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# Law School in a Pandemic

Student Perspectives on Distance Learning  
and Lessons for the Future



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## TODAY'S AGENDA

- 01** The Pivot to Distance Learning
- 02** The Emergency Remote Classroom
- 03** Impact of Remote Learning on Law Students' Lives
- 04** Fundamentals of a Positive Distance Learning Experience

# COVID-19 Has Forced a Natural “Experiment” With Online J.D. Courses

On a five-point scale, where “5” means “strongly agree” and “1” means “strongly disagree,” please rate your level of agreement with the following items.

%5 Strongly agree
  %4
  %3
  %2
  %1 Strongly disagree

[School name] successfully responded to the challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic.



I trust that [school name] is acting in the best interest of students during the COVID-19 crisis.

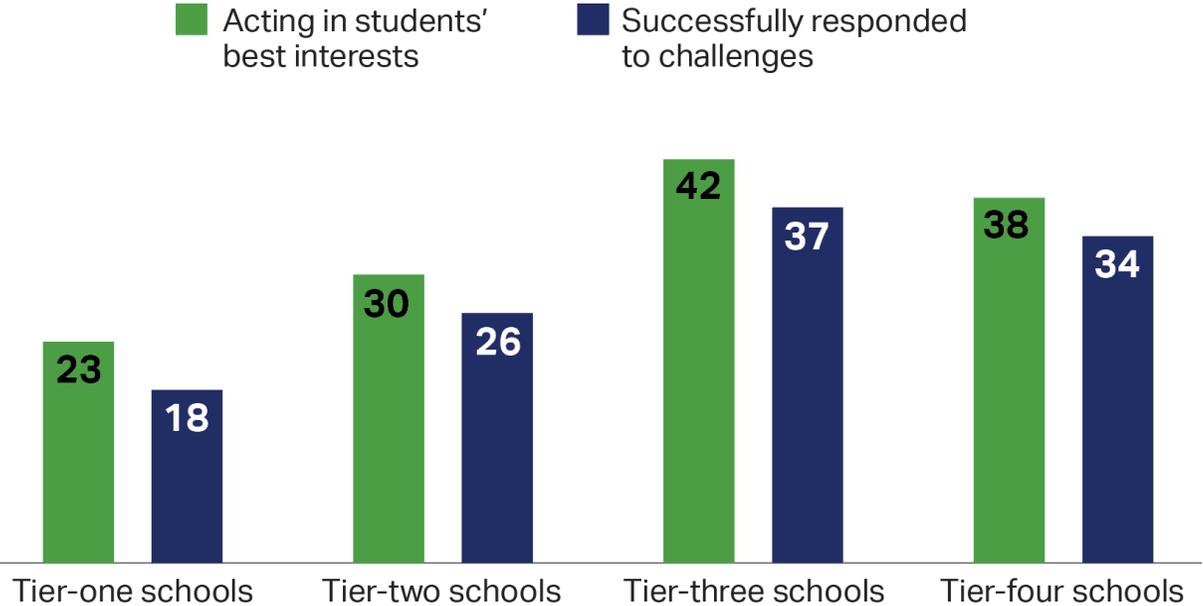


During the 2020 academic year (Fall 2020 and Spring 2021), about **90% of law students took at least half of their courses online.**

About **six in 10 students** agree strongly or somewhat that their school successfully responded to pandemic-challenges and acted in their best interests.

# Most Students Are Positive About Their Law School's Communications, but Approval Varies by Tier

Student perspectives on law school communications amid the pandemic, by school tier  
% Strongly agree

