ABA Memorandum

To: ABA Council

From: Kirsten Winek, Manager, Law School Analytics and Reporting
       Bill Adams, Deputy Managing Director

Date: February 14, 2020

Re: Employment Questionnaire: Class of 2018 Random Graduate Reviews and Elevated Reviews

This memo will provide a brief overview of the Random Graduate Reviews and Elevated Reviews based on the Employment Questionnaire (EQ) for the Class of 2018. This class is unique as it is the first one for which Kirsten Winek reviewed files from every law school currently admitting students. We required each law school to submit either 10 or 20 randomly selected graduate employment files documenting the information reported in the EQ for her review (the Random Graduate Review). The number of files selected for review depended on the size of a law school’s graduating class – 10 files for a graduating class of fewer than 230 students or 20 files for a graduating class of 230 or more students.

Having the Random Graduate Review encompass all law schools was very helpful. It allowed us to see what issues and points of confusion still persisted despite the implementation of the Employment Protocols and if any particular schools had issues with documentation or classification of graduate employment outcomes. Clarifying information based on these issues will be added to the Employment Protocols for the Class of 2020, for which we will seek Council approval in August. Additionally, we made it a priority to provide detailed feedback to each law school requiring it. This included notes on why specific files were out of compliance as well as things law schools needed to do to improve or streamline their files going forward. Most law schools seemed to understand the classification and documentation rules; however, some still struggle with them, so this feedback was important to provide despite its time-consuming nature. We are confident this feedback will help all law schools improve the information and documentation they provide to the ABA going forward. That said, no issues of systematic misreporting or misrepresentation were found in the Class of 2018.

There was one school subject to the Elevated Review process after failing to meet the compliance standard set for the Random Graduate Review. This school was required to undergo both a Level 1 and Level 2 review, the latter of which is currently in progress.

As with all new processes, there are some improvements that can be made to the file reviews. We shifted the timeline to start the Random Graduate Reviews earlier so that schools can receive feedback earlier and have more time to implement it for the next graduating class. Additionally, law schools expressed some concerns about the number of randomly selected files relative to the size of the graduating class – smaller schools had a larger overall percentage of their files reviewed compared to larger schools. We will take these concerns under advisement.