

US News Ranking Delayed as Law Schools Claim Faulty Job Data Included



The release of the U.S. News law school rankings has been delayed by a week following an “unprecedented number of inquiries from schools.” Some law schools have flagged concerns regarding the employment data, which they claim is flawed, prompting the delay.

U.S. News typically provides schools with an early copy of the rankings before releasing them publicly. However, some law schools have highlighted discrepancies between the employment figures they reported to the American Bar Association and the figures that appear in the April 11 version of the rankings provided by U.S. News.

The University of California, Berkeley School of Law dean Erwin Chemerinsky wrote to U.S. News on Monday to request a review of his school’s employment numbers. Chemerinsky noted discrepancies between the employment figures his school reported to the American Bar Association and those appearing in the April 11 rankings.

U.S. News stated in January that it would assign full weight to law graduates in most school-funded fellowships and those in graduate programs, a change from previous years. However, the latest rankings do not appear to reflect seven 2021 Berkeley law alumni now in graduate school, Chemerinsky noted in his letter.

Don't settle for less - sign up for LawCrossing and find your dream legal job.

Reuters reviewed a copy of the April 11 version of the rankings and compared them with publicly available ABA data for the class of 2021, upon which the upcoming U.S. News’ rankings are largely based. At least 11 of the top 14 schools appear to have an undercounted employment rate. Schools with more graduates in school-funded fellowships or graduate programs tended to have more significant discrepancies with their ABA figures.

Yale Law School ranked number one, has seen a more than 9-percentage-point drop in its 10-month employment rate between the April 11 version and last year’s ranking. This is despite having one of the largest cohorts of 2021 graduates in school-funded fellowships and graduate school. Yale anticipated its employment rate would increase to nearly 97% this year instead of declining to 80% under the revised methodology.

Associate dean Debra Kroszner said that if the employment metric used for Yale Law School was based on the April 11 rankings, it was “entirely incorrect and flatly inconsistent with the changes in methodology outlined on their website.”

Law school admissions consultant Mike Spivey said that the April 11 rankings had caused widespread confusion among law school administrators. He believes that there is a high probability that U.S. News made an error or multiple errors.

The delay in releasing the rankings could significantly impact law schools and prospective students, as the U.S. News rankings are often a key factor in determining where students choose to apply and ultimately attend. U.S. News has not provided further clarification on the cause of the delay.