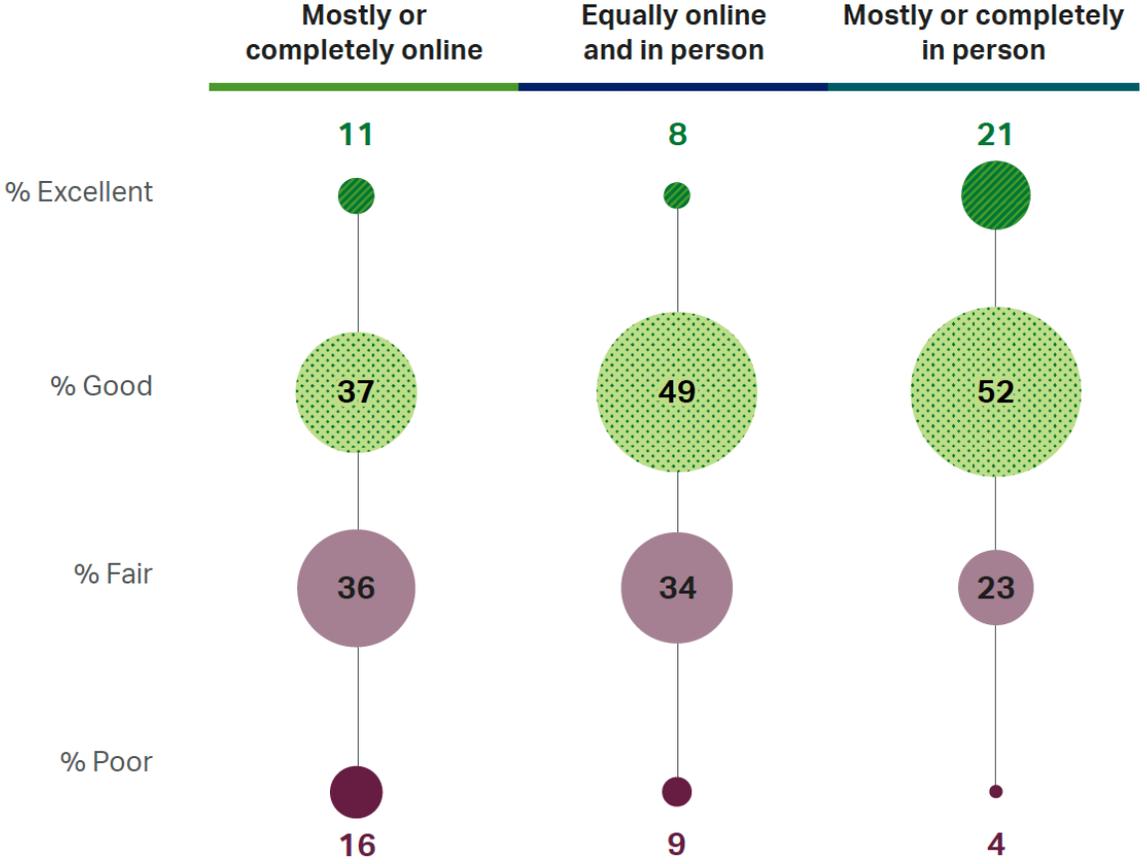


Students enrolled at **tier-three and tier-four** schools are more likely than those at tier-one and tier-two schools to **strongly agree** that their schools acted in their best interests and successfully responded to COVID-19 challenges.

# Students who Completed their Courses Mostly or Completely Online were More Positive

How would you rate the quality of your current J.D. program during the COVID-19 pandemic?

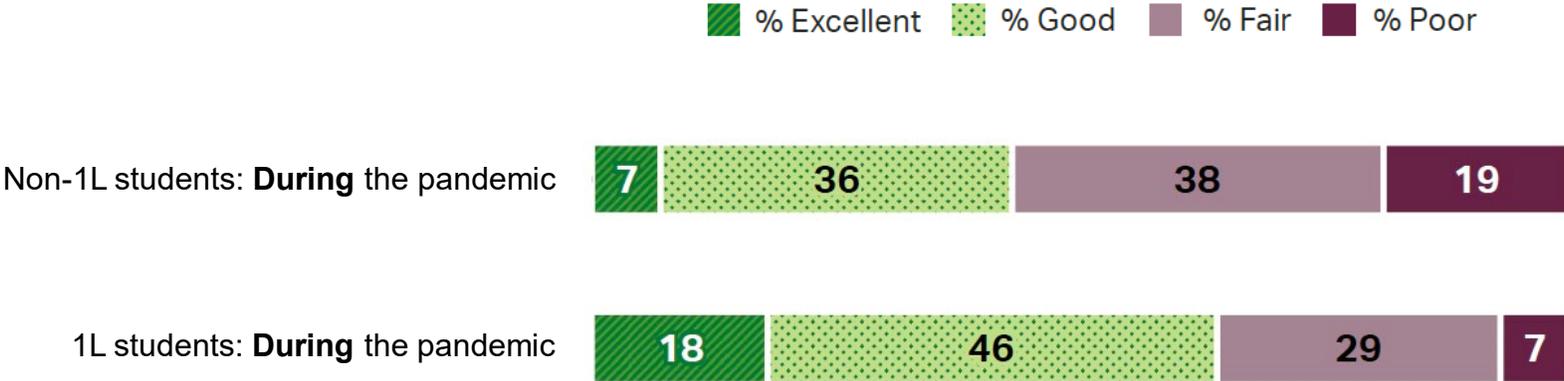
Results by Spring 2021 course format



Less than half (**48%**) of predominately online students said the quality of their program during the pandemic was “excellent” or “good,” compared with **73%** of students who were learning mostly/completely in person.

