

## Latham, Kirkland Are The Hottest Firms For Summers

By **Xiumei Dong**

*Law360 (May 24, 2021, 10:02 AM EDT)* -- Latham & Watkins LLP is the most desired place for law students to practice their summer associateship, according to a new survey by Law360 Pulse.

The survey of over 1,200 law students found that their top choices for where to do their summer programs were Latham, followed by Kirkland & Ellis LLP and Skadden Arps Slate Meagher & Flom LLP.

Latham also stood out from other firms when it came to marketing their summer programs to the students, according to the survey. And it was one of the firms students bid on most frequently in on-campus interviews for summer associateships in 2021, coming in second to Kirkland in that category.

### The 'Dream' Firms for Summer Associates

Latham topped students' lists of their most desirable places to spend a summer.

Rank	Firm	Mentions	Rank	Firm	Mentions
1.	Latham	135	26.	Baker Botts	29
2.	Kirkland	88	26.	Wilson Sonsini	29
3.	Skadden	75	28.	Baker McKenzie	28
4.	Gibson Dunn	71	28.	Hogan Lovells	28
5.	Cooley	69	28.	Morgan Lewis	28
6.	Covington	66	28.	Weil	28
7.	O'Melveny	59	32.	Williams & Connolly	27
8.	Akin Gump	57	33.	Paul Hastings	26
8.	Cravath	57	34.	Proskauer	23

10.	Sidley Austin	56	35.	Alston & Bird	22
11.	Jones Day	50	35.	Greenberg Traurig	22
12.	Davis Polk	49	35.	Vinson & Elkins	22
13.	Cleary	42	38.	DLA Piper	21
13.	Perkins Coie	42	38.	Holland & Knight	21
15.	White & Case	41	38.	Milbank	21
16.	Debevoise	39	38.	Quinn Emanuel	21
16.	Sullivan & Cromwell	39	42.	Willkie	20
18.	Ropes & Gray	37	43.	Jenner & Block	19
19.	Wachtell	35	44.	Foley & Lardner	18
20.	Arnold & Porter	34	44.	King & Spalding	18
20.	Morrison & Foerster	34	44.	Orrick	18
22.	Akerman	32	47.	Mayer Brown	17
23.	Goodwin	31	48.	Baker Donelson	16
23.	WilmerHale	31	48.	McGuireWoods	16
25.	Paul Weiss	30	48.	Simpson Thacher	16

"Latham has really pioneered the unassigned system, so when law students graduate from school, they have the opportunity to take matters in a variety of different practice areas before they have to make a decision where they want to spend the bulk of their career," Abid Qureshi, global chair of Latham's recruiting committee, told Law360 Pulse.

According to Qureshi, Latham, which has nearly 30 offices worldwide, has replicated this system of "unassigned" practice areas for its summer program, which helped the firm get ahead of the competition in the early rounds of the talent war.

"So, a summer associate might come in and be unsure as to whether she wants to do litigation or transactional work, or tax. She can have an opportunity to explore each of those areas ... and try to get a feel of what she enjoys the most," Qureshi explained.

This year, Latham will have a total of 240 summer associates joining the firm's 10-week virtual program starting on May 17. According to Julie Crisp, vice chair of the firm's recruiting committee, the firm will

make return offers at the end of the program following comprehensive reviews.

Crisp said the firm is aware of the shortcomings of any program that has to be carried out remotely, given the coronavirus pandemic. Latham has come up with some creative events, such as virtual recreational classes, dance parties and even virtual scavenger hunts, to ensure that associates feel connected.

More than half of the students surveyed by Law360 Pulse cited the inability to connect with colleagues and receive sufficient mentoring because of remote working conditions as their biggest worry going into the summer programs.

To address such concerns, Latham is pairing each of its summer associates with a partner mentor and an associate mentor, who will help answer their questions and provide guidance throughout the summer, according to Crisp.

And despite being virtual, Latham will continue to host its flagship "Summer Academy" program, which brings together summer associates from across the globe and immerses them in the firm's culture through training seminars and social events, Deborah Kirk, a partner in Latham's London office, said.

Latham's 2021 summer associate class is the most diverse class in the firm's history, with 49% racial and ethnic minorities, according to the firm. Qureshi pointed out that the incoming class of associates was recruited from 39 law schools.

"We're looking to find top legal talent wherever it might be," Qureshi said.

Meanwhile, Kirkland, which came in second to Latham in two categories but topped the list of firms students most frequently bid for, is also going virtual this summer. The firm has accepted more than 300 summer associates, including about 275 second-year law students and 30 first-year students, for its 10-week program, according to Chris Greco, co-chair of Kirkland's firmwide recruiting committee.

"Going forward, I would expect that we'll go back to in-person, but that would probably start in 2022," Greco told Law360 Pulse.

Last year, Kirkland shortened its summer program to a two-week virtual training in response to the pandemic, but nonetheless, the firm paid its associates a full 10-week salary and extended return offers to all summer associates even before they started their program.

In 2021, Greco noted that Kirkland is returning to its standard procedure and will extend offers at the conclusion of the program.

To make sure that the summer associates feel connected in the virtual setting, Greco said that Kirkland offers a few types of mentoring systems where the summer associates will be pairing up with current associates and partners to stay connected throughout.

"Our people are far and away our most important asset," he said. "So, I'd like to think that the results that we're getting, the feedback that we're getting, is the result of the effort that we put into the program and the engagement that our attorneys have with the summers."

--Editing by Pamela Wilkinson and Kerry Benn.

*Methodology: Law360 conducted the first part of the Summer Associate Survey from March 9 to April 2, 2021. We received more than 1,200 responses from law students, of whom 638 were in their 2L year, 268 in their 1L year, 252 in their 3L year, and 37 attending either part-time or only evening classes. Among the participants, 54% were women and 43% were men. Less than 3% said they preferred not to disclose their gender, and the remainder of respondents identified as nonbinary. The survey was anonymous and will not connect any individual response with any person.*

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