to 45% this year, as the legal industry continues to face challenging times.

Hiring assurances and the pressure to impress may be down, but firms don't sound like they're cutting back on ensuring that summer associates have fun during their programs.

Summer associates reported that firms made sure to include not just work but fun activities to round out their experiences, with events such as pickleball tournaments, polo matches, international trips to Amsterdam and Hong Kong and even attending a Taylor Swift concert.

Weil received top ranking for the fun aspect of its programming, with its mentorship offerings and its compensation fairness also getting top honors from participants.



The 105

summer associates in Weil's program engaged in activities such as attending a New York Mets baseball game and Amateur Night at the Apollo Theater in Harlem, said Jessica Falk, co-head of Weil's summer associate program.

Summer associates told Weil they particularly loved the firm's shadowing assignments, where they got staffed on a deal or on litigation and were subsequently invited to all of its related calls, hearings or depositions, she said.

"One thing we do very well is strike a good balance between the social and the substantive," said Justin Lee, co-head of Weil's summer associate program. "Other firms may err more towards the social or towards work, work, work, but I think we try to give people an accurate impression of what it's like to be at Weil."

--Additional reporting by Andrew Strickler. Editing by Pamela Wilkinson, John Campbell and Xavier Chauvis. Graphics by Jason Mallory.