# 1L Students Are Mainly Positive About Online Learning, Compared With 2L and 3L students

How would you rate the quality of your current J.D. program [before/during] the COVID-19 pandemic?



Among 2L and 3L students, **88%** rated their pre-pandemic program as “excellent” or “good,” compared with just **43%** who say the same about their current pandemic experience.

**Meanwhile, 64% of 1L students say their current J.D. program is “excellent” or “good.”**

# The Most Successful Online Programs Integrated a Wide Variety of Learning Approaches

Please indicate how many of your law school courses have used the following during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Percentage “all courses” or “most courses” among students taking most or all their courses online in Fall 2020 and Spring 2021

Results among students who rate the quality of their program during the pandemic as ...

	Results among all online students	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Live lectures from faculty	90%	94%	90%	88%	87%
The Socratic method	52%	65%	54%	50%	43%
Written assignments	41%	55%	44%	35%	34%
Online discussions	36%	63%	38%	32%	21%
Quizzes	23%	39%	25%	22%	11%
Skills-based instruction	17%	30%	21%	12%	8%
Group projects or other collective work	13%	19%	15%	10%	10%
Pre-recorded lectures	8%	12%	8%	6%	9%
Guest lectures	7%	11%	8%	6%	7%

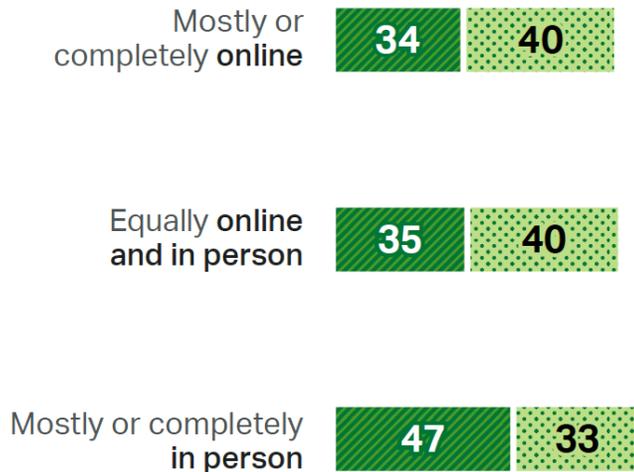
The most successful online programs were those that successfully integrated online and traditional approaches.

Students who rated their online programs as “excellent” were 2-3X more likely to say all/most of their courses used online discussions than those who rated their online programs as “fair” or “poor.”

# Online Law Students Express Concerns About Their Ability to Pass the Bar Exam

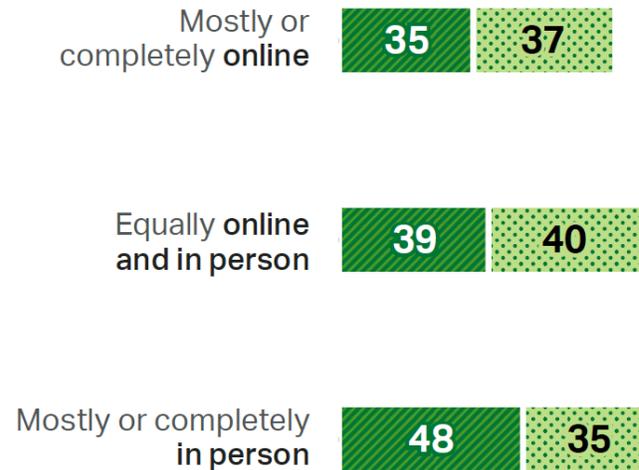
*I am confident that I will graduate from my J.D. program with the knowledge and skills I need to be successful in my chosen career path.*

■ % Strongly agree    ■ % Agree



*I am confident that I will graduate from my J.D. program with the knowledge and skills I need to pass the bar exam.*

■ % Strongly agree    ■ % Agree



Students who completed most of their Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 law courses online are significantly less likely than those who were predominantly in person to strongly agree they will graduate with the **knowledge and skills** necessary to pass the bar exam and **succeed in their careers**.

# Despite Dissatisfaction, Online Students Report Similar Academic Performance as Their In-Person Peers

*Which statement best describes the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on your academic performance in law school?*

*Results among 2L and 3L students*

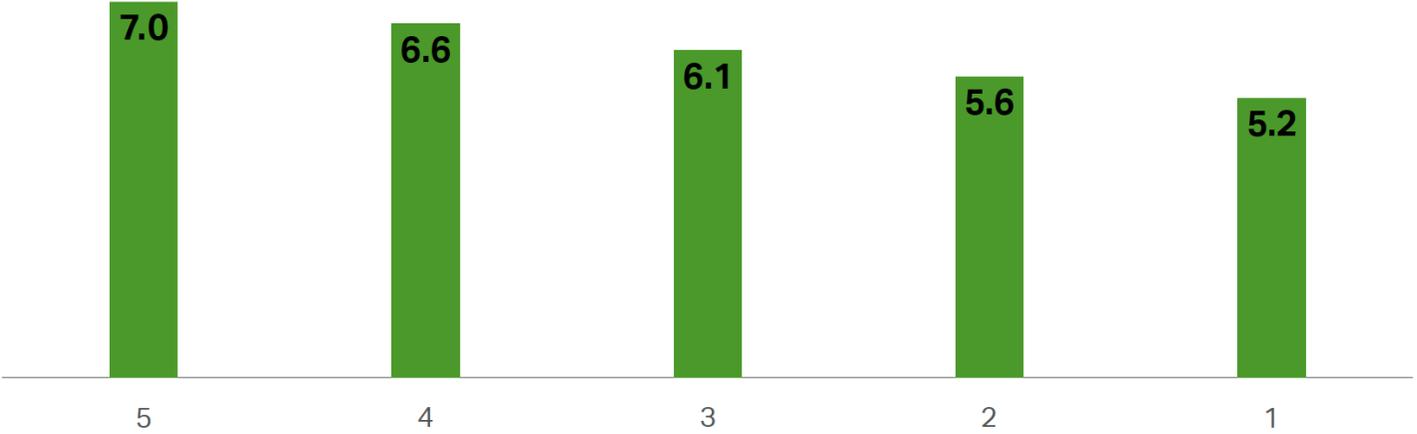
	Completely online in Fall 2020 and Spring 2021	At least some courses in person in Fall 2020 or Spring 2021
My academic performance has improved during the COVID-19 pandemic.	25%	24%
My academic performance has been unchanged during the COVID-19 pandemic.	40%	41%
My academic performance has declined during the COVID-19 pandemic.	36%	35%

While **38%** of 2L and 3L students agree or strongly agree that online J.D. programs met their learning needs, when asked about their academic performance, 2L and 3L students who completed all their courses online in the 2020 academic year reported **near-identical performance to students who completed some of their courses in person** over that period.

# Students Whose Learning Needs Were Met Report More Positive Life Evaluations

*Students' life evaluation, by their belief that online courses have met their learning needs*

*Rating scale: 0 = worst possible life to 10 = best possible life*



Average life rating among students who **strongly agree** that online J.D. courses have met their learning needs

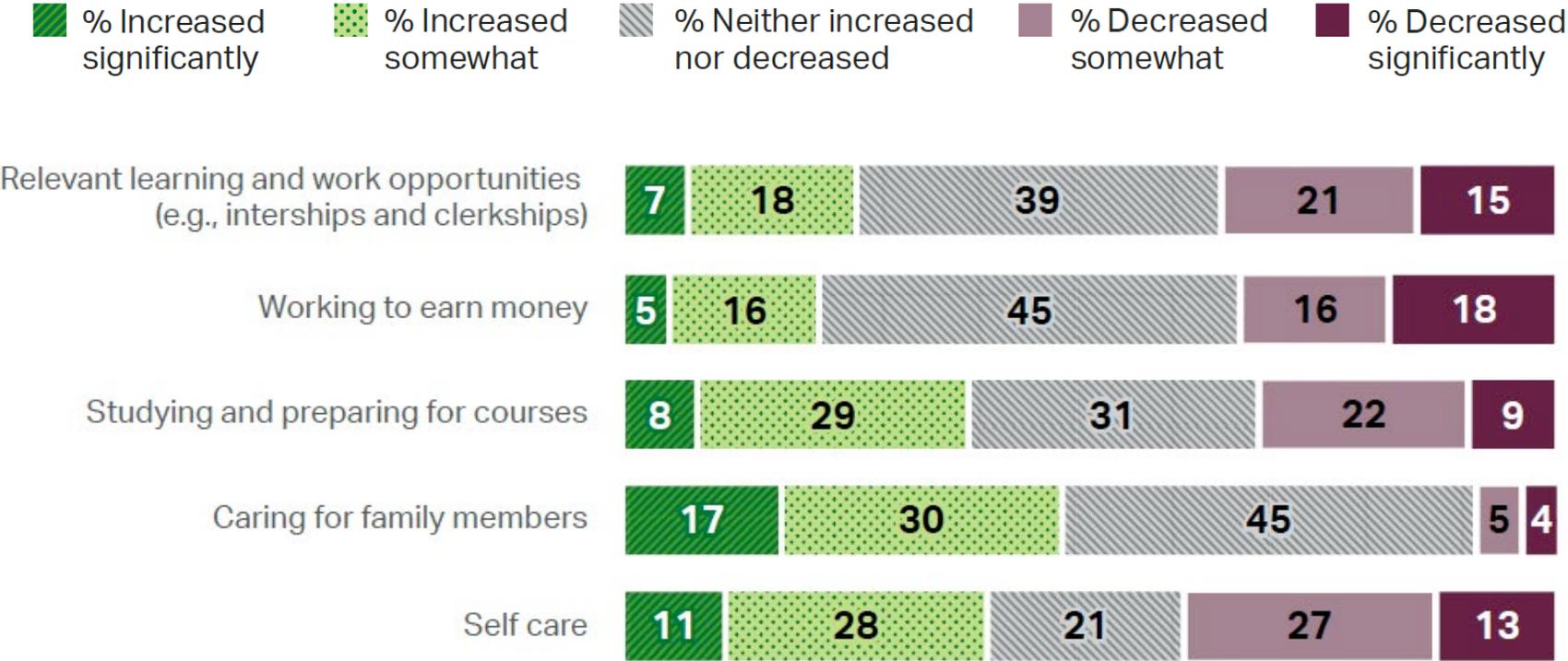
Average life rating among students who **strongly disagree** that online J.D. courses have met their learning needs

**The average rating among all J.D. students is 6.3.** This figure varies by students' level of agreement with, “My online J.D. experience during the COVID-19 pandemic has met my learning needs.”

Students who strongly agree their needs have been met give an **average life rating of 7.0, compared with an average of 5.2** among those who strongly disagree.

# COVID-19 Provided Students More Family Time, But Has Decreased Learning and Work Opportunities

How has transitioning to online courses during the COVID-19 pandemic affected the amount of time you have for ...



**38%** of students say the time they have to study and prepare for courses has increased significantly or somewhat with the transition to online courses.

**25%** say the time they have for learning and work opportunities (such as internships and clerkships) has increased, while 36% say it has decreased.

**47%** of students say the time they have to care for family members has increased, while only 9% say it has decreased.

# Students of Tier-Four Law Schools Are More Likely to be Promoters Than Students of Institutions in Other Tiers

On a scale of zero to 10 where “0” means you are not at all likely and “10” means you are extremely likely, how likely is it that you would recommend online J.D. courses to family, friends or colleagues?

	All J.D. students	Students at tier-one schools	Students at tier-two schools	Students at tier-three schools	Students at tier-four schools
“9” or “10” (promoters)	9%	6%	9%	10%	15%
“7” or “8” (passives)	18%	13%	20%	18%	26%
“6” or less (detractors)	72%	81%	71%	72%	59%

32% of part-time students rate their likelihood to recommend online J.D. courses at a “9” or “10,” compared with 8% of full-time students.

1L (11%) and 2L (11%) students are twice as likely as 3L students (5%) to give ratings of “9” or “10.”

Students at law schools ranked as tier four are more than **twice as likely to be promoters as students in the tier 1— 15% vs. 6%, respectively.** They were also less likely to be detractors, **59% vs. 81%.**

# Panel Discussion